Boston Borough Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Council Chamber - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR on Monday, 11th November, 2024 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

The Mayor Councillor Helen Staples, in the Chair.
Councillors Suzanne Welberry (Deputy Mayor), Jyothi Arayambath, Alison Austin, Richard Austin BEM, John Baxter, Peter Bedford, David Brown, Dale Broughton, Callum Butler, James Cantwell, Emma Cresswell, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian, Neil Drayton, Stuart Evans, Sandeep Ghosh, Mike Gilbert, Paul Gleeson, Andy Izard, Patricia Marson, David Middleton, Barrie Pierpoint, Ralph Pryke, Lina Savickiene, David Scoot, Sarah Sharpe and Stephen Woodliffe.

Officers:
Chief Executive, Interim Deputy Chief Executive – Programme Delivery and Assistant Director - Assets, Assistant Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Team Leader.

36 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Mountain and Claire Rylott.

37 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

38 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 16th September 2024 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

39 Communications

The Chief Executive confirmed that there were no communications.

40 Deputations and Petitions

The Chief Executive confirmed that no deputations or petitions had been received.

41 Questions from Elected Members

The Chief Executive advised that the following questions had been received:

Question to Councillor John Baxter from Councillor James Cantwell

Is the Cabinet Member concerned about amount of energy related planning applications and the impact on The Five Villages Ward?

Response from Councillor John Baxter

I would like to thank Councillor Cantwell for notice of his question.

As Portfolio Holder for Planning I do share a concern about the number and scale of some of the proposed energy related planning applications in the District.

As Members will be aware a number of these projects are Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). These projects are determined by the Secretary of State, rather than the District Council. As Portfolio Holder for Planning, I will ensure that our planning officers are fully engaged and understand the policy issues and challenges that these proposals raise. It is critical that the environmental impacts of these proposals are fully appraised.

Where applications are submitted to the Council as Local Planning Authority, these will be dealt with in the usual professional manner by the team, in accordance with local and national policy and our scheme of delegation.

Where members have any specific concerns, I encourage them to speak to either Phil Norman as AD for Planning or Abbie Marwood as Deputy Development Manager.

Supplementary question to Councillor John Baxter from Councillor James Cantwell

My residents have found this borough's response to the numerous projects painfully silent. This administration's neutrality on renewable energy projects damaging our countryside and our area is certainly a sign of the weaknesses of its leadership. Why are you so silent on this? And will you meet with myself, Councillor Brown, Bicker Parish councillors and residents to discuss the support we need on Bicker Fen as well.

Response from Councillor John Baxter

Thank you, Councillor Cantwell for your supplementary question.

Sometimes I do things quietly. I can assure you that I have been to nearly every consultation. The other week, I went to Bicker Village Hall to talk to the guys there from the National Grid about the national project there, and chatted to some of the residents. Fair enough I didn't have my badge, but I explained the other work as well. If you remember, there was a question in the Council here from Council Rylott to Councillor Dorrian where we expressed our concern about the National Grid, the pylons, and in effect we have lobbied MPs etc. This of course means, well, some of these are permitted development.

They come from national government and also the Secretary of State. I can assure you that I have been to Midville to the National Grid consultation with Councillor Butler.

I've been involved with Councillor Sharp and Councillor Butler.

We've been to the outer dowsing projects with some of these. We've talked about local people being employed. We've talked about the community projects. If you remember, I sent you an e-mail councillor to say, had you heard about some of the community projects you could tap into. So, I accept what you're saying, but I'm afraid I don't agree with the fact that we're not concerned. Thank you.

Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor James Cantwell

Can the Leader please update the Council on the progress of the LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Cantwell for notice of his question.

I was very grateful to the two scrutiny committees for holding a joint meeting to help shape the final Action Plan. In the Action Plan we specified that every six months an update would be provided to scrutiny and that update will be due early in the New Year. If you had wanted more regular updates, you had the opportunity to specify that at the time. In the interim, I have regular meetings with officers to ensure that we are on track and making progress; and I am pleased to say that the Action Plan is well into delivery, with several actions already completed and the vast majority that remain outstanding are on track.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor James Cantwell

Thank you, Councillor Dorrian for not answering the question I asked.

On Appendix A of the peer challenge report, on the bottom of page 15 and the top of page 16, I will read a quote:

“The Peer Team had examples of councillor and officer roles and responsibilities being blurred. Peers heard concerns that at times councillor's behaviour have fallen short of expected standards and staff need to feel supported by senior officers in challenging such situations, it will be important for Boston Borough Council to take steps to reset relationships and behaviours to foster a culture of strong, respectful, open and honest councillor / officer working.”

I would like to ask on that, Madam leader, it has now been many months since that report was issued and the action plan has begun to take effect. Why have no administration members been removed for this disgusting lack of standards as a councillor? And will there be consequences for those inside your own group who treat officers with such disrespect?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I'd like to start with the point of personal explanation, just to educate Councillor Cantwell that I did in fact answer your question and I answered it very eloquently. As I am apt to do.

I would also like you to know that on the paragraph that you read, and I reported this to the Joint Scrutiny Committee at the time, perhaps you fell asleep, perhaps you weren't paying attention, perhaps you were being a naughty schoolboy that night, but I reported to the joint scrutiny that I had only one instance of inappropriate member conduct come to me personally regarding an officer and I reported it to the Monitoring Officer at the time. So I would like you to withdraw the rest of your scurrilous accusations, because that's exactly what they are. And if you haven't learned yet, Councillor Cantwell, it's a reason you are sitting over there and we are sitting over here. Because of comments like that.

Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

When will the Independent Panel's report on Councillor Allowances be presented to Councillors? Submissions to the Panel were requested to be submitted by 31st July 2024, three months ago, so the Panel has the evidence to come to a decision on parity with the other two councils in the Partnership. It's now time for a decision.

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Woodliffe for notice of his question.

The Independent Remuneration Panel will be presenting a report to Full Council in January.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

It is a fact that the ward sizes in ELDC and SHDC are significantly greater than those in Boston, but all three councils have similar numbers of committees (circa 20). As there are significantly fewer Boston councillors compared with the other two, Boston's councillors must make a significantly greater commitment than the other two and thus are entitled at least equivalent remuneration. Do you agree?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I will provide a written response to Councillor Woodliffe, thank you.

[A copy of the written response is appended to the Minutes.]

Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

I have detected little public enthusiasm for the proposed Rosegarth development. What plans do you have to reassure the public that this development will indeed prove to be money well-spent and an asset to Boston?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Woodliffe for notice of his question.

We understand that public confidence and enthusiasm are crucial for the success of any redevelopment project. The Rosegarth Square development is designed with the

community's best interests at heart, aimed at enhancing the quality of life for residents and invigorating the local economy.

To reassure the public, we have comprehensive plans to continue to engage with the community throughout the development process and with that enthusiasm will continue to grow. We are committed to demonstrating that the Rosegarth Square development is not only a sound investment but a project that will enhance the vibrancy and resilience of the area.

Value for money is a key consideration. We will follow public contract rules, will work with reputable consultants and contractors and carry out independent value for money assessments as we plan and deliver works within this area. We are regenerating one of the key gateways from the train and bus station to the town centre. Regeneration which goes well beyond public realm improvements will be a catalyst for wider regeneration. Our plans utilise funding allocated from Government and involve addressing long running issues caused by having empty buildings falling quickly into disrepair and dereliction.

With the other sub projects of the Rosegarth Square masterplan, i.e. B&M and Crown House these interventions will be long term assets to Boston. The public realm is only the start of regenerating this area, it is one of 3 sub-projects within the Rosegarth Square masterplan that will be the catalyst to wider regeneration. And it is that regeneration and the capitalisation of it that is the biggest asset to Boston.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

Isn’t this project really a waste of resources given that there are so many other pressing needs for our Borough?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

No, I disagree with you Councillor Woodliffe. It's not a waste of resources. The funding was given to this Council by the Government and we had a choice in the matter. We could either take the funding and regenerate an area of our town that's really been neglected for generations, or we could give the money back and do nothing. And my administration decided that no, we would run with these projects. We didn't conceive the projects, they weren’t initially thought out by us, it was a previous administration, but when we inherited them, the decision was very clear that we had to take that money from Government and make the best use of it that we can.

I fully understand the frustration that our residents have, and I'm sure you read social media, as I do. Our residents see potholes that need to be filled, they see highways that are overgrown with weeds and shrubs, and they get frustrated that those things can’t be addressed, but yet we're going to be spending all this money on a public realm. But we have to understand that when the funding was allocated to the Council, it was within very strict parameters and try as we might, and comms are here tonight, we keep trying to educate the public and tell them that, you know, the funding has very strict criteria we have to spend there or give it back. We can't just use it any way we choose. So, we've chosen to go with the project, and I'd like to think that perhaps in two years time you'll stand up

and ask a question that will say ‘do you know what Councillor Dorrian that area is looking really lovely and long may it continue’.

Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

Referencing the reply you received from our new Member of Parliament, Richard Tice MP, do you consider that the ten recommendations contained within his letter to be helpful in improving commercial confidence within Boston’s town centre?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Woodliffe for notice of his question.

As you know, the relationship between the sitting MP and the Leader of the Council is an important one and is one which should be above party politics. Just as I cultivated and enjoyed a good working relationship with Matt Warman, so too, am I developing a productive working relationship with Richard Tice.

In my reply to Richard’s letter, which I believe you have a copy of, I was able to point out the many actions and strategies that this administration have introduced since we took control of the council in May 2023, many of which are very similar to his thoughts and ideas. I am delighted that he in in sync with our approach. In being so new to the role, it is understandable that Richard wasn’t completely up to speed on every single detail and it is incumbent upon me to ensure that he has all the necessary information so that he is best positioned to be active in the national space, helping us seek funding for our town’s place-shaping activity. Notably, our accomplishments have been achieved despite the national challenges faced by towns such as Boston.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

A senior retired Police Officer has told me that as PCSOs do not have the power of arrest, that private security firms have no powers beyond that available to any ordinary citizen and that only uniformed Police Officers can handcuff and detain. Do you consider that our residents would support a private security firm patrolling the streets of Boston, as suggested by our new MP, or would they prefer that to be done by the Police?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

Well actually, without going out to consultation, I would hate to speak for the whole of the residents of Boston, but I think that there's a reason that PCSO’s don't have the power of arrest and it's because the police and Crime Commissioner, perhaps the Government at large, don't want to blur the lines between what is an enforcement role and what is more of a supportive role, and the PCSO’s occupy that space very much as being more supportive and community focused in their jobs as PCSO. So too, then are our Town Rangers, and so although there is a company that Richard Tice suggested we engage with, we have invited them to come to have a look at the town and give us a quote to see what they would charge, but I would far rather keep our Town Rangers in the role that they're currently doing, which is to support the Police. They can help with arrests, as and when required,

but I wouldn't want that to be their sole function. I think they're far better in that community space and being supportive to our residents, but thank you for the question.

Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

When the original Boston Leisure Centre proposals were presented to Councillors in March 2022, I requested that the project be sent to a Scrutiny Committee prior to a vote at Full Council. You will recall that that request was rejected by the Chief Officer on the grounds of insufficient time and so the project was dispatched for approval at Full Council without appropriate scrutiny. However, our Chief Officer did confirm that there would be opportunities for scrutiny going forward but to this date there appear to have been none. It lies within your power to recommend that all the projects where Boston Borough Council is the accountable body that appropriate scrutiny will take place at the earliest opportunity. Will you do that?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Woodliffe for notice of his question.

The Boston Leisure Centre project will be monitored carefully, along with the other Levelling Up Projects, on a monthly basis. This is being done by a project management group, which is comprised of senior officers, me and the Chair of the Town Board; and it is expected that project leads will provide regular updates on their progress. I am more than willing to ensure that all Members are kept informed periodically through member briefings and communications, at the appropriate stages of the project's delivery. Each scrutiny committee has the authority to set its own work programme and to summon officers and portfolio holders to report on their respective projects and I am certain that the relevant officers would be happy to attend any such committee, as and when required.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

There is vast difference between Member Briefings and a Scrutiny Committee investigation.

Do you agree with me that all projects where Boston Borough Council is the accountable body should be subject to exacting scrutiny?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

Yes, I do agree with you, Councillor Woodliffe. I do think that we're the accountable body, it's a significant amount of funding. They should be subject to exacting scrutiny.

I don't want to impose on the Chairs of scrutiny. They are very accomplished, experienced politicians. Very accomplished, experienced chairs that we are lucky to have. So I am more than happy for them to call any project they wish to their committees. They can set up a joint committee if they wish. They can not only summon myself, my cabinet members and out senior officers, they can also, Madam Mayor, summon the leads on various projects, from Boston College, from Chestnut Homes, from Destination Lincolnshire. I'd be

more than happy to support that, but it's for the Scrutiny Chairs to design their own work programme in consultation with their committees.

Question to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

Are all the Levelling-Up Funds in the Borough Council's possession or not? If not, when will all the funds be in the Borough Council's coffers?

Response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh

I would like to thank Councillor Woodliffe for notice of his question.

Please note that Pranali and I raised the receipt of the funding with MHCLG. It has not been received, but it is expected imminently. There is no risk to the funding.

Supplementary question to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

What contingences have you set in motion to cover any possible change in Government policy?

Response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh

The funding is secured, as I mentioned just now, and we have regular meetings with MHCLG to ensure we can respond to policy changes. Thank you.

Question to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

I note from the report to be presented tonight (Agenda Item 6) that the projected capital cost of the Boston Leisure Centre project is identical to the cost presented to Full Council on 29th March 2022, namely £7.14m. The funding arrangements appear to have changed but not the projected cost. Is that assumption correct?

Response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh

I would like to thank Councillor Woodliffe for notice of his question.

That assumption isn't correct, no. The overall project budget and current cost estimate details are set out at paras 2.12-2.14 of the report considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 31st October 2024 and outlined below. The further £7m LUP funding now secured addresses both the funding gap between the original estimated (£7.14m) cost of the project and the subsequent preferred construction partner tender bid that was received (circa £10m) ; and a requirement from MHCLG to incorporate a community volunteering and wellbeing hub within the scheme.

The total capital cost for the overall revised scope of the project is now £14,645,823 and will be funded, as noted below.

2.12 In securing LUP funding, the revised project budget is summarised below:

- Town Deal funding (original) £2,425,092
- Town Deal funding (plaza) £574,566 (inc. £74,566 community art project)
- LUP funding £7,000,000
- BBC Capital funding £4,720,731 (agreed by Full Council 6 March 2023)

Total project funds £14,645,823 (exc. art project funding)

2.13 Project spend to date equates to approx. £884,295 leaving a balance of approx. £13,761,528 to complete the delivery of the project.

2.14 In reviewing the required project deliverables, it is intended that the project will ensure the delivery of:

- Boston Leisure Project (Est £10.34m inc. contingency and client-side costs)
- Project Fitness Equipment (Est £250k)
- GMLC Capital Renewal Items (details being confirmed)
- Community Volunteer and Wellbeing Hub (using balance of available funding)

Supplementary question to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

According to the Building Cost Information Service, by 2022 building material costs had risen by 43% in two years, with overall costs rising by 24% for the same period, which is well in excess of the contingences projected in the original business case. In 2022, build costs increased by nearly 9% and are projected to rise by 15% by 2029 with tendering prices rising by 20% over the same period. Given the current volatility of the global economy, there is a question about the accuracy of the projected costs and the potential liability to Boston Borough Council, should costs exceed current predictions. Every commercial contract will have exceptional circumstances clauses written in. Do you accept that there is a serious risk that the eventual cost of the Leisure Centre project could well exceed the grants provided by HMG and that set aside by our council?

Response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh

Thank you, Councillor Woodliffe, for the supplementary. The building industry cost inflation has impacted the tender costs received for the Boston Leisure project, hence the need to seek additional funding and the subsequent successful bid for LUP funds. The updated cost for the main leisure project scheme, including value engineering is due imminently. The delivery of that scheme, along with the additional Community, Volunteering and Wellbeing Hub element will be completed within the total amount of funding that has now been provided for the project. Any further inflationary impacts will be met from within the overall funding envelope. Thank you.

Question to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

I note that the Boston400 project is mentioned in the summary of Agenda Item 6 but there is no mention of a budget for this prestigious event in the report itself. The summary identifies the Boston400 project as one of the objectives of the funding bid to HMG but the budget for this important event is not identified within the report. Why is that?

Response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh

I would like to thank Councillor Woodliffe for notice of his question.

One of the objectives of the funding is – supporting the Boston 400 visitor economy. There are several projects that will support this objective, including the St Botolph's Church Visitor Offer, Boston Community Research Project, Haven Wharf, and primarily Boston Connected delivered by Destination Lincolnshire.

Boston Connected will deliver the digital infrastructure needed for a vibrant and competitive visitor economy in Boston. The outcome will be a fully curated visitor experience that attracts domestic and international visitors, travel trade and business tourism. The investment includes an accessible content management system, enhanced destination website, dynamic content, destination management system, digital asset library, online travel agent (OTA) booking integrations, data collection, social listening, an experience platform, B2B data planning hub, APIs and live event information. It also includes interactive wayfinding that tackles the dispersal of people and multilingual/real-time visitor information in the destination. Boston Connected will be delivered in partnership with local businesses, art, culture and heritage partners. It will present Boston in a way that has never been possible before and will act as a digital web across all the other funded projects; scaling up the visitor experience into a compelling 'place' proposition for visitors and residents.

Supplementary question to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

What budget has been set aside for the Boston400?

Response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh

Thank you Councillor Woodliffe, for the supplementary. There is allocation of £50k from UKSPF for Boston 400 project. The allocation of £691k from LUP to Destination Lincolnshire includes work for developing visitor economy offer for Boston 400 Project.

42 Questions from Members of the Public

The Chief Executive confirmed that no questions had been received from members of the public.

43 Audit & Governance Committee Minutes

Councillor Barrie Pierpoint, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the draft Audit and Governance minutes from the meeting held on 14th October 2024 which was for councillors to note.

44 Audit and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2023/2024

Councillor Barrie Pierpoint, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented a report by the Assistant Director – Governance & Monitoring Officer which sought consideration of the Audit and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2023/2024, attached as Appendix 1 within the report.

Members noted that the progress made by the last 12 months had been very positive. The action plan, continuous training, increased knowledge and experience had placed the Committee in a very strong position to ensure checks, balances and assurances were all in place. Any areas where there had been concerns or issues had been swiftly addressed by the officers concerned. Two new independent co-opted members had been appointed to the Committee and would be attending their first meeting on 18th November 2024. Councillor Pierpoint thanked Committee Members and the Officers involved for their hard work.

Members congratulated Councillor Pierpoint for the way he had chaired the Committee over the last year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

45 District Joint Committee

Councillor Anne Dorrian, Leader of the Council, presented a report by the Assistant Director – Governance & Monitoring Officer which sought consideration of a proposal to establish a District Joint Committee for the purposes of devolution and participation of non-constituent local authorities at the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority.

It was anticipated that new arrangements would come into existence late 2024/early 2025 which would allow for the establishment of the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority (GLMCCA) with an election of a Greater Lincolnshire Mayor taking place in May 2025. The arrangements allowed for the establishment of a Joint Committee of the seven districts, non-constituent members, to provide a mechanism for participation at the GLMCCA. The proposed Terms of Reference (Appendix A) and Standing Orders (Appendix 1) for the District Joint Committee were attached to the report.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Concerns were raised regarding the election of a Mayor for Lincolnshire as it had not been evidenced that it was what the public actually wanted.
- Concerns were also raised in respect of the preset powers the Mayor would have, the additional tier of Local Government and the potential additional costs to residents.
- Members noted that the Council had previously rejected the deal. However, the importance of Boston Borough Council's involvement in the Joint Committee was recognised.
- The Leader was committed to working with the elected Mayor, as far as possible, to get the best outcomes for the residents of the Borough.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Barrie Pierpoint.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the establishment of a District Joint Committee of the Lincolnshire District/Borough Authorities for the purposes of devolution and participation at the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority be approved;**

2. **That the Leader of the Council represent Boston Borough Council at the District Joint Committee;**

3. **That the proposed Terms of Reference (Appendix A) and Standing Orders (Appendix 1) for the District Joint Committee be approved; and**

4. **That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, to approve amendments to the Terms of Reference, in consultation with the Leader and Monitoring Officer, noting that such amendments shall require the approval of all members of the District Joint Committee.**

46 Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles

Councillor Dale Broughton, Deputy Leader of the Council, presented a report by the Assistant Director – Regulatory which sought adoption of the proposed Statement of Principles in respect of the Gambling Act 2005, as detailed in Appendix 1 within the report.

The purpose of the statement was to provide advice to businesses, operators and the public of the Council's overall position with regards to administration and enforcement of gambling legislation and to provide a decision making framework for the Council through the Licensing Committee. The Gambling Act 2005 delegated responsibility for a number of gambling functions to licensing authorities.

Members noted that the Licensing Committee had considered the draft revised statement of principles on 24th September 2024 and had resolved that the draft be consulted on in accordance with the Gambling Act. Additionally, the Committee had resolved that, should the consultation yield no responses, the statement of principles be presented to Full Council.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Dale Broughton and seconded by Councillor Anne Dorrian.

RESOLVED:

That the Statement of Principles be adopted and published.

47 Affordable Housing Capital Scheme

Councillor John Baxter, Portfolio Holder – Housing, presented a report by the Deputy Chief Executive – Communities which sought approval to add to the Capital Programme the financial capacity to support the delivery of Affordable Housing through the use of commuted sums.

The funding was held by the Council, within its reserves, to assist with the delivery of new affordable homes. In order to deploy the funding it was necessary to be transferred into the Council's Capital Programme. These funds would be used to deliver affordable housing within the borough over the next two to three years. Discussions were underway with registered affordable housing in order to identify housing stock within the borough which would provide a mixture of accommodation, including general needs, social rented properties, rent to buy and shared ownership.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- There was a significant need for new affordable homes in the borough.
- Concerns were raised regarding the growth of the population when compared to the homes that were available. There were several households within the area that were not considered to be fit for purpose.
- The location of an identified site was queried, but was confirmed to be confidential for commercially sensitive reasons.
- Concerns were raised regarding the amount of residents coming in from the EU for work purposes and the fact that many landlords were rumoured to be selling properties as a result of the effects of Central Government taxation.
- Clarity was sought regarding the types of housing that would be available in The Quadrant, for which the details were currently commercially sensitive.
- It was queried whether residents from outside of the borough would be entitled to receive affordable housing.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there were currently 1253 houses available which were allocated on a priority basis. He advised that the types of properties becoming available should satisfy the needs of the residents. He also thanked officers for their work on the project.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor John Baxter and seconded by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the addition of £1,074,000 to the Capital Programme for the purpose of supporting the development of Affordable Housing be approved; and**

2. **That the use of £1,074,000 from the commuted sum affordable housing funding held in reserves to support this activity be approved.**

48 Boston Partnership Funding

Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, Portfolio Holder – Finance, presented a report by the Director of Economic Growth which sought the acceptance of Levelling Up Partnership (LUP) funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to enable the delivery of eight projects.

MHCLG was providing £16,985,760 capital funding and £240,000 revenue funding to the Council. The objectives of the funding were to improve community cohesion, support the Boston400 visitor economy and improve skills and address health barriers to employment. MHCLG had identified eight projects to be delivered by the Council, three directly and five projects in partnership with external project leads.

The delivery of the project would be done through a range of partners, including Boston College, Destination Lincolnshire, Boston United Football and Sports Complex and Lincolnshire Community Voluntary Services. The funding would deliver a range of benefits for the town, including affordable homes and improved tourism, offer an enhanced access to leisure, health and well-being.

Members noted that the Cabinet would have oversight of the delivery of the projects with internal governance and monitoring arrangements in place.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Members were encouraged to find that Boston400 had been considered within the report, due to its forthcoming anniversary, and noted the following details in that democracy was the big contribution that Boston (UK) had made to America and the world in general. Democracy had been cemented into place in the 1630s in Boston, Massachusetts, by the 12 men and women who came from the local area. They were named on the stones either side of the path on the south side of St Botolph's Church. Knowing the importance of democracy would help people to engage with the plans for Boston400.
- A suggestion was made to adopt democracy as a theme for the Boston400 celebrations and to establish a working party of members from all three partnership Councils to increase understanding of the plans for Boston400.
- The Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre facilities were referred to as needing improvement and maintenance. It was confirmed that funding from the LUP would be used for it.
- There was consensus from Members to support the recommendations within the report. However, concerns were raised as to whether the funding was sufficient.
- Members noted that the Portfolio Holder – Culture, Councillor Sarah Sharpe, was supportive and passionate regarding the Boston400 project and would be confirming plans in due course.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh and seconded by Councillor Anne Dorrian.

RESOLVED:

That the Levelling Up Partnership funding from MHCLG be formally accepted, with the Council's Capital Programme and Revenue budget being updated accordingly to enable project funds to be allocated and projects to be delivered as set out in the table within section 2.7 of the report.

The Meeting ended at 7.46 pm.

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Supplementary Question and Written Response
Full Council – 11th November 2024

Supplementary Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

It is a fact that the ward sizes in ELDC and SHDC are significantly greater than those in Boston, but all three councils have similar numbers of committees (circa 20). As there are significantly fewer Boston councillors compared with the other two, Boston's councillors must make a significantly greater commitment than the other two and thus are entitled at least equivalent remuneration. Do you agree?

Written Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I will provide a written response to Councillor Woodliffe, thank you.

Cllr Woodliffe, I do agree with your summary of the current situation regarding the workload of Boston Borough Councillors and I also agree that we are entitled to at least the equivalent renumeration. I have often wondered if this matter would be better dealt with at a national level in order to take the 'sting' out of elected members deciding their own allowances, however, we are where we are at the moment and this body will have the opportunity to consider the Independent Renumeration Panel's report in January 2025.

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