

BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC)

27 November 2019

Present: Councillor Paul Goodale (Chairman), Councillor Colin Woodcock (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian, Viven Edge, Deborah Evans, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Brian Rush, Yvonne Stevens and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –
Head of Place and Space and Senior Democratic Services Officer

Guest: Inspector Fran Harrod, Boston’s Policing Inspector, Lincolnshire Police

Observers: Councillors Tracey Abbott, Paul Skinner and Nigel Welton

Also in attendance: County Councillor P Cooper

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The Committee looked at the background information attached to the agenda pack, which had been requested by the Chairman in response to requests from some Members, to assist the Committee to consider whether BTAC should be a Town Council before asking for a report to be drafted with detailed information.

It was noted that the process for setting up a town council had to be triggered by a 1,800-signature petition followed by a Governance Review, which would take a year.

One Member who had requested the information expressed the view that a Town Council was needed in order to address a “democratic deficiency”. Other areas in the borough were covered by parish councils, but the town wards were covered by BTAC, which did not have the same powers, and more needed to be done for the residents of the town.

Others agreed, particularly as the town’s population was growing. It would be a significant step to take, but would achieve self-determination and it would be worthwhile investigating the options.

In particular, there was frustration that the Committee had to have Cabinet approval for higher levels of expenditure and that the Committee’s recent recommendation to Cabinet for funding for the events programme had been deferred. However, it was suggested that the recommendation might have been approved had the former Portfolio Holder been present to present it and another suggestion was to ask that the limit on BTAC’s expenditure be raised.

There was also a view that a town council would create another layer of government and additional work for officers when the Committee worked well as it was. The Committee currently had a good budget and officers; a town council would need new members,

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officers and clerk as well as a base to meet and would have to pay for services such as emptying litter bins and lighting the streets.

It was then proposed and seconded that the matter of setting up a town council should not be considered.

During further debate, the Chief Executive pointed out that BTAC had executive powers, delegated from Cabinet, and advised Members to consider what they believed they could do as a town council that they could not presently do as BTAC. Officers would investigate the options if Members wished. It would be a decision for Cabinet to consider if BTAC wished to recommend that the financial limit on its expenditure be raised.

In response to a suggestion that the Committee could also investigate moving back to the full committee system, the Chairman advised Members that this would have to be considered by Full Council, not BTAC.

[The meeting adjourned temporarily and Councillor Viven Edge left at this point.]

An amendment was then proposed and seconded that the matter be deferred to a future meeting and when put to the vote this was approved as the substantive motion. A vote was then taken on the substantive motion and it was:

RESOLVED: That consideration of the possibility of setting up a town council be deferred to a future meeting.