

Skegness Town Council



BUSINESS PLAN

2019-2023

*"Taking Control,
Taking
Responsibility"*

Contents

HEADING	PAGE
Introduction	3
Community Involvement in the Business Plan Process	3
Skegness – The Current Situation	4
Overview	5
Management Structure	5
Corporate Vision, Aims and Objectives	7
Financial Information	7
The Council Functions	9
Monitoring the Business Plan	12
Forward Budgets	12
Skegness Town Council - Action Plan	12

1. INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of the Business Plan?

This Business Plan sets out how Skegness Town Council will work for the people of Skegness. It sets out our mission, objectives and key priorities.

It is our action plan for the next five years, but sets out ambitions over a longer period.

The Business Plan sets the direction and other Town Council strategies, policies and procedures will be guided by the plan. It is a rolling five-year plan that allows the Council to adapt and change in a controlled and systematic way, growing to meet the changing needs of the Community, the changing pressures from other strategic plans and government legislation.

It will influence how we design and deliver services, allocate our resources and achieve value for money.

The plan sets out how we propose to achieve our longer-term vision and outcomes and specifies the priorities and actions we plan to deliver during the next 5 years.

In putting together this plan, Councillors have reflected on the view of local communities and have taken account of priorities set elsewhere in the local and national context.

2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE BUSINESS PLAN PROCESS

To ensure that the Business Plan truly represents the best interest of the Town, the outputs from consultation on the Community Led Plan in 2015, the Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation in 2017, feedback relating to existing projects (e.g. Tower Gardens and Asset transfer) and general comments received from other community consultation have all been used to help formulate this plan.

Skegness Town Council has developed an effective Community Engagement Policy and is ensuring continued engagement through its website, through social media using Facebook, Twitter and most recently Instagram and through monthly public meetings, newsletters and traditional noticeboards. This document is published on the Council's website where feedback, comments and suggestions are encouraged.

3. SKEGNESS – THE CURRENT SITUATION

Skegness is one of the main towns and centres of population within the District of East Lindsey in Lincolnshire. Skegness has a population of around 20,000 but this swells dramatically during summer months, as visitors come to the town.

Skegness is one of the UK's top 5 tourist destinations and has a strong national brand image. The success of the Skegness economy depends largely on tourism both to the town and to wider East Coast attractions. The Foreshore (owned by East Lindsey District Council) is a major asset for the town and one of the main drivers of the local economy.

The town faces several challenges. A significant proportion of the Skegness employment market is low wage and seasonal through a relatively short tourist season. The town and surrounding area has also become an attractive retirement area, with relatively low house prices and owned static caravans being used as comparatively cheap accommodation almost year-round. This puts pressure on local service provision and funding.

There is pressure on the affordable housing market. Few new properties have been made available, but demand from both within the town and from those wishing to relocate from midland towns/cities is increasing in certain parts of the housing market.

Climate change and the impact on sea levels pose a risk of major flooding if the sea defences are overcome. Currently the town is reasonably well protected, but uncertainty over future resourcing of sea defences beyond the next few years will need to be addressed by the Environment Agency.

As in many towns, the number of town centre shoppers has declined following loss of major stores and as people's shopping habits change. 2018 has seen the loss of several major retail chains nationally and this is a concerning trend. Often businesses have not yet adapted to the changing demands and this has resulted in some vacant units or change from retail to financial services and charity shops. Landlords are also facing a changing environment and nationally have been slow to adapt, still wanting premium rents in a declining market. The town faces the same challenges as other areas in finding ways to, maintain vitality in the town centre, provide services for local people and keep the town centre bright and attractive.

Access to the town is relatively difficult with a poor-quality road network with access to the Country's core road network more than an hour away. This presents a barrier to new industries that require easy distribution of raw materials and products.

There is however a large untapped working population that if activated could drive growth in the local economy forward. Skegness' location also presents unique potential for new attractions and experiences with the potential to increase the Skegness season and attract a new sector of tourists. There is also the potential for the Town to become a centre for conferences, conventions and corporate activities.

Skegness is also part of the Coastal Business Improvement District project which will raise £2.5m over 5 years for local investment in the coastal strip, plus potentially other inward investment. The company set up to deliver this is developing projects to support the local coastal economy, including events, displays and practical support for the business community through best practice and procurement opportunities.

4. OVERVIEW OF SKEGNESS TOWN COUNCIL

The Council is made up of 21 Councillors are elected every four years, with the next planned elections due in May 2019. Its offices are currently in the Town Hall on North Parade.

The Council has a Town Mayor (in the role of Chairman of the Council) and a Deputy. The holders to these positions are elected each year at the Annual Council Meeting.

There are three main Committees that meet regularly, Planning and Planning Policy, Direction and Strategy and Business and Resources. Additionally, there is an HR Committee which meets as and when business dictates.

Task and Finish Groups are formed from time to time to undertake specific time limited tasks and projects.

Council usually meets at 7.15pm once per month in the Council Chamber at Skegness Town Hall. Committees also meet regularly throughout the year. Council and Committee meetings are usually open to the public and at scheduled Council meetings, time is set aside both before and during the meeting, for public speaking.

5. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

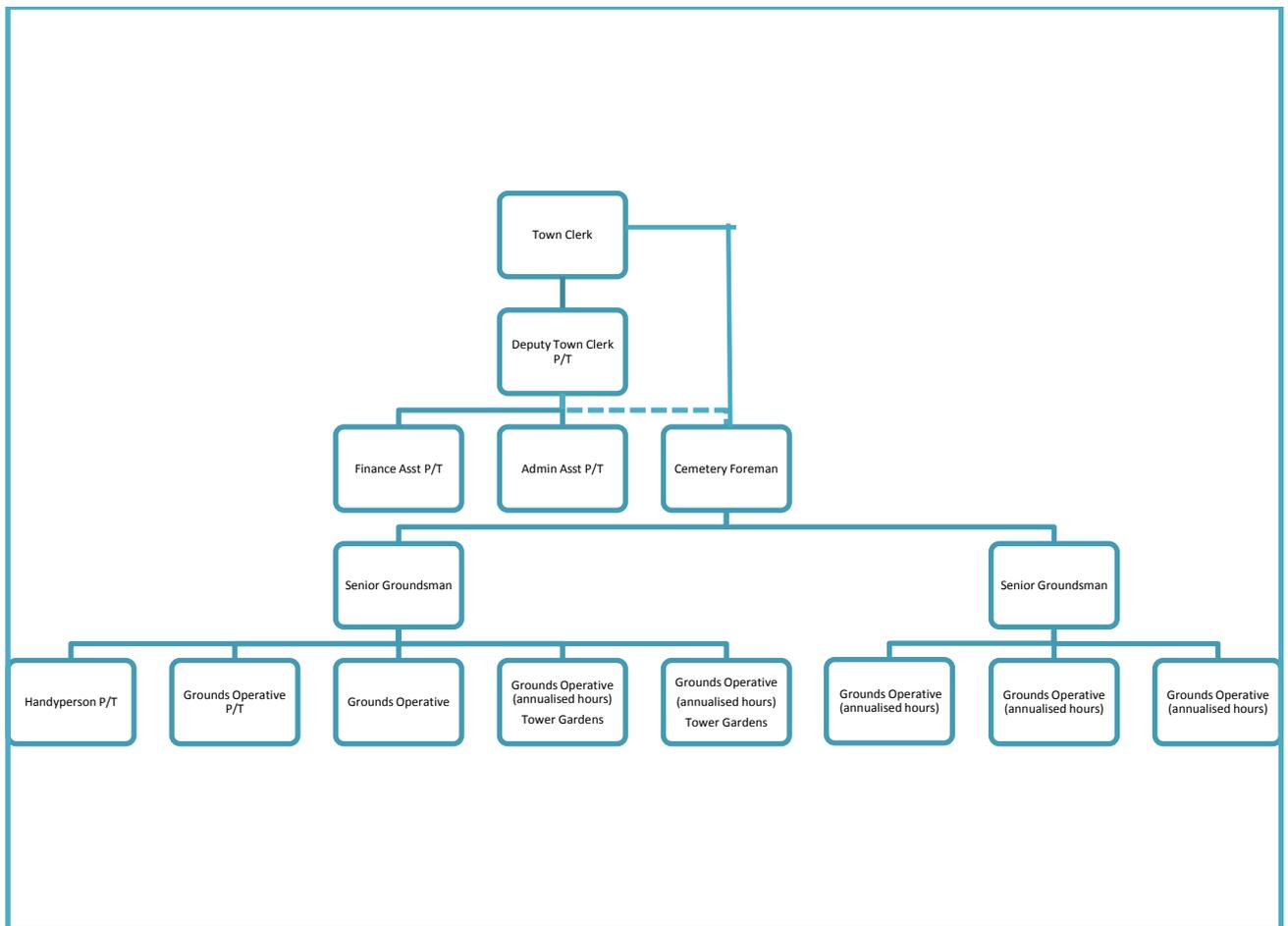
The administration of the Town Council is managed by a qualified Town Clerk who is appointed by the Council. The Town Clerk is required to carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's Proper Officer and to issue all statutory notifications. The Town Clerk also acts as the designated

Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and advises the Council on legal, financial and policy matters.

The Town Clerk is supported by a qualified part time Deputy Town Clerk who is responsible and has delegated authority when the Town Clerk is absent and who oversees some of the project work. A part time Finance Assistant and a part time Admin Assistant complete the Office Team.

The Cemetery Foreman has day to day operational responsibility for the Cemetery and maintenance of the Council's other Public Property, including a playground, allotments, amenity verge cutting and various planters. He is assisted by a small team of Groundsmen and a Handyman.

A diagram of the current Management Structure (Jan 2019)



6. CORPORATE VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The vision for the future of Skegness Town is:

A forward thinking, vibrant town that is known for its welcome and customer service and being a good place to live and raise a family. An attractive coastal town that has traditional values, but which has diversified to become a premier resort with year-round tourist attractions, emerging and mixed commercial interest, job opportunities, excellent further education colleges and that builds on its own distinctive identity acting as the hub for surrounding towns and villages facilitated by an improved infrastructure for easy access to the resort via rail and road.

The Town Council's aim is to improve the quality of life for the residents of Skegness and develop the local economy. To achieve this, we will:

- Engage with the residents to better understand their needs, and in turn explain how we will address these needs within the resources and powers available to the Town Council.
- Create positivity – Promote the positive, tackle the negative to create a great town, a good place to live, work and visit where aspirations can be achieved and the future is bright.
- Provide good quality, cost-effective services to help meet the needs and wishes of residents.
- Pursue a clean, bright, attractive and safe environment, a place of pride.
- Engage, assist and encourage other bodies, voluntary organisations and partners to provide services that support the Council's aims.
- Promote the best interests of the town for the betterment of the local community.

Our corporate objectives are:

- A. To encourage, develop and promote the economic and mixed commercial vitality and positivity of the town by encouraging the development of activities throughout the year for both locals and visitors and the development of new industries.
- B. To lobby, consult, improve links with and listen to comments received from other statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and individuals to ensure improving standards of service that meet with local needs.
- C. To work with partners to create and sustain a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents and seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual co-operation.
- D. To champion the provision of sufficient suitable affordable homes for the people with local connections to Skegness, whilst safeguarding the environment in and around Skegness from inappropriate development to maintain it for future generations.

- E. To create a healthy positive community by helping residents to have access to social, recreational and cultural facilities within the Town and to seek the continuing improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents.
- F. To work with others to protect the town and its residents from the impact of environmental change, including climate change.
- G. Ensure the Town Council is efficient, skilled and uses novel ways, within its powers, to provide services in the most efficient and effective way.
- H. Prioritise discussions with ELDC/LCC and make proposals to take on more locally provided services.
- I. Improve the corporate image of the Council and promote democracy.
- J. The development of a Community Hub and Heritage Centre incorporating a new Council Offices with combined community and business facilities.
- K. Lobby to improve strategic traffic management, road and rail infrastructure.

7. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

General

The budgeted annual revenue expenditure for the Council 2019/2020 is £479,396 plus £218,694 specifically related to the delivery of objectives within Business Plan. This will be funded from the Council's precept, fees, from revenue earning assets, with some one-off costs funded from reserves.

The precept is the local tax levied by the Town Council and which is collected on our behalf by East Lindsey District Council as the rating authority. The Town Council's five-year business plan will seek to provide details of its future spending in order that residents can receive an indication of what the precept will be in future years.

- The Council set a gross precept of £435,637 in 2018/2019 and a gross precept of £469,290 for 2019/2020.
- The Council's income for 2019/2020, other than the precept, is expected to be £113,300 made up mainly of cemetery fees and income from the rental income from kiosks transferred by ELDC.
- A Band D Council Tax Payer will pay £83.07 per annum for Town Council services in 2019/2020 and a Band A Tax Payer will pay £55.66 per annum.

Capital Expenditure and Finance

Capital expenditure will need to be balanced between the sustainability and development of existing assets and the provision of new assets to meet the Council's objectives.

Capital expenditure will be financed where possible using specific earmarked reserves or revenue contributions. This year a decision to borrow to fund the building of the community building in Tower Gardens has been taken. The

borrowing will be drawn down as it is required to pay the building instalments. It may also be necessary to rent or lease assets. Decisions will be taken at the appropriate time to ensure the most appropriate and cost efficient financing options are considered and taken.

Reserves

The Council will adopt a risk based approach to its levels of reserves which will be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. The Council determined that the minimum level of General Reserves should be set at approximately three months gross operating costs. This could have an impact on service levels or the precept. When considering the medium-term financial position over 5 years, the Council decided to increase General Reserves over this period and progress towards achieving this will be reviewed each year at budget setting time.

Other reserves will be held for specific, earmarked purposes. Risk assessed use of earmarked reserves can assist in keeping general (unspecified) reserves to a lower level than would otherwise be needed.

Allowances

Elected Councillors are able to claim an allowance for their duties which is currently set at £500 per annum. A separate amount of £2400 is provided for civic events and a further £2880 proportion of this is paid direct to the Mayor each month by way of an allowance. All allowances are paid through payroll with appropriate deductions for National Insurance and Income Tax.

8. THE COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

For the purpose of the accounts, the Council's activities are divided into headings so that expenditure and budgets can be analysed.

The responsibilities and objectives for each of these services are detailed below. In order to achieve some of these aspirations, partnership funding may be sought for capital projects where appropriate.

Employee Costs

This is the total direct costs relating to the employment of all staff. The introduction and proposed changes to the National Living Wage means that Employee costs are expected to continue to increase in the period to 2022. It is also anticipated that the number of employee hours will increase across this period to cope with the additional workloads, Council projects and increased regulation. The previous 1% pay cap on public sector pay ended and the impact of the National Living Wage on the pay structure has seen an increase of around 9% for lower paid workers.

Town Hall Offices

This is the provision of the Council's Office accommodation and Civic rooms.

- The Council intends to move to its own multi-use accommodation, in January 2020, that will form a part of a community building in Tower Gardens. The current accommodation lease runs until March 2019. Council agreed to renew the existing lease but with a 6 month termination notice period.

Supplies and Services

This represents general office administration. In the future the Council will:

- Continue to develop the use of technology with more reliance on cloud based technologies.
- Continue the move away from paper based systems
- Continue to develop Councillors to become "technically enabled".
- Continue to review policies and procedures to ensure that the Council is run in a legal and business-like manner

Professional Fees

As well as belonging to professional associations, from time to time the Council purchases expertise that it does not retain in-house.

Grants and Donations

The Council provides grants to a variety of local groups and organisations to support and encourage community activities. In future years the Council will:

- Continue to provide grants for local organisations in the Town.
- Encourage local organisations to find sustainable income, rather than rely on grants for operating costs, and to develop the community services they provide.

Democratic & Civic

Elected Councillors are paid an allowance and the Mayor gets an additional allowance for performing civic duties. The Council will:

- Keep under review the civic roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the process of selection and the duties.
- Ensure Chairmen are appropriately trained to ensure all meetings run efficiently and effectively.

Publicity and Marketing

This has been narrowed over recent years to be publicity directly relating to Council Services together with the provision of the Christmas lighting in the town centre. In the future the Council will:

- Seek to become more involved in the development, organisation, coordination and publication of events
- Continue to encourage local businesses to work in partnership to fund the marketing of the area as a major tourist destination.
- Seek to work with other public sector organisations to ensure that any public money available is appropriately targeted.
- Encourage businesses and other organisations to contribute to the development of a Christmas display and offering that covers a wider area and has greater impact.

Industrial Units

This is the provision of accommodation relating to the Councils grounds maintenance and public property functions. In the future the Council will:

- Keep running costs under review and seek to move to combined accommodation if appropriate.

Allotments

The Council provides allotment gardens to enable local people to grow fruit and vegetables for their own consumption. In the future the Council will:

- Undertake regular inspections to ensure that allotments are being cultivated and take enforcement action where appropriate.
- Continue to market allotments where more than 5% fall vacant

Garden and Baskets

The Council provides summer hanging baskets in Lumley Road and maintains the gardens in the central reservation of Castleton Boulevard. In the future the Council will:-

- Maintain the number of containers on Castleton Boulevard and hanging baskets in Lumley Road to deliver all year round displays.
- Work with East Lindsey District Council to safeguard the summer planting.

Sunshine Play Area

The Council provides an enclosed play area adjacent to Pier Field. In the future the Council intend to return this leased land to ELDC and take over responsibility of 3 play areas in Alma Ave, Church Lane and Tower Gardens.

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

The Council provides the town cemetery located next to St Mary's Church Winthorpe and also maintains the closed church yard at St Clements' Church. In the future the Council will:

- Undertake other sensitive improvements to the cemetery including the planting of additional trees to provide wind shelter and protection.

- Investigate the longer-term potential to provide commercially chargeable services.
- Ensure long term sustainability by ensuring only approved memorials to BS 8415 are installed and that cemetery regulations are observed.

General Public Property

The Council uses a range of vehicles, equipment, tools and materials to maintain all its public property assets. It also provides CCTV within the town in partnership with ELDC and other Towns and Parishes. In the future the Council will:

- Continue to maintain a comprehensive asset register to include condition and the maintenance programme for Council assets
- Regularly review equipment and assets to ensure they are meeting requirements and provide the most cost effective solution.

9. MONITORING THE BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan will be monitored at the quarterly Business & Resources meetings where progress against the objectives in the Action Plan (appendix B) will be evaluated and reported to Council. The plan will be regularly updated and residents will be able to monitor progress through the website, hard copies are available to view in the Town Council Office. If you require any further information that would help you understand the objectives within the Business Plan, please contact Skegness Town Council office.

10. FORWARD BUDGETS

The table below sets out the Council's Forward Revenue and Capital Budgets with links to specific Business Plan Objectives.

The revenue budget is mainly funded from the precept but other income is derived from fees, charges, interest on investments and small amounts of miscellaneous income.

The capital budget is usually funded from the revenue budget contributions or reserves. In 2019/20 the community building in Tower Gardens is being funded through borrowing. All projects requiring external funding are shown as unfunded until the funding is secured.

Where it has been agreed that business plan actions are to be funded from revenue the amounts have been built into the base budget. Where these are dependent on other factors (e.g. a borrowing) they are separately identified. Where funding for the revenue item is not yet quantified or secured this is shown on the Council Action Plan and no cost is shown in the budget at this stage. These will be added as and when the amounts are agreed and commitment obtained.

Skegness Town Council
Draft Budget for the Year Ended 31st March 2020

	BUDGET 2019/20 £	FORECAST 2020/21 £	FORECAST 2021/22 £	FORECAST 2022/23 £
Total Employee Costs	271,119	277,774	283,329	288,996
Total Town Hall Offices Costs	9,590	-	-	-
Total Supplies & Services Costs	18,470	18,445	18,570	18,595
Total Professional Fees Costs	62,517	4,300	4,100	4,100
Total Grants and Donations Costs	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
Total Democratic and Civic Costs	36,630	20,730	20,730	20,730
Total Publicity and Marketing Costs	18,800	18,800	18,800	18,800
Total Industrial Unit Costs	15,800	15,520	15,535	16,500
Total Allotment Costs	750	850	850	850
Total Allotment Income	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150
Total Public Property Costs	41,220	41,470	41,670	41,870
Total Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Income	43,500	45,000	45,000	46,500
TOTAL BUSINESS PLAN REVENUE EXPENDITURE	218,694	229,636	250,653	255,112
TOTAL BUSINESS PLAN INCOME	60,000	86,370	93,740	93,740
Total General Income	6,650	6,400	6,400	6,400
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	698,090	632,025	658,737	670,053
TOTAL INCOME (NOT INCL PRECEPT)	113,300	140,920	148,290	149,790
NET EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME	584,790	491,105	510,447	520,263
Transfer into General Reserves	-	500	4,500	5,000
Transfer from General Reserves	-	-	-	-
Transfer from Earmarked Reserves	115,500			
Precept needed	469,290	491,605	514,947	525,263
Band D Tax Base	5,649	5,649	5,649	5,649
Cost per Band D	£ 83.07	£ 87.03	£ 91.16	£ 92.98
Increase	£ 3.77	£ 3.95	£ 4.13	£ 1.83
Increased cost per week	£ 0.07	£ 0.08	£ 0.08	£ 0.04
Percentage Increase	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	2.00%

11. SKEGNESS TOWN COUNCIL - ACTION PLAN (see appendix)

For more information about the Council please see: -

www.skegness.gov.uk



@SkegnessCouncil



#skegnesstowncouncil