

Economy Tourism and Culture Scrutiny Panel

DATE	02/10/2025
REPORT OF	Carolina Borgstrom, Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure
SUBJECT	Safer Towns Review
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The review of Safer & Stronger Place functions and related services supports our Town Master Plan aspirations and our Council outcomes, Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities. Recommendations based on the findings of the review aim to:

- Promote attractive and vibrant town centres, encouraging growth and supporting businesses
- Ensure happy visitors and great leisure opportunities, whilst preserving our heritage
- Effectively manage our assets whilst providing clean and safe streets and open spaces

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The review has a broad scope and has therefore been broken into four workstreams with the programme utilising the Council's Double Diamond design process. This report details the findings and recommendations defined and developed for the workstreams Resort & Events Management, and Town Centre Management.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

It is asked that the Economy, Tourism and Culture Scrutiny Panel consider the findings from the design discovery process and feedback on the recommended approaches defined and developed with key stakeholders, particularly relating to the long-term recommendations.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Safer Towns Review programme was commissioned by the Director of Economy, Environment & Infrastructure to help the Council achieve a more cohesive place management approach in our resort and town centres and ensure a fit for purpose community safety function is in place moving forward to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improve community safety and community confidence across the borough.
- 1.2 The scope of the programme includes:
 - Town Centre management and activation
 - Cleethorpes Resort management
 - Event management and coordination for public spaces
 - ASB strategy, practice and policy guidance and related work
 - Community Safety and Community Safety Partnership
 - Public Space and Building Safety

- Area based tasking and Neighbourhood Management approaches
- Future security requirements for Council assets and staff

1.3 The project is being managed in four workstreams.

- Resort & Event Management
- Town Centre Management
- Community Safety
- CCTV & Security

1.4 The first two workstreams are due to complete in 2025/26 and the initial findings are detailed in this update. The second two workstreams are programmed in 2026/27, to align with our post Equans transformation plans and the later phases of the Enforcement Review.

1.5 The Council's Transformation Hub has undertaken detailed engagement with the services and stakeholders relating to the resort, events and Town Centre management to get a thorough understanding of service needs and challenges, public perceptions and expectations and opportunities for improvement and development. This has resulted in a suite of recommendations for service transformation divided into immediate, 'quick win' opportunities that the services can be supported to deliver within the coming months, and more significant, long-term changes to service structure and delivery that aim to meet strategic requirements.

1.6 **Resort Management**

The Resort Team is a long-standing service that is currently responsible for beach safety, resort management along the seafront, and tourist information provision. Our beaches attract year-round visitors, but their dynamic nature can be dangerous due to fast incoming tides, changing sandbanks and thick mudded areas. Engagement with the team, the public and key partners such as the RNLI and HM Coastguard has shown that this service is an invaluable resource in the resort, as their understanding of the risks in the area, their regular tidal patrols and resort monitoring during peak times of use, are key to preventing incidents. It is considered by partner organisations that the number of incidents and fatalities on our stretch of coastline would greatly increase without this proactive approach.

1.7 Current resourcing levels make it difficult to achieve all team objectives, including operation of a staffed tourism office. The review has re-confirmed the need for beach and water safety resource and education, but it has further highlighted resourcing gaps to deliver the full objectives set out above. In particular promoting attractive, clean and vibrant town centres, supporting businesses and effectively managing our assets. There is also a need for the Council to raise the profile of the team with residents and visitors to make the resort feel a safer place for them.

1.8 Quick win opportunities for the team centre around improvements to:

- ❖ Staff kit and equipment
- ❖ Review of their Standard Operating Procedure
- ❖ Supporting the team to develop a more consistent social media plan
- ❖ Exploring opportunities to work with other teams to deliver education about water/beach safety that help to share the message.

1.9 **Signage** - A beach safety signage and safety equipment review has been commissioned with the RNLI that forms part of the Resort Taskforce work, and this will be supported by the team, who will take forward any future recommendations based on the RNLI risk assessment.

1.10 **Restructures** - In the longer term, related to findings from other elements of the programme on event and town centre management, it is recommended that the team should be part of a wider service reorganisation that would realign services and job roles under different strategic management areas. Any proposed changes would be subject to the Council's change management processes and formal staff and Trade Union consultation.

1.11 Event Management

1.12 Work undertaken with stakeholders across Culture, Heritage, Leisure & Tourism, the Events Safety Advisory Group and its co-ordinators, event organisers, the public and other authorities give a clear picture of the limited resources and missed opportunities currently within our organisation surrounding events and event management. There are high aspirations within the organisation and across the borough to raise the profile of our area by activating new and existing public spaces, delivering a varied and engaging schedule of events and activities throughout the year. A clearer, cross cutting strategic approach to this with a commitment to allocating the appropriate resources would bring various place-based benefits that support many of the aims in our Council Plan.

1.13 **Events Management** - As it stands there is no specific events management function in the authority and whilst there are pockets of excellent work currently being undertaken across Culture, Heritage, Leisure & Tourism and by the Licensing Team who co-ordinate the Events Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) we appear to be behind compared to other authorities in realising the potential to bring these together and invest in them. The few Council-led events delivered in the borough are achieved through grant funding, with limited future proofing.

1.14 As with Resort Management several recommendations split by 'quick wins' and longer-term changes have been identified and developed. These also feed into the proposed restructuring.

1.15 **Quick Wins** – these can be undertaken by the relevant services with support of the Transformation Hub:

- ❖ A review of our land use policy and charges, and the creation of an Events Space Map and specification list to help potential event organisers looking to hold events in our borough.
- ❖ A review of our road closure processes to support event management

and safety.

- ❖ Review of opportunities to charge for services such as waste collection and street cleaning for events delivered by external organisations.
- ❖ Creation of a mandatory handover plan and site-specific information documents, including technical specifications, for sites/assets created in all regeneration projects.
- ❖ Review how upcoming event details are shared and promoted to ensure more robust co-ordination between service areas and utilisation of internal Comms resource.

1.16 Longer Term Recommendations - In the longer-term, recommendations centre around the creation of an ambitious Events Strategy and specific Events Team grouped with our Tourism function to support our current more safety focused ESAG administration by liaison with potential event organisers and related internal services. It would also commission, promote and support co-ordination of new and established events and potentially include the capacity to deliver NELC run events. Once created the team could help to deliver the following future recommendations:

- ❖ Work with the partners to review ESAG processes to ensure alignment to new laws and safety initiatives.
- ❖ Create a single point of access for event organisers, as a "pre-ESAG" process to include information on NELC land, NELC support available, advice and guidance, signposting to other support and resources, dedicated inbox, expression of interest form, etc.
- ❖ Undertake an in-depth review into data gathering for NELC's annual events calendar, it's impacts on local business and the wider economic, social and tourism impacts.

Any proposed changes to staffing would be subject to the Council's change management processes and formal staff and Trade Union consultation.

1.17 Town Centre Management

1.18 Engagement with the Grimsby Town Centre Manager, Project Co-ordinator and businesses, local groups and partner organisations, alongside research into other local authority models demonstrate the success of this approach and the opportunity to extend this model to Cleethorpes and Immingham Town Centres, albeit with an approach more tailored to their specific needs and challenges.

1.19 It is evident that the success of the Grimsby Town Centre Placed based approach helps to promote an attractive, safer, cleaner and vibrant place which in turn encourages growth and supports business. It also creates greater opportunities for investment in retail, leisure and recreational facilities which in turn create a positive visitor experience.

1.20 This placed based approach will form part of the new model, both continuing in Grimsby Town Centre, and being established in Cleethorpes Resort and Town Centre and Immingham Town Centre and would need to be resourced adequately and linked into wider Council resources to ensure that tangible outcomes are both delivered, visible and sustainable.

2 RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 **Risks** - Previous service reviews have grouped services such as Beach Safety and Tourist Information to deliver efficiencies. Ungrouping services and increasing delivery scope by creation of a multi-skilled Events Team, would result in a need for larger staff resource, increasing the cost.
- 2.2 **Opportunities** - The refocussing of the Resort team to deliver the Council objectives of a clean, vibrant and safe resource and subsequent rebranding of the service will have a positive impact on reducing incidents on the beach, promote better use of our assets and allow the team more capacity to work collaboratively with businesses, HM Coastguard and RNLI to further protect and educate residents and visitors. Making the resort and Cleethorpes Town Centre safer and cleaner and demonstrating our commitment to this will improve public perception, support positive use of the new public realm created by Cleethorpes Levelling up Schemes and support the increase in visitor numbers and economic growth.
- 2.3 The development of a cross-cutting Events Strategy aligned to our Council Plan and Culture and Heritage vision, and creation of dedicated a Events Management Resource to deliver this will ultimately increase our visitor economy and raise the profile of North East Lincolnshire as a vibrant and interesting place to visit, live and work. This type of growth and cultural enrichment directly and indirectly contributes to most of the aims in our Council Plan.

3 REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 There are many positive reputational benefits linked to the recommendations, although the funding and costs that will be incurred may still attract some negative comment. This would be managed by a robust communication plan and strong messages relating to economic growth and prosperity.

4 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst there are some opportunities for income generation through the potential to charge for some services and maximise income for use of council land and assets, the financial benefits would only be likely to be seen in the long term based on increased visitor economy benefitting business growth and resulting business rates income.
- 4.2 In the short term the development of an Events function and strengthening of Town Centre management will require funding from council budgets, although there may be some opportunity to utilise grant funding for initial set up and in the early years of delivery. There are also future options to consider setting up arm's length companies or Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) to deliver on event management, which has been used effectively by other Local Authorities.
- 4.3 The impact of these proposals would require financial and resource considerations as part of the budget setting process to be fully progressed.

5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Recommendations would deliver positive impacts to children and young people in the borough who would benefit from a safer resort and town centres and more opportunities to experience cultural events. The new public realm offer in Cleethorpes Resort includes playgrounds and water play and the recommendations in this report would ensure these are well managed and safe to use for children and young people.

6 CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Events Strategy that is developed with the input of colleagues from Environment and Ecology could be designed to protect, enhance and educate on our natural environment and cross service working would ensure this is overseen and delivered upon. Colleagues from Resort, Town Centre and Event Management would be expected to work closely with Environment to ensure their input to events and initiatives to align delivery to our environmental aspirations.

7 MONITORING COMMENTS

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No quantifiable budget impacts have been identified at this stage of the Safer Towns review. Any future actions arising from the review will need to be delivered either within existing budget envelopes, or, where additional funding is required, proposals will be subject to the Business Development framework and assessed in line with the Council's financial governance processes.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications immediately arising from this report.

10 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 11 There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

12 WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The recommendations in this report would affect all wards in the borough.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 None

14 CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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