

Skegness Town Council



BUSINESS PLAN

2017-2021

*"Taking Control,
Taking
Responsibility"*

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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 long-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 actions resulting from consultation on the Community Led Plan and Tower Pavilion Project along with comments received from other community consultation have been brought together to help formulate this plan. Further consultation will take place within the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and will be incorporated in the Business Plan through the monitoring and review process.

Skegness Town Council has developed an effective Community Engagement Policy and is ensuring continued engagement through Social Media using Facebook and Twitter along with 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 22,000 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 a number of 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 in particular 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.

As in many towns, the number of town centre shoppers has declined following loss of major stores and as people turn to internet shopping. 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. 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.

At the time of writing Skegness is also part of the Coastal Business Improvement District project which aims to raise a 1.5% levy and raise £2.5m over 5 years for local investment in the coastal strip. There is a vote of businesses in the area and the result will be known in April 2017.

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 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.

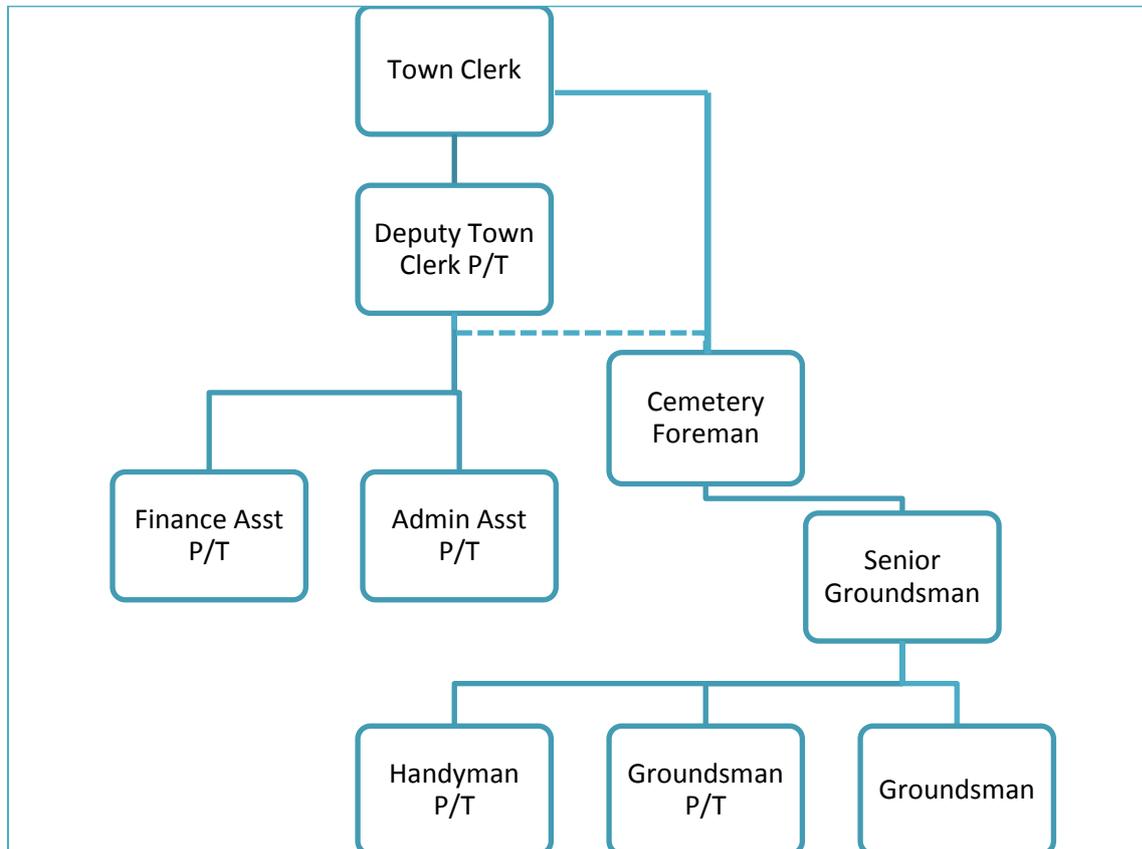
5. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

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 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 the Sunshine Playground, Allotments and Castleton Boulevard Gardens. He is assisted by a small team of Groundsmen and a Handyman.

A diagram of the current Management Structure (NB proposals may change this)



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.

Our longer term aspirations for the Town include projects for which there is no current budget but for which funding is being sought. These aspirations include, but are not limited to, the following projects.

- 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 expenditure for the Council 2017/2018 is £450,015. This is funded from the Council's precept, grant funding and income from service fees.

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 £317,770 in 2016/2017 and a gross precept of £403,837 for 2017/2018.
- The Council's income for 2017/2018, other than the precept, is expected to be £46,178 mainly derived from cemetery services.
- A Band D Council Tax Payer will pay £75.71 per annum for Town Council services in 2017/2018.

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 through the use of specific earmarked reserves or revenue contributions. Additionally, it may be necessary to borrow to finance expenditure or 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. Currently, the minimum level of General Reserves is set at approximately three months gross operating costs. However, in the future, information from the Government Finance Settlement indicate that "Referendum Principles" may

apply to Parish and Town Councils. If this is the case, the Council may have to set its minimum reserve levels higher to ensure that inflationary pressures can be smoothed over the medium term to avoid a referendum being triggered by inflation. This could have an impact on service levels or the precept.

Reserves will only be held above the minimum level for specific, earmarked purposes.

Allowances

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 will 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 increase in the period to 2021. It is also anticipated that the number of employee hours will increase across this period to cope with the additional workloads from additional workloads, Council projects and increased regulation.

Town Hall Offices

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

- The Council has ambition to acquire its own multi use accommodation that can also be accessed and utilised by the community. The current lease runs until 2019 but can be terminated by either party with 12 months' notice.

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

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 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.

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 will:

- Work with the Police to review methods of reducing the problem of vandalism.
- Refresh paint and signage when required

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 potential to provide commercially chargeable services.
- Clean the town's war memorials and mark 100 years since the end of the First World War.
- 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:

- Improve the 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 and charges, interest on investments and small amounts of miscellaneous income.

The capital budget is mainly funded from revenue budget contributions or reserves. Some capital projects are dependent on external funding (i.e. grants). These 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 successful capital grant bid) 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.

BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY ORIGINAL BUDGET						
Revenue Budget Group						
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Expenditure:	Actual (£)	Budget (£)				
Employee Costs	182,425	174,113	229,702	237,816	246,406	252,288
Premises -Town Hall	12,062	13,184	13,298	13,511	-	-
Premises -Units	8,718	8,365	8,141	8,304	-	-
Supplies and Services	20,762	18,057	16,275	17,116	17,169	17,631
Professional Fees	8,745	3,800	3,600	3,672	3,745	3,820
Grants and Donations	6,120	11,600	5,100	5,100	5,100	5,100
Section 137	-	-	-	-	-	-
Democratic and Civic	16,885	20,580	20,580	20,600	20,620	20,641
Publicity and Marketing	19,981	22,150	25,200	25,704	26,218	26,742
Allotments	1,080	800	800	816	832	849
Gardens and Baskets	2,170	2,800	2,800	2,856	2,913	2,971
Sunshine Play Area	1,805	4,690	1,790	1,826	4,862	4,900
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	2,568	7,400	2,600	2,648	7,697	7,747
Public Property (General)	27,354	35,130	32,130	32,303	35,479	35,658
Business Plan Objective J	-	30,000	4,000	12,500	257,323	216,771
Revenue contribution to Capital Programme	-	-	70,001	70,000	-	-
Net Revenue Contribution to Reserves	17,544	8,001	38,999	22,999	-	-
TOTAL REVENUE EXPENDITURE	328,219	360,670	475,015	477,771	628,364	595,118
Funded by:						
Interest Received	767	1,200	650	1,200	1,200	1,200
Grave Fees (exclusive rights)	13,113	15,000	15,000	15,300	15,606	15,918
Interment and Grave Digging Fees	17,516	14,200	15,312	15,618	15,931	16,249
Memorial Permits and Licenses	11,290	5,000	7,500	7,650	7,803	7,959
Allotment Rents	2,955	2,940	2,940	2,940	2,940	2,940
Churchyard Service Charges	4,255	4,460	4,676	4,770	4,865	4,962
Miscellaneous Income	30,545	100	25,100	100	100	100
Business Plan Objective J Income	-	-	-	-	65,001	65,109
Precept	247,778	317,770	403,837	430,193	453,920	480,681
Use of Reserves	-	-	-	-	60,998	-
TOTAL FUNDS	328,219	360,670	475,015	477,771	628,364	595,118
Capital Budget						
Business Plan Objective:						
A	-	-	-	5,000	-	-
B	-	-	-	-	-	-
C	-	-	-	1,500	-	-
D	-	-	4,000	21,000	-	-
E	-	-	-	1,000	-	-
F	-	-	-	-	-	-
G	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	-	-	-	-	-	-
J	-	-	267,142	3,448,473	312,140	-
K	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	-	-	271,142	3,476,973	312,140	-
Funded by:						
Revenue Contribution to Capital Programme	-	-	70,001	70,000	-	-
Use of Reserves	-	-	4,000	-	99,000	-
TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDS SECURED	-	-	74,001	70,000	99,000	-
Anticipated Grants CCF	-	-	197,141	3,378,473	213,140	-
Anticipated Grants NDP	-	-	-	16,000	-	-
Unfunded as yet	-	-	-	12,500	-	-
TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDS UNSECURED	-	-	197,141	3,406,973	213,140	-
TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDS	-	-	271,142	3,476,973	312,140	-

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

For more information about the Council please see: -

www.skegness.gov.uk



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