

Present: Councillor Sue Ransome (Chairman), Councillor Ben Evans (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Anton Dani, Viven Edge, Paul Gleeson, Martin Griggs, Stephen Raven, Brian Rush, Yvonne Stevens, Nigel Welton and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Head of Place and Space and Local Communities Development Officer & BTAC Grant Administrator

Also in attendance: County Councillor Paula Cooper

**37 MINUTES**

With the agreement of the committee the Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 August 2018

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

The Head of Place and Space confirmed he had spoken with representatives from British Telecom who had advised they would be refurbishing the 3 phone boxes outside the old Post Office on Wide Bargate as they had recognised that they were listed. They had further confirmed they would also refurbish the 3 boxes outside the Exchange Building. Members were advised that the BTAC operatives would take responsibility for clearing any graffiti or other from the refurbished boxes, once refurbished.

**39 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were tabled by Councillors Alison Austin and Stephen Raven. Apologies were also tabled by Inspector Morrice and by the Chief Executive

**40 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Yvonne Stevens declared that whilst she had been a named member of the sub-committee for Toilets, she had not been in attendance at the meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

Councillor Sue Ransome declared that as a Poppy Appeal Organiser and also as Secretary of the Royal British Legion Boston and District Branch she would take no part in either the deliberation or determination of item within the second report on the agenda that sought committee's agreement to release funds which had been ring-fenced for 1914-1918 projects.

**41 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions were tabled.

**42 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME**

A member of the public questioned how much police time was being spent on removing anti-social behaviour activity and addressing issues of drunkenness within Central Park, following the decision to leave the gates open over night: how many incidents had taken

place during the time since the gates were left open and finally what was the cost to the police for the additional activity. The Head of Place and Space confirmed that whilst he was aware of one incident in respect of vandalism to the Pavilion there had not been a significant increase in anti social behaviour but would seek clarification and revert.

#### **43 POLICING ISSUES - STANDING ITEM**

Inspector Morrice was unable to attend.

#### **44 BTAC SMALL GRANT SCHEME**

The Local Communities Development Officer presented the report to the committee and confirmed that two applications had been received in Round 2 of the scheme and each of which had been considered eligible by the BTAC Small Grants Sub-Group at its recent meeting.

Alongside the application committee were also asked to agree the release of funding of £1385.00 which had been ring fenced by the committee for the 1914 – 1918 commemorations.

##### **Application 1.**

Committee were provided with a simple overview of the first application by Boston Community Tennis Partnership and following debate which whilst acknowledging the benefit of the subject under application, concerns were raised by a number of members at the lack of detail in respect of the specific funding attributed to volunteers and helpers expenses with requests being made for a clearer breakdown of what that funding was actually for.

A number of *suggestions* were made for resolution of the application including one which would delegate power to the Officer to determine the application if they felt the additional information was deemed acceptable, but members still felt they needed sight of the information.

It was moved and seconded that the application be deferred to allow the additional information to be sourced and the updated report returned in full to the next committee. The motion was carried.

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the application be deferred for one month to allow the Local Communities Development Officer to source the detailed information to support the funds to be allocated for volunteers and helpers expenses, and that the updated report be returned to the committee at its next meeting scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 for final determination.

##### **Application 2.**

Committee were provided with a simple overview of the second application by Boston Borough Council Community Safety Team. Recognising that both projects noted within the application would be of benefit to the town, members voiced some questions and concern. One member questioned why funding had not been sourced either from the Controlling Migration Fund which had significantly more finances than BTAC, whilst

another questioned if the emergency services including Army Recruitment which again was well funded compared to BTAC and who would be attending the Blue Lights event, had been approached for funds to support the event.

Officers advised that whilst the Controlling Migration Fund had delivered the funds requested for the new Anti-Social Behaviour Officer post, that funding did not include additional funds for the officer to take their role forward: it was the Officer's responsibility to seek the funding.

Unable to confirm if the emergency services had or had not been approached for funding, the officer stated she felt that the invitation to attend had been 'in-kind' and it was the support of the services at the event itself which was the priority for the team.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted in line with the officer's recommendation. The motion was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

That the application be granted.

**Part 3 of the item.**

*It is recorded that Councillor Sue Ransome took no part in the deliberation or determination of this item.*

Members were reminded that the committee had at its meeting on the 28 March 2018 ring-fenced monies to ensure it would be able to support the 1914-1918 commemorations by purchasing suitable commemorative items for Boston including WW1 'tommy silhouettes' and event poppies for lamp posts.

It is recorded that a member questioned the Chairman in respect of their involvement with the Poppy Appeal and the Chairman referred the member to the declaration of interest she had made at the beginning of the meeting confirming she would abstain from the item.

Whilst the committee overwhelmingly agreed its support of the request, acknowledging the importance of the event and of the need for Boston to respect it and ensure the town be suitably decorated, a concern was noted that previous event poppies had been lost. A further concern was noted by a member in respect of no. 5 Bridge Street in Boston which had a Memorial Plaque on its facade which was in need of cleaning and restoration but appeared to be ignored. Officers confirmed that they were aware of it and that the owner, who would need to give consent to any work being undertaken, was providing difficult to trace. A member of the public who worked with the British Legion confirmed that it too had tried to make contact with the owner who proved very elusive with the only information being the owner was a 'The Boston Friendly Society'. Councillor Anton Dani confirmed he would take measures to try to track down the owners and he would advise the British Legion should he be able to do so.

**RESOLVED:** That the ring-fenced funding of £1.385 be released to permit the purchase of the items for the 1914-1918 commemorations.

The motion was carried. The Chairman did not vote on this item

**45 FINANCIAL REPORT - STANDING ITEM**

The Head of place and Space tabled the report. No questions were table and members noted the report.

#### **46 UPDATE ON WORK OF BTAC OPERATIVES**

The Head of Place and Space referenced the pictures provided within item 4 of the papers and confirmed that activity across the town was ongoing with the operatives undertaking a wide manner of repairs and refurbishments providing whilst also providing ongoing maintenance to sustain the improvements already achieved. New bike racks had been installed; brickwork repaired; painting of railings and barriers was ongoing and new signage was being installed including outside Central Park to advertise the events on offer. Furthermore the memorial gardens had been thoroughly cleaned with new lighting added and new rubbish bins in readiness for the 2014-2018 commemorations. In conclusion members were advised that all of the operatives took great pride in their work: they were conscious of the results on impact on the town and because of their high visibility they were often thanked for the work they did by members of the public.

A member questioned why flower planters had not been installed along West Street and also why the flowers and shrubs that were growing out of the top and down the sides of the Council office's had not been removed. Officers confirmed that the property team were aware of the growth from the top and sides of the Council offices and its removal would be undertaken, however, scheduling was taking time as removal would require not only a cherry picker but also closure of part of the street which took time to secure from highways.

Further concern was noted that although the work within the town centre was providing great results and a focus was obviously needed on that area, other areas of BTAC also had areas requiring attention. The member was reminded of the dedicated email address for Councillors to use to report issues and a number of members confirmed that it worked very well with the incidents from the email being relayed direct to the operative which resulted in a quick direct response at the site of the issue. The committee had agreed the implementation of the dedicated email address and it had worked very well. Another member suggested that the member carry a map of the area around with him and highlight any issue on the map to remind them: when they returned home they simply had to email the request for assistance in via the email.

With no resolution required members noted the report.

#### **47 PROPOSAL FOR THE REUSE OF LITTER BINS IN THE BTAC AREA**

The Head of Place and Space referred members back to their meeting of 20 June 2018 when they agreed the replacement of the litter bins in various areas of the town. New bins had been purchased and the installation of the bins would be implemented by the town centre operatives.

The report sought committee approval of refurbishment of the bins due for replacements; re-issue of those bins to replace bins outside of the designated town centre area and their agreement to a £1000 budget to be used for consumables. Again refurbishment work would be carried out by the town centre operatives. The refurbished bins would only be installed in BTAC wards and in areas where cigarette littering was not considered a primary source of litter. For confirmation members were reminded that there were 375 bins located within the 8 BTAC wards and the re-use of the old bins would not increase that existing provision: they would simply be

replacement bins and not additional bins and they would be serviced, emptied and refurbished by the environmental Operations team.

It is recorded that Councillor Yvonne Stevens absented from the meeting at this point in the proceedings and did not return.

Member commented included a suggestion that a public consultation be carried out to determine where the members of BTAC wanted their bins to be and that any implementation of the bins should be postponed until such a consultation had taken place. This would provide a report of the areas in need of bins. Another member stressed the need of measuring distance between bins before putting the new ones in to ensure there were readily available bins within easy reach for the public in all areas. There was overall recognition that the new bins were of a good design and strength and that it was hoped they would be used and the suggestion made that maybe they be signposted more to encourage use. A number of members started to table requests for implementation of the new bins in specific areas and the Chairman reminded them that the bins were replacement and not additional bins. Further questions sought confirmation of what the onward costs for the bins should they be used as additional and not replacement bins. It was further suggested that the bins could be used in addition if BTAC could stand the onward costs and a request made for a report identifying those costs was tabled.

It was moved and seconded that the application be granted in line with the officer's recommendation and that a report be produced at tabled identifying the onward costs of using the replacement bins as additional bins. He motion was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- **That committee approve re-use of the refurbished bins being removed during the replacement programme and agree the budget of £1000 for consumables**

**That a report be produced and tabled to the committee identifying the onward costs for use of the bins as additional and not replacement.**

**48 SUB GROUP REPORT ON BTAC ASSETS - PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

Reminding committee of the tour of assets undertaken on 20 June 2018, the Head of Place and Space advised that an outcome from that had been the convention of the sub-group to investigate matters in greater detail in respect of the current provision of public conveniences. A meeting was held by the group on 23 August where they undertook a tour of the current facilities and a further meeting was held with the Chairman and Secretary of the Boston Disability forum on the 4 September together with himself and the Head of Operations.

Priorities had been identified for each site to both improve and secure the facilities and following the meeting with the Disability Forum it had been agreed to close the disabled facilities in the evening, which had been subject to damage; anti-social activity and rough sleepers for a long time.

It had been agreed that closing the disabled facilities at the same time as the others would ensure they were clean and useable when opened for use the following morning. Whilst there was the requirement to access the facilities with a RADAR Key which had initially been only for disabled residents, it had been identified that both taxi and coach

drivers also had keys and the facilities were now being left open all night making them vulnerable and open to abuse on a very regular basis.

Member comment opened with concerns about the cost of some of the goods required for the refurbishment, in particular the taps and the flooring for the Lincoln Lane site. Reassurance was given that the sensor taps currently used were being replaced and the type required needed to be industrial for commercial use: domestic taps would not provide the requisite level of wear and tear level required. It was further recognised that with the cost being over the £10000 threshold for BTAC to agree, that Cabinet would be making the decision and as such the suggestion made that additional costings and options of products be sourced ahead of the report going to Cabinet.

The Chairman invited representatives from the Boston Disability Forum who had been consulted during the sub-groups review, to address the committee. They reiterated the comments of the members in that the use of the Radar Key was no use as it was so widely available and stressed that none of their members expected or wanted to be treated any differently from other members of the public. Committee were advised that many disabled people did not go out in the evening: they were vulnerable and most visited the town during the daytime when it was necessary to have the facilities clean and in working order.

Further member comment questioned the use of swipe cards and asked if a report could be tabled identifying the costs, however it was pointed out that would only benefit residents of the town and not visitors. A further suggestion noted that it may a good idea to have stickers on the closed toilets identifying where the all night open sites were but caution was urged in that dispersal of anti social activity to the late sites should not be encouraged.

It was moved and seconded that committee agree and recommend to Cabinet that they grant the expenditure from the unallocated reserve sum of £12,550 to complete the works before the end of the financial year and that prior to the report being considered by cabinet, further costings and options of products to be used, be sought.

The motion was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- **That committee agree and recommend to Cabinet that they grant the expenditure from the unallocated reserve sum of £12,550 to allow completion of the works prior to the end of the financial year**
- **That prior to the report being presented to Cabinet, officer source optional costings and products for inclusion within the report.**

**49 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM**

The following suggestions were made for reporting through the committee:

A report was requested in respect of mixed use housing following recent issues. Councillor Gleeson advised that such a report would need to be tabled through the Corporate and Community Scrutiny Committee.

It was agreed following discussion under item 6 that a report would be produced advising the onward costs for the litter bins currently identified as replacement bins, should the decision be made to use them as additional bins for the town instead.

A member requested an update on the current position of the Into Town Bus Service be provided by the operator, following their previous attendance when they addressed the re-routing of the buses away from the market place.

Various items in respect of policing issues were discussed with the following items being agreed:

1. A report to be produced advising the impact on the police by leaving the gates open at Central Park. In particular the report should identify additional incidents and time incurred by the police over the hours when the park had been previously closed.
2. That a letter be produced on behalf of BTAC and sent to the area supervisor or ACC stating that if Inspector Morrice was unable to attend a meeting, a representative on his behalf, attend instead. It was a standing item on the agenda and questions arose at each meeting in respect of policing matters.
3. Due to grave concerns in respect of serious issues of safety within the town centre in the evening, coupled with the potential future cuts to policing within the County, Lincolnshire Crime Commissioner Mr Marc Jones be requested to attend a meeting of the committee to identify how such potential future cuts to policing would further impact on Boston. In the event that Mr Jones be unable to attend then a Chief Officer from Lincolnshire Headquarters be requested to attend on his behalf.

Following initial representation by the Into Town Bus operator in respect of potential re-routing of the services away from the market place, members sought an update on the operator's intent for its future routing, being mindful of the committee's overwhelming support and request for the re-routing.

Referencing the issue of homelessness in the town and the rough sleepers refusing assistance and sleeping / living in shop doorways, members sought a report on the current situation; the procedures and laws in place and how Boston could resolve such issues. It was agreed that a report would be requested through the Scrutiny Corporate and Community committee with an invitation to all members to attend.

The Meeting ended at 8.30 pm