

Boston Borough Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR on Wednesday 7th May 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Anne Dorrian (Leader), in the Chair.

Councillors Councillor Dale Broughton (Deputy Leader), John Baxter, Callum Butler, Emma Cresswell, Sandeep Ghosh and Sarah Sharpe.

In attendance:

Councillor Chris Mountain.

Officers:

Deputy Chief Executive (Programme Delivery) and Assistant Director - General Fund Assets, Interim Finance Director and S151 Officer, Assistant Director - Leisure and Local Services, Assistant Director - Neighbourhoods, Operations Manager, Interim Strategic Finance Manager, PSPSL, Communications Manager and Democratic Services Team Leader.

84 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

85 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

86 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

87 Questions from Members of the Public

No questions were received.

88 Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny (Standing Item)*

There were no recommendations.

89 Recommendations from the Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) (Standing Item)

There were no recommendations.

90 Boston Market Development Plan Report

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Dale Broughton, presented a report by the Assistant Director – Culture & Leisure which provided an update on the Boston Market Development Plan, originally agreed at Cabinet on 27th March 2024. The report outlined

progress made during the first year of delivery and highlighted a number of key developments. The report provided an update on the four key objectives within the Boston Markets Development/Action plan, attached as Appendix 1, and an overview on how Boston's regular Wednesday and Saturday markets had been performing.

Councillor Broughton outlined the progress made during the first year of implementation and highlighted several key developments:

- Revised market and severe weather policies had been adopted from April 2025.
- Market fees had been reduced across various categories to support trader engagement.
- A successful capital funding bid of £47,750 had enabled the purchase of a new market vehicle, gazebos, and equipment.
- Operational efficiencies had been achieved through a service review, resulting in a new store erector team and reduced contracted hours.
- Debt recovery measures had been implemented for non-compliant traders.
- Road closures had been introduced for Saturday markets, with consultations ongoing for Wednesday closures.
- New events, including the Makers and Farmers Markets, had been launched and were proving successful.
- Market occupancy had significantly improved, with near-full capacity achieved at recent events.
- Social media engagement had increased, with the Facebook page surpassing 3,000 followers.
- Promotional materials and branding had been refreshed, contributing to a more professional market appearance.
- The Market Action Plan remained a live document, with 9 of 13 actions completed, 2 on target, and 2 requiring further work.

Members discussed the report and commented as follows:

- The report and the work of the Markets Team were widely praised for their thoroughness and positive impact.
- Members noted visible improvements in the market's appearance and atmosphere, particularly during the Makers and Farmers Markets.
- The increase in social media engagement and the revamped Facebook page were highlighted as key contributors to public awareness and footfall.
- It was acknowledged that market occupancy had improved, with a recent event nearly reaching full capacity.
- A question was raised regarding the target occupancy rate; it was clarified that while 100% was ideal, 70–80% was a realistic and positive goal.
- The issue of footfall monitoring was discussed, with confirmation that new data collection methods were being explored to better understand visitor numbers.
- The availability of free stalls for charities was discussed, with confirmation that this was being actively promoted and that a designated charity market day was planned.
- Feedback from traders was generally positive, with most welcoming the changes and improvements, although it was acknowledged that not all were satisfied.
- The potential for introducing a continental market was raised. It was confirmed that the Council remained open to external event proposals.

- The integration of markets with local events and the broader benefits to town centre businesses were noted.
- A technical query regarding the compatibility of the new payment system (Pay360) with existing systems was raised, with a written response to be provided.
- The importance of continuing to build on recent successes and maintaining momentum was emphasised.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Dale Broughton and seconded by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh.

Resolved:

That the progress made to date against the commitments set out within the Boston Market Development/Action Plan be noted.

91 Waste Services Delivery Model

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, Councillor Callum Butler, presented a report by the Director of Communities which outlined the Council's response to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021. The Act mandated the introduction of weekly food waste collections from all households by April 2026.

An assessment of the options was included within Appendix 1, setting out the financial costs of each option and the service delivery impacts on both residents and the current service. Capital financing details were provided within Appendix 2. The preferred option involved the procurement of 14 new pod vehicles, identified as the most economical, viable, and environmentally sustainable solution. Due to a lead time of over 40 weeks, it was recommended that the capital programme be brought forward to allow for timely ordering.

Members were advised that the proposed changes would necessitate a full review of collection routes, which would likely result in changes to collection days for many residents. In addition, the introduction of the food waste service would coincide with the cessation of the current side waste policy, which allowed up to four additional bags to be placed alongside bins. The rationale for this change included improving recycling rates, enhancing staff safety, reducing incidents of fly-tipping, and identifying properties with potential overcrowding issues.

Councillor Butler highlighted the following key points:

- The introduction of weekly food waste collections from April 2026 was a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021.
- Two options had been assessed for delivering the service, with pod vehicles identified as the most cost-effective and environmentally sustainable solution.
- An order for 14 new pod vehicles had to be placed by June 2025 due to a lead time of over 40 weeks; and the capital programme would need to be brought forward to accommodate the purchase.
- A full review of collection routes would be required, likely resulting in changes to collection days for most residents.

- The current side waste policy, which allowed up to four additional bags alongside bins, would be withdrawn alongside the introduction of food waste collections.
- Reasons for removing side waste included:
 - Low recycling rates (currently around 39%);
 - Health and safety concerns for collection staff (e.g. risk of injury from sharp objects);
 - Prevention of fly-tipping and misattributed waste; and
 - Identification of overcrowded or problematic properties.
- Boston was currently the only council in Lincolnshire still accepting side waste with wheeled bins.
- Aligning the removal of side waste with the food waste rollout would allow for a single, coordinated communication and transition effort.

Members discussed the report and commented as follows:

- Strong support was expressed for the removal of side waste, particularly due to health and safety concerns for collection staff.
- Members welcomed the alignment of the new food waste service with the withdrawal of side waste, allowing for a single, coordinated transition.
- It was noted that the changes would help improve recycling rates and reduce fly-tipping incidents.
- Assurance was given that officers would provide support and engagement to help residents adapt to the new arrangements.
- Questions were raised about the disposal of existing vehicles, with confirmation that they would be sold and the proceeds would be returned to the capital programme.
- Clarification was sought on the modelling used to determine the number of vehicles required; officers confirmed that local data and projected growth had been factored in.
- The need for flexibility in vehicle size was discussed, particularly to accommodate narrow streets.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of the side waste policy during the Christmas period; it was agreed this would be reviewed.
- Members emphasised the importance of a clear and consistent communications campaign to support the rollout.
- It was noted that food waste caddies would be compatible with standard liners, and that additional support would be available for households with specific needs.
- The broader benefits of reducing food waste and encouraging more mindful consumption were acknowledged.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Callum Butler and seconded by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet:

- 1. Note Option 1b as presented within this report for collecting food waste weekly from households;**

2. Approve drawing forward £2.010m from the capital programme allocation for 2027/28-2028/29 to 2026/27 to fund the capital costs of purchasing food waste collection vehicles, subject to Council approval;
3. Approve slippage of £0.840m in the Capital Programme allocations for Food Waste for 2025/26 into 2026/27 to fund the capital costs of purchasing food waste collection vehicles, subject to Council approval;
4. Approve an addition of £0.130m to the capital programme in 2026/27 to fund the capital costs of purchasing food waste collection vehicles, subject to Council approval;
5. Approve the placing of an order for 14 food waste collection vehicles in June 2025 for delivery in 2026/27, subject to the budget being confirmed; and
6. Approve the changes to the current waste collection policy to remove the presentation of sacks alongside bins, requiring waste and recycling to be presented within wheeled bin containers provided by the Council.

[The Assistant Director – Neighbourhoods and the Operations Manager left the meeting at 7.09p.m., following consideration of the above item.]

92 Sponsorship Generation in Boston

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Dale Broughton, presented a report by the Assistant Director – Strategic Growth and Development which proposed the development of a sponsorship initiative to generate additional income to support Council activities. The report outlined how sponsorship could be used to enhance services, events, and infrastructure across the borough.

The initiative aimed to create new funding streams by engaging with local, regional, and national sponsors. It was intended to supplement existing budgets, add value to Council-led programmes, and foster stronger relationships with the business community. The approach would also support a more commercial and outward-facing image for the Council.

Members were advised that the proposal included appointing a freelance contractor to lead the sponsorship work. That individual would be responsible for identifying opportunities, building relationships with potential sponsors, and working with Council teams to develop a coordinated and commercially informed approach. The long-term aim was for the initiative to become self-funding.

The report set out the strategic benefits of the initiative and the principles that would guide its implementation. These included ensuring transparency, maintaining strong relationships with sponsors, and seeking opportunities beyond the borough's boundaries.

Members discussed the report and commented as follows:

- Members expressed strong support for the initiative, describing it as innovative and timely.

- It was noted that the proposal could help enhance events and services without placing additional strain on Council budgets.
- The potential to attract both local and national sponsors was welcomed, with an emphasis on promoting Boston as a proactive and business-friendly borough.
- Members highlighted that sponsorship opportunities should extend beyond events to include assets such as waste vehicles and public spaces.
- The importance of maintaining the identity of key community assets while exploring branding opportunities was raised.
- It was confirmed that pursuing sponsorship would not affect the Council's eligibility for other funding streams.
- The use of a freelance contractor was supported, with recognition that sponsorship and commercial engagement require specialist skills.
- Members acknowledged the value of internal expertise and experience in shaping the proposal and offered continued support to the initiative.
- The initiative was seen as a way to build stronger relationships with the business community and increase civic pride.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Dale Broughton and seconded by Councillor Sarah Sharpe.

Resolved:

- 1. That approval be given to a programme of pursuing the generation of sponsorship to support council activity, with a view to seek to deliver the expected benefits as articulated within the report;**
- 2. That the recommended resourcing strategy for such a programme (i.e. the procurement of a contractor) as articulated within the report be approved; and**
- 3. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Strategic Growth and Development, in conjunction with the Deputy Leader of the Council, to conclude contractual matters associated with the report recommendations.**

The Meeting ended at 7.18 pm.