

Present: Councillor Paul Goodale (Chairman), Councillor Stephen Woodliffe (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Katie Chalmers, Anton Dani, Viven Edge, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Brian Rush and Yvonne Stevens

Officers –

Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnership, Senior Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Apprentice

**113 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Alan Bell, Anne Dorrian, Deborah Evans and Viven Edge

**114 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chairman

**115 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

All actions from the minutes had been completed.

**116 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Yvonne Stevens made the committee aware that the Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre was within her Portfolio responsibilities, referring to Agenda Item 1.  
Cllr Martin Griggs, in reference to Agenda item 2, was Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing and would abstain from voting.

**117 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None

**118 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME**

There were no public speakers

**119 BTAC SMALL GRANT SCHEME**

The Local Communities Development Officer presented a report which set out the applications made to the Small Grants Working Group in Round 1 of the financial year 2021/2022. The report also considered additional business, in relation to a request from Boston Big Local to consider financial investment greater than the small grants policy allowed and provided the latest information on grant applications put on hold from Round 3 2019/20.

Guests, Jody Raggo and Richard Tory from Boston Big Local (BBL) appeared before the Committee to explain the 'Boston Monopoly' project set out in Appendix 1 of the

report, and asked the Committee for their support in the production, in return for BTAC's logo to feature on the box and for BTAC to be listed as a sponsor.

The Committee sought clarification from BBL surrounding the figures that had been presented in their report. It was confirmed that for the £5,000 BBL were asking BTAC to invest that would provide 220 units of the Monopoly Board.

Members felt as though an opportunity had been missed by involving BTAC at such a late stage in the process as the Committee could have offered a lot more support.

It was moved and seconded that the Committee endorse all the Round 3 applications, but not support the BBL application as it could not justify the spending.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the recommendations made by the Working Group in respect of the eligible applications set out in Table 1 to the report, to grant the full amount requested for each application, be endorsed**
- 2. That the latest information on grants put on hold from Round 3 2019/20 be noted**
- 3. That Boston Big Local's request for investment be noted**

An amendment was then proposed and seconded to have a trial period for the BBL application, but when put to the vote this fell.

**120 EMPOWERING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES (MHCLG COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME)**

The Assistant Director, Housing & Wellbeing presented a report on the delivery of a significant Health and Wellbeing Programme (Empowering Healthy Communities), funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Community Champions Programme.

As part of the programme £20,000 had been allocated to BTAC for members to allocate to meet local need. The funding could be spent to support local communities, provided the spend was in line with the grant conditions, which were set out in the report.

Two options were presented to members for consideration:

- An evidence based proposal was included for consideration linked to digital literacy and language support.
- Add the grant funding to an existing BTAC small grants scheme to enable health and wellbeing focussed grant allocation opportunity.

Full details of the options were set out in section 4 of the report.

It was recommended to the Committee that the work to deliver the preferred approach should commence within four to six weeks and that BTAC would receive regular reports on progress and impact. The outcomes achieved through the funding would also be reported to the Empowering Healthy Communities Programme Board and to MHCLG.

Officers were able to support BTAC members to consider and agree their preferred approach to allocate the funding, ensuring that proposals were in line with the MHCLG grant conditions and to enable delivery and outcomes.

Members were in agreement in recognising the benefits of Option 1, but felt that all aspects of the communities within Boston should benefit from the grant, not just one particular area, and expressed a preference Option 2.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Option 2, set out in the report, that the £20,000 Empowering Healthy Communities grant funding, provided to BTAC to support residents in the BTAC area, be added to the existing BTAC small grants scheme**
- 2. That the Assistant Director, Housing and Wellbeing, be delegated the authority to commission and implement the agreed approach to allocate the funding; in consultation with the BTAC Chairman and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities**

**121 REGULATING AND SAFEGUARDING BOSTON'S ECONOMY TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS IN RELATION TO CENTRAL PARK SECURITY**

The Assistant Director – Regulation presented a report on options for improved security for Central Park, arising from the recommendations of the Regulating and Safeguarding Boston's Economy Task and Finish Group.

Members were reminded that at the meeting of the Committee held on 3 February 2021, it had been agreed to accept the recommendations relating to locking of the park gates overnight and the funding of a service for Central Park to address on-going anti-social behaviour. Officers had been instructed to produce an options report including costings for consideration at a future meeting.

The report provided options to address the issues raised:-

- Employ a security firm to patrol the park and open and lock the gates on a daily basis;
- Use of BTAC Operatives
- Install maglock gates, an electronic access control system which would automatically lock and unlock the gates at predetermined times.
- Employ three additional anti-social behaviour officers to patrol the park.

The full details of the options, associated costs and appropriate officer opinions were set out in the report.

The report also included the views of Boston Sector Police Inspector Francesca Harrod on behalf of Lincolnshire Police, who had been consulted on the matter.

Regarding the police's capacity to respond to incidents, the Inspector confirmed that all calls were graded in terms of harm and risk, with officers deployed to urgent incidents. A fight would be graded as urgent; people sitting drinking would not. The police did not struggle to attend urgent incidents, but when urgent and non-urgent incidents were reported concurrently, urgent incidents took priority.

The Inspector added that the police representation had not been submitted lightly, but as a result of nuisance caused to residents and park users and the impact on police resources.

The majority of incidents occurred in the hours of darkness, so the figures varied over the year. Anecdotally, it was considered that locking the gates overnight would eliminate incidents and the police could utilize their resources more effectively.

The Committee thanked Inspector Harrod for her comments.

Members discussed all options to address anti-social behaviour within Central Park, with the primary focus being on timing and method of locking the gates. The Committee recognised that not everyone in the park in either the early hours of the morning or late at night were acting in an anti-social manner and accepted that locking the park gates would not be 100% effective in stopping all anti-social behaviour, but it would be a deterrent.

Consideration was given to employing an additional CCTV operative to focus on the BTAC Area to improve surveillance and early notification to the relevant authorities of any incidents observed.

A proposition that an additional CCTV operator be employed was then proposed and seconded.

There was also a view that locking the park gates overnight would have a positive impact on reducing nuisance for residents and protect the park. There had been a substantial number of complaints received from nearby residents of noise and disturbance from the park at night.

Members discussed the need for locking the gates and having a patrol of the park in addition to employing another CCTV Operator. There was more support for locking the gates if the times could be set. Someone locking the gates and advising people it was time to go home would make the area safer.

It was proposed that a security firm be employed to open and lock the park gates on a daily basis, as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report, for one year, with officers to consult Members regarding the details.

*[Councillor Viven Edge left the meeting at 8.35 pm]*

The Assistant Director - Regulation advised the Committee that there had been a significant level of BTAC investment in CCTV for the park and the cameras had night time capability so it was difficult to see how matters could be improved. CCTV was a passive deterrent.

Anti-social behaviour required officers on the ground to move people along. It was pointed out that an additional operator would result in an ongoing revenue cost to the Committee for the length of the contract. The Committee could set locking times for the gates.

The Chairman pointed out that CCTV was a Council service and that provision of an additional operator represented a 2% increase in the BTAC precept.

The Community Safety Manager confirmed that an additional CCTV operator dedicated to Central Park and other BTAC play areas would help alert the police to incidents of anti-social behaviour adding that the operators relied on complaints from residents regarding noise disturbance, as they did not have sound capability.

Following thorough debate and propositions being moved and seconded it was;

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Option 1 be approved, as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report, to employ security personnel with the appropriate competency and training to open and lock the gates of Central Park on a daily basis for a one-year period.**
- 2. That the Assistant Director Regulation be delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman of BTAC, Leader Portfolio Holder and Section 151 Officer, to implement this option with Members to be consulted on the details.**
- 3. That the Assistant Director Regulation undertake an immediate recruitment process to acquire one CCTV operator, to be focused on the BTAC area.**

**122 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM**

It was noted that proposed items for the next meeting were:

- Grant Request - Arranging Community Events Group
- Open Spaces Improvements 'Wish List'
- Public Conveniences – Costs and Options re Charges/Opening Hours
- Bulky waste collection – consideration of amnesty
- A Community Governance Review– following Full Council consideration

The Meeting ended at 9.00pm