

# Skegness Town Council



## FINAL BUSINESS PLAN

2021-2025

***"Building a future  
together"***

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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 this 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 2017-2019, 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. Large scale consultation is a big, resource intensive exercise and so the larger planned consultations of the whole community will be undertaken every 10 years and these will be supplemented by specific targeted consultation in the interim years to explore any major issues that may arise.

Skegness Town Council has a Community Engagement Policy and is ensuring continued engagement through its website, through social media using Facebook, Twitter and 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.

Historically the town has faced 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.

The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic and associated control methods has had a major impact on the town and its current and future prosperity. At the time of writing this plan, the future for the country is uncertain and this is exacerbated in a town such as Skegness.

There continues to be 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 impact of climate change and a potential acceleration of climate change means 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. The last decade has seen the loss of several major retail chains nationally and this is a concerning trend. The Covid-19 lockdown has increased the decline in traditional high street shopping as on-line services rapidly expand. Many businesses are not adapting quickly enough 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 also 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. This however requires those untapped resources to have the necessary skills and training but this has not been available locally, although it is hoped that the Town's Fund may be able to address the provision of local learning and training.

Skegness is also part of the Coastal Business Improvement District project which raises £2.5m over 5 years for local investment in the coastal strip, plus potentially other inward investment. The company set up to deliver this develops 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 who are elected every four years, with the last change being in May 2019. Its offices are now at Tower Gardens Pavilion, Rutland Rd after a move in 2020.

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, although in 2020 Covid-19 disrupted the usual process.

There are two main Committees that meet regularly, Planning and Planning Policy, and Management Committee that considers governance, operational and strategic matters. Additionally, there is an HR Committee which meets as and when business dictates.

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

Council usually meets at 7pm once per month and in due course these meetings will be at the Tower Gardens Pavilion, Rutland Rd, Skegness. 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.

During the Covid-19 lockdown face to face meetings have stopped and use has been made of video conferencing technology to maintain Council business and show meetings live on YouTube.

## **5. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

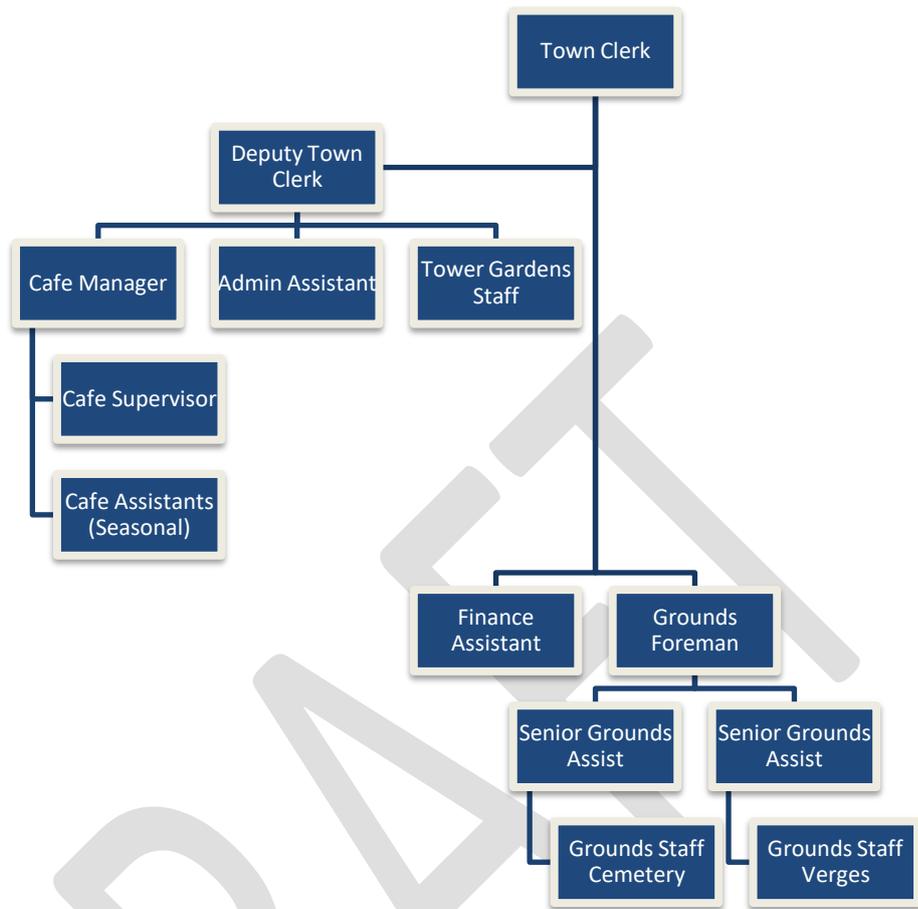
The administration of all Town Council functions is managed by a qualified Town Clerk who is appointed by the Council. The Town Clerk is required to carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's Proper Officer and to issue all statutory notifications. The Town Clerk also acts as the designated Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and advises the Council on legal, financial and policy matters.

The Town Clerk is supported by a part time (80%) fully qualified Deputy Town Clerk who is responsible and has delegated authority when the Town Clerk is unavailable and who leads on some of the project work and is responsible for managing four members of staff. A part time (80%) Finance Assistant and a full time Admin Assistant complete the Office Team.

The Grounds 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 Operatives covering different aspects of the team's work.

The Café Manager is responsible for the operation of Café Dansant and all the associated staff.

**A diagram of the current Management Structure (JUL 2020)**



## 6. CORPORATE VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The vision for the future of Skegness Town is:

***A forward thinking, vibrant town that works together and is known for its welcome, 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 all 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 everyone has the opportunity to achieve a brighter future.
- Provide good quality, cost-effective services to help meet the needs 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 inclusivity and the best interests of the town for the betterment of the local community.
- Ensure an inclusive community by challenging discrimination on any protected characteristic.

### **Our corporate objectives are:**

- A. To inspire, 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. To challenge the idea within the Local Plan that you cannot develop market value housing in Skegness.

- E. To create a healthy positive community by helping residents to have access to social, recreational, cultural, fitness and wellbeing 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 and seek to protect Council assets.
- H. Improve the corporate image of the Council and promote democracy.
- I. To develop a Heritage Centre to celebrate the Town's past, provide a visitor attraction including shop and to display the Council's memorabilia and old photographs.
- J. Lobby to improve strategic traffic management, road and rail infrastructure.
- K. To undertake improvement works in Tower Gardens and other Council land to make them more accessible, inclusive and support the community's health and wellbeing.

## **7. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **General**

The budgeted annual revenue expenditure for the Council 2021/2022 is £665,625. This is 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 £551,284 in 2021/2022.
- The Council's projected income for 2021/2022, other than the precept, is expected to be £114,341 made up mainly of cemetery fees and income from the rental income from kiosks and the Scarbrough Avenue car park. This income is likely to be hit significantly by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council will need to draw on reserves during the year.
- A Band D Council Tax Payer will pay £96.36 per annum for Town Council services in 2021/2022 and a Band A Tax Payer will pay £64.56 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. The Council borrowed to build the Tower Gardens Pavilion. 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 has 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, with two tests set out in the Reserves Policy. 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 to cover the projected additional expenditure and loss of income caused by the pandemic.

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 £2880 per annum is paid direct to the Mayor by way of a monthly 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. To achieve some of these aspirations, partnership or grant 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 total number of employee hours will increase across this period to cope with the additional workloads, Council projects and increased regulation. The previous 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.

## **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” to engage with residents.
- 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 offerings that covers a wider area and has greater impact.

## **Industrial Units**

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

- Keep running costs under review and ensure security arrangements are 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

### **Tower Gardens Pavilion and Gardens**

The Council owns and operates Tower Gardens Pavilion and the gardens. The building includes the community café, the community hall and the Council Offices. In the future the Council will:-

- Continue to develop the gardens and Tower Gardens Pavilion for community use
- Seek to improve the accessibility and usability of the gardens with a project bid to the Towns Fund.
- Improve the entrances and signage
- Support a diverse ecology

### **Scarborough Avenue Car Park**

The Council owns, operates and maintains the Car Park and derives an income.

### **Public Property**

The Council owns, operates and maintains a number of other land areas and other property including:-

- St Mary's Cemetery
- Alma Avenue and Winthorpe play parks
- Various public open space areas around the town
- Vehicles and equipment
- CCTV Cameras
- Benches and bins

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.
- Ensure long term sustainability by ensuring only approved memorials to BS 8415 are installed and that cemetery regulations are observed.

- 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 Management Committee 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. 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 2022

These columns are indicative only and will be subject to change in future years' budgets

	BUDGET 2020/21 £	BUDGET 2021/2022 £	FORECAST 2022/23 £	FORECAST 2023/24 £	FORECAST 2024/25 £
<b>EMPLOYEE COSTS</b>					
Total Employee Costs	357,029	368,050	384,614	394,472	405,081
<b>SUPPLIES &amp; SERVICES</b>					
Total Supplies & Services Costs	23,463	23,680	24,240	24,770	26,480
<b>PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>					
Total Professional Fees Costs	21,071	16,755	11,900	12,300	23,300
<b>GRANTS AND DONATIONS</b>					
Total Grants and Donations Costs	4,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
<b>DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC</b>					
Total Democratic and Civic Costs	16,630	19,230	19,230	19,230	19,230
<b>Publicity and Marketing</b>					
Total Publicity and Marketing Costs	18,800	20,250	20,250	20,250	20,250
<b>INDUSTRIAL UNIT</b>					
Total Industrial Unit Costs	22,400	23,600	23,730	23,860	23,990
<b>ALLOTMENTS</b>					
Total Allotment Income	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150
Total Allotment Costs	750	1,150	1,220	1,300	1,380
Net Income over Expenditure	2,400	2,000	1,930	1,850	1,770
<b>TOWER GARDENS PARK AND BUILDING</b>					
Total Tower Gardens Park and Building Income	51,750	51,750	51,750	51,750	51,750
Total Tower Gardens Park and Building Costs	103,600	103,000	104,300	107,850	108,900
Net Income over Expenditure	- 51,850	- 51,250	- 52,550	- 56,100	- 57,150
<b>SCARBROUGH AVENUE CAR PARK</b>					
Total Scarbrough Avenue Car Park Income	26,500	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
Total Scarbrough Avenue Car Park Costs	6,800	5,750	7,220	11,500	8,180
Net Income over Expenditure	19,700	12,250	10,780	6,500	9,820
<b>PUBLIC PROPERTY AND GROUNDS</b>					
Total Public Property Costs	80,175	81,660	83,420	83,870	84,420
<b>INCOME</b>					
Total Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Income	46,250	31,500	31,500	31,500	31,500
Net Cost Public Property	33,925	50,160	51,920	52,370	52,920
<b>CAPITAL PROJECTS</b>					
	10,000	-	-	-	-
<b>GENERAL INCOME</b>					
Total General Income	10,461	9,941	9,941	9,941	9,941
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	665,218	665,625	682,624	701,902	723,711
<b>TOTAL INCOME (NOT INCL PRECEPT)</b>	138,111	114,341	114,341	114,341	114,341
<b>NET EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME</b>	527,107	551,284	568,283	587,561	609,370
Transfer into General Reserves	5,430	60,000	5,000	5,500	5,500
Transfer from General Reserves	-	-	-	-	-
Provision for Bad Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from Earmarked Reserves	34,500	60,000	-	-	-
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	-	-	-	-	-
Precept needed (Indicative only for 2022/23 on)	498,037	551,284	573,283	593,061	614,870
Band D Tax Base	5,723	5,721	5,721	5,721	5,721
Cost per Band D	£ 87.02	£ 96.36	£ 100.21	£ 103.66	£ 107.48
Increase	£ 3.95	£ 9.34	£ 3.85	£ 3.46	£ 3.81
Increased cost per week	£ 0.08	£ 0.18	£ 0.07	£ 0.07	£ 0.07
Percentage Increase	4.75%	10.73%	3.99%	3.45%	3.68%
<b>RESERVES</b>					
Projected General Reserves (year end)	107,000.00	167,000.00	172,000.00	177,500.00	183,000.00
<b>Ear Marked Reserves</b>					
Cemetery Extension	60,000.00	-	-	-	-
Neighbourhood Plan	24,000.00	-	-	-	-
Legal Fee	12,500.00	12,500.00	-	-	-
ITC and Office Fund	8,000.00	8,000.00	-	-	-
Public Property Maintenance & Replacement	68,000.00	68,000.00	-	-	-
Civic Awards	2,900.00	2,900.00	-	-	-
Investment Reserve	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	-	-
War Memorial Cleaning/Maintenance	1,000.00	1,000.00	-	-	-
Election Reserve	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	-	-
Tower Gardens/Pavilion Maintenance & Development	130,000.00	130,000.00	-	-	-
VE Day	1,800.00	1,800.00	-	-	-
<b>Total Ear Marked Reserves</b>	328,200.00	244,200.00	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	435,200.00	411,200.00	-	-	-

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

For more information about the Council please see: -

[www.skegness.gov.uk](http://www.skegness.gov.uk)



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