

## **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 29th September 2025 at 6.30 pm.

### **Present:**

The Mayor Councillor Barrie Pierpoint, in the Chair.

Councillors Patricia Marson (Deputy Mayor), 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, David Middleton, Chris Mountain, Jonathan Noble, Claire Rylott, Lina Savickiene, David Scoot, Sarah Sharpe, Helen Staples, Suzanne Welberry and Stephen Woodliffe.

### **Officers:**

Chief Executive, Assistant Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer, Interim Finance Director and S151 Officer, Legal Advisor, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Officer.

### **31 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ralph Pryke.

### **32 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **33 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Full Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

### **34 Communications**

The Chief Executive confirmed that no communications had been received.

### **35 Deputations and Petitions**

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

### **36 Questions from Elected Members**

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

#### **1. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor Jonathan Noble:**

As a local politician who presumably supports openness and transparency in local government affairs, why did you think it appropriate to vote for a secret vote on the proposed allowance increases for Boston Borough Councillors at January's Full Council meeting?

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

May I thank Cllr Noble for his question. This decision doesn't pertain to my role as Leader. The full Council considered this matter in a public meeting and voted via a paper ballot which is a permitted form of voting within the Council's constitution.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Jonathan Noble to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Mr Mayor, I think the Councillor's response was really an exercise in semantics because he talks in his response about a paper ballot. This is, in effect, a secret vote and no doubt it was made a secret vote because some councillors didn't want their local citizens to know how they voted., Which brings me on to the second part of it, which is of course, it was all about allowances. Now, there was an Independent Panel that made certain recommendations as to allowances. I think there was an amendment put forward by Councillor Woodliffe which was accepted.

And so as a result of that we had an allowance increase for ordinary members of 25%, but there were some more incredible increases in allowances, for example, Councillor Broughton, then Deputy Leader of Boston Independents, saw a 49% increase in his allowance to £12,500 plus the basic allowance.

So I'm just asking, given that in Boston you know we are a town where there's high rents and there's low wages and there's exorbitant energy costs, how does Councillor Broughton justify this massive increase in allowances, given that the inflation rate at the time of the vote was about 3 or 4%. Thank you.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

I would like to thank Councillor Noble for his supplementary. As I stated previously Councillor Noble, this was a Council decision, a Full Council decision. You seem to be assuming it was me who made all these decisions and it wasn't.

Everybody took a vote on it, so therefore I don't see why you're actually trying to say it was me who actually put these increases in. So, that's as much as I can say. Thank you.

**2. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor Jonathan Noble:**

Why did it take so long for Boston Borough Council to support East Lindsey District Council's and South Holland District Council's proposal for a Southern Lincolnshire Unitary Council, given that they are our partner councils?

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

A position was taken in March that the Council should consider what proposals were being developed for Greater Lincolnshire before deciding how it wished to position itself. Very quickly after becoming Leader, with Cabinet, we took a decision that the strongest proposal is 'A Greater Lincolnshire for All', which proposes a Northern and Southern Unitary Council. We are actively engaged with our partners at SHDC and ELDC to ensure we have a robust submission to government for 28 November.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Jonathan Noble to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Obviously, this is all about devolution but in fact it seems to be an accretion of power to a higher authority. You see we have a current system that seems to work which is Parish Councils, Borough Councils and County Councils. Now all kind of claims have been made about this new entity when it comes into, that it'll be better value for money, better value for services, but I question is there not going to be a democratic deficit for people of Boston, because at the moment we have fairly small electoral wards and people can fairly easily access the councillors. If this all goes through, we're going to have bigger electoral divisions and it's going to be harder, I think, for people to get information. It talks about decision making remaining close to the local communities.

Do you think that the whole thing is going to be a massive success or do you agree with me, perhaps there's going to be a democratic deficit for local people in terms of getting their information, thank you.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Thank you, Councillor Noble. Again, our 'A Greater Lincolnshire for All' proposal has been all across the county. We've explained what our proposal is.

We've come to the conclusion, rather than going against it, we've got to embrace it and try and get the best for our residents. And, again, we've still got another three roadshows to go. Our proposal I believe is the best for our residents of the Borough and I will believe that until the Government decides which one to choose.

**3. Question to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh from Councillor Jonathan Noble:**

Why is there a forecast Revenue position overspend of £829,000 for the financial year 2025-26?

**Response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh:**

Thank you for your question.

The overspend reported at Q1 for BBC was due to shortfalls in achieving targeted salary efficiencies and lower than expected income from Bereavement services. These shortfalls are partially mitigated by savings from Senior Leadership Officer posts, higher than anticipated investment income and additional grant funding. Further, the Council has made arrangements to seek improvement in this position through identifying opportunities for further efficiencies and actively engaging with Service Managers to take this forward.

This report is available at the following link should the enquirer wish to review the matter in greater detail.

[https://democracy.boston.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=22\\_90&Ver=4](https://democracy.boston.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=22_90&Ver=4)

Please see Table 1 of the Revenue Finance report

(<https://democracy.boston.gov.uk/documents/s23866/Appendix%20A%20-%20BBC%20Q1%20Finance%20Revenue%20Report%202025-26.pdf>), which outlines the specific variances along with the appropriate figures.

As is usual in Boston the Efficiency Target identified as part of the process to balance the Budget is set to reduce progressively throughout the financial year. In order to assure that progress continues to be made at officer level a new Transformation monitoring process has been created to oversee this journey in 2025/26 and 2026/27. Further progress will be reported through the quarterly financial monitoring process.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Jonathan Noble to Councillor Sandeep Ghosh:**

Thank you, Councillor Ghosh, for a very comprehensive answer. You did refer at the beginning of your statement or your response to shortfalls in achieving targeted salary efficiencies and lower than expected income from bereavement services.

Now, bereavement services used to be a very good earner for this Council. I know it's not a statutory obligation, but we did provide it. So, I wonder why there's this sudden decline in bereavement services' income. If you could answer that please and also why we failed to meet our salary efficiency targets? If you don't know I would be happy to have a written response later.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Sandeep Ghosh:**

Regarding the bereavement services, it's an historically set budget. So, I already discussed with the managers, they have to learn from the historical data and they have to come up with the new budget, really, which considers the wrong way budget set previously it should be corrected this time.

Regarding the next one you said was the salary efficiencies. Every budget manager has to consider the timing of the recruitment, so that needs to be considered. It's just the Quarter One, still more three quarters to go. We will get to know how much we can save. It's really an estimation, really, we don't know yet. Thank you.

**4. Question to Councillor Claire Rylott from Councillor Jonathan Noble:**

Given that Boston Borough's contribution to global warming is so infinitesimal as to be immeasurable, why does Boston Borough Council have a Net Zero target of 2040?

**Response from Councillor Claire Rylott:**

As a country, the UK Government has set legally binding commitment to be Net Zero by 2050. Whilst Boston Borough Council's carbon footprint from its own operations is relatively modest, as a local authority we are uniquely positioned to lead by example and foster positive relationships within the wider community to educate, guide and implement some of the changes required to reduce carbon emissions across the Borough. That sphere of influence is wide ranging and covers local infrastructure, planning, housing and economic development amongst many other areas.

The Council takes a balanced and pragmatic approach to identifying opportunities to reduce our carbon emissions in a way that leads to multiple other benefits being realised including long term financial savings, improved health and wellbeing and reduced waste. The decision to set Boston Borough Council's Net Zero target at 2040 was based on

science-based targets linked to the Carbon Budget which demonstrates that the level of emissions required to keep global temperatures below an increase of 1.5 degrees would be exceeded within the Borough by 2042 unless emissions are reduced.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Jonathan Noble to Councillor Claire Rylott:**

Well, given that response it's very clear that this Council, or the Cabinet anyway, supports the net zero target. Now my point is this - we have electricity costs in this country which are the highest in the Western world, our costs are a third higher than they are in Germany.

Therefore, because of net zero and green energy subsidies, we are paying exorbitant electricity prices. So, my question to Councillor Rylott, do you think that that is a price worth paying in order to get to a notional net zero target of 2040. Thank you.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Claire Rylott:**

Just recently, the Royal Yacht Association announced they would prefer us not to use the old saying "man overboard". We should now say "person in the water". By my recollection, Councillor Noble, the next time you jump ship, it could be third time lucky. I wonder which political party will be top of the polls then.

I will respond to the supplementary question in writing.

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

**5. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor Jonathan Noble:**

Does Boston Borough Council support the flying of English flags on certain lamp posts in the town, thus allowing local citizens to demonstrate their patriotism?

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

As Leader of this Council, I have and will continue to support the appropriate flying of various national flags to mark, commemorate and celebrate a whole host of local, national and international events, including the flying of the English Flag and the Union Jack. What I do not support is any form of graffiti being sprayed or painted on anything or flags being attached to monuments or heritage assets that are not purposely designed to have them attached because of the risk of damage being caused; I also hope that this Council does not begin to see any complaints land with it about the state any flags, that have been put up recently as a display of the patriotism you suggest, could fall into as they weather and may begin to degrade.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Jonathan Noble to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Yes, I think Councillor Broughton's answer goes beyond his brief because I only asked about flags on lamp posts. I wasn't talking about any flags on monuments or anything like that but the key point is this - some people apparently have suggested that this is an example of vandalism and thuggery having these flags flying.

So, my question to Councillor Broughton is this, do you think that these flags on lamp posts - are they an appropriate form of celebration or not? And if not, is your group seeking to have these flags taken down, given that they're on LCC property? Thank you.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

I responded to the last question, Councillor Noble.

I will continue to support the appropriate flying of various national flags to mark, commemorate and celebrate a whole host of local, national and international events, just not done on heritage assets, which should not be used for putting flags on.

**6. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor Richard Austin:**

The Great Exhibition of Lincolnshire is due to be staged on 22nd October 2025 at the Lincolnshire Show Ground.

The purpose of this event is to showcase the best of Lincolnshire, attract investment, and celebrate the County's industry and innovation.

I understand that the stands are by invitation and that they are now at capacity.

Please can you tell the Council which companies, based in this Borough, have accepted the invitation to exhibit at this prestigious event?

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Many thanks for the question.

The Great of Exhibition of Lincolnshire is planned for 22nd October. It is being arranged by the Greater Lincolnshire County Combined Authority, but officers and members from Boston Borough Council (and the wider SELCP) will be attending the event to meet with those in attendance, including those with an investment interest in the area. The Borough Council is actively promoting the event to local businesses, and it is hoped many local businesses will also join on the day as delegates.

In terms of exhibitors, the Combined Authority have invited a number of Boston based businesses to showcase their business at the event. At the time of writing the combined authority was working with those businesses to confirm their attendance. For any business considering attending, we would warmly welcome their involvement and hope to meet them there.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Richard Austin to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

It is a big disappointment that the event does not give opportunity for the great anniversary of 2030 and the foundation of Boston, Massachusetts. It ought to be showcased at this event as it has a big potential to increase the economy of a substantial area of Lincolnshire.

Please can you ensure that this doesn't happen next year.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Thank you, Councillor Austin. I'll make a note of that and pass it on.

**7. Question to Councillor Barrie Pierpoint from Councillor Anne Dorrian:**

Please provide a list of all Mayoral duties which you have attended to between the dates of 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025 until 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

**Response from Councillor Barrie Pierpoint:**

Between 21<sup>st</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025, I have attended 29 mayoral engagements across the Borough. A copy of those details will be available for Councillor Dorrian to collect at the end of the meeting and also for anyone else who wishes to see a copy.

*[The A list of Mayoral Duties is appended to the Minutes.]*

**Supplementary question from Councillor Anne Dorrian to Councillor Barrie Pierpoint:**

Are you going to abuse any women when you're on mayoral duties, Is my question?

**Supplementary Response from Councillor Barrie Pierpoint:**

I've never abused any women in my mayoral duties and I take exception to that remark. Thank you.

Let me just respond to something else about mayoral duties for your information. I was amazed and overwhelmed by your interest in my Mayoral role and duties, becoming the Mayor of Boston and Admiral of the Wash. Considering that you have never spoken to me since I took the appointment up to ask me how I was getting on. Nor showing any interest in whatsoever from.

**8. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor David Middleton:**

With regard to your portfolio duties relating to community safety, please provide council with an update on the appointment of the two Community Safety Officers and their duties.

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Thank you for your question.

Two Community Safety Officers have now been appointed and commenced their duties in August.

Their main job purpose is to work mainly within Boston Town Centre, but any area within the wider Borough to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour, creating safer, more cohesive communities through enforcement, education and increased awareness.

Some of their key duties:

- a) To carry out uniformed patrols as identified by the Safer Communities and Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Team in consultation with Lincolnshire Police and other partners, providing a visible and reassuring presence to deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The role includes some evenings during the week and working at the weekend.
- b) To offer targeted support to vulnerable members of the community, responding to their needs and referring to other agencies when required.
- c) To work with all residents and businesses to promote and encourage community integration and social inclusion, reducing the fear of crime by establishing trust.
- d) Be responsible for recording incidents / actions within a PACE note book and then transfer onto the ASB Database system (called E-CINS), reporting and investigating activities and allegations of nuisance behaviour, reporting back to residents (with the support of the ASB Officer) with progress and outcomes of investigations.
- e) Encourage residents to report anti-social behaviour / crime and signpost them on how to do so.
- f) To be alert to and report back on any incidents of fly-tipping, littering, graffiti, and acts of vandalism.
- g) Ensure compliance with the Public Spaces Protection Order (Alcohol) within Boston Town Centre, issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for any breach of the conditions set out within legislation and/or reporting back to the ASB Officer any matters dealt with that fits in within the recognised incremental approach for the PSPO (Alcohol).
- h) To act as a professional witness, prepare evidence and appear in court as required.
- i) Work with the wider Communities Team on community engagement activities and events to build trust, utilising opportunities to speak to residents / businesses and partners and promote key messages.
- j) Work closely with Lincolnshire Police and other partners, including businesses on ShopWatch and Pubwatch.

As the CSOs have only just commenced their duties, I will be reviewing their work regularly at my Portfolio Meetings with Safer Communities Team throughout the next year.

**Supplementary question from Councillor David Middleton to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

A very comprehensive answer – thank you.

With regard to the press release which announced the arrival of these Community Safety Officers, local residents could be forgiven for reaching the conclusion that these posts had been funded by Boston Borough Council when that is not the case. Now we know that this



initiative was entirely developed by Councillor Dorrian but given that we've all gotten used to you riding on her coattails, it's not surprising you didn't give her any credit at all.

What is unforgivable though is the fact that you failed to acknowledge the Boston Town Board, because it was they who contributed £100,000 to the project following negotiations with the previous Leader. It is completely unacceptable that you would treat one of our valued partner organisations with such contempt. Could you find it in your way please to apologise to the Town Board?

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

This has been addressed. This has been addressed to the Town Board and once again Councillor Dorrian - was she the only one on the Council when all this was done? Obviously not.

**9. Question to Councillor Helen Staples from Councillor Anne Dorrian:**

Cllr Cresswell will be an extremely hard act for you to follow and many people, including me, believe that she was unfairly sacked for honouring her election pledge and refusing to join your new gang. Please provide commentary on the approach you will take to ensure the effective delivery of your portfolio duties.

**Response from Councillor Helen Staples:**

Thank you for your question.

Under Councillor Cresswell's remit, the Communities portfolio and services have established some excellent initiatives, and I hope to maintain and expand these partnerships and projects.

As an example of my new steer, last week we held a successful Autumn Days event within the Parish of Boston. I'm pleased to report that nearly 600 people came through the doors of the Stump.

I hope my experience as Mayor and work in the community will help, and the great team of staff and fellow Councillors in this chamber will support the effective delivery of my duties.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Anne Dorrian to Councillor Helen Staples:**

I was actually keen to discover if you had any sayings or mantras to give us an insight into your approach to your portfolio. You wrote to me earlier this year and I quote: "Never trust a Tory or an Austin is my mantra", and I'm curious to know how that translates now that you're in an administration with two Austin councillors and you're sitting around the Cabinet table with a Tory, perhaps both the Austins and the Tories, should take a very cautious approach in getting involved with you.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Helen Staples:**

No, I find it totally inappropriate, Councillor Dorrian and I will not answer that publicly, but I'll give you a written answer.

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

**10. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor Emma Cresswell:**

I am sure that several weeks into your new role you will have met with the Chief Executive of PSPS on a one-to-one basis. If so, what assurances, did you give him in relation to his claim that he failed to retain staff, in part, due to the conduct of elected members? If you haven't met him yet please explain why not and please still comment on how you intend to reassure him with regard to staff retention issues.

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Yes, I have already met with the PSPS Chief Executive. It is my intention to look forwards and work constructively with PSPS as a significant delivery partner.

It is for the PSPS Board of Directors to oversee and scrutinise staff turn-over within the Company and I have now appointed two Councillors as Directors who will be responsible for that on our behalf.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Emma Cresswell to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

I'm sure that you will agree that proper oversight of PSPS and the Board of Directors is extremely important. To add to what Councillor Noble raised earlier about the point to yourself about LGR. As a Cabinet, I think you will agree, we did not feel we could work with East Lindsey or South Holland while they removed some of our class rights on PSPS and that was part of our bargaining chip before we actually agreed.

Regarding staffing issues, as well as many other issues, the Board of directors of PSPS is really important. Councillor Rylott raised a legal matter at the last meeting of Full Council and claimed that neither you nor the rest of the Cabinet were aware of the costs incurred when you know and the rest of the Cabinet who were the last administration know that's not true. Councillor Dorrian kept all of Cabinet fully briefed. She gave us multiple packs of information to do with PSPS and sought support and guidance from us on at least three Cabinet meetings. I would like to know who gave you authority or why you discussed a confidential legal matter with the opposition instead of going through the deputy monitoring officer?

Councillor Rylott raised a point of order to clarify that the information being referred to did not originate from any Cabinet Member, but was provided by an external source.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

I didn't quite catch all your question, Councillor Cresswell, but I'm happy to give you a written response.

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

**11. Question to Councillor Callum Butler from Councillor Anne Dorrian:**

Please provide council with a brief update of your portfolio work with a specific reference to current staffing arrangements.

**Response from Councillor Callum Butler:**

My Portfolio Holder work is described in our Annual Delivery Plan. It's a very busy year as we plan for food waste collections. We employ our staff directly, supported by agency workers and operate under a management structure operated within our partnership arrangements.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Anne Dorrian to Councillor Callum Butler:**

With regard to staffing, the introduction recently of the EDI policy at Cabinet was very important because this policy allows us to attract and retain diverse talent and helps to create a workforce that's better equipped to understand, engage and respond to the complex challenges of our residents.

It allows staff actually to have equality such as equal pay, maternity leave, holiday pay or being appointed on merit and not because you're part of a jolly boys' club.

The EDI policy allows us to ensure that voices and the needs of all residents are recognised and valued and in turn leads to policies and initiatives that genuinely reflect the communities they serve. A good example actually in your portfolio, Councillor Butler, would be the application of our back door bin service. For example, recently one resident suffered the indignity of this service being withdrawn simply because operatives didn't fully understand issues around disability.

So, I'd like to ask you why you voted against the introduction of the EDI policy at Cabinet, especially given the fact that you hadn't bothered to offer any contribution to the debate beforehand.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Callum Butler:**

Thank you, Councillor Dorrian, for your supplementary. I voted against the EDI policy solely because I do not agree with employing another officer, another member of staff, to do something that we should be doing anyway. Thank you.

**12. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor Anne Dorrian:**

Please comment on the importance of elected members providing factually correct and truthful information - in line with the Nolan Principles - when discussing council business with the press, other elected members or members of the public.

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

May I thank councillor Dorrian for her question. I would agree this is important and is something we should positively support each other in, to learn and become the best Council we can going forward, which is what the majority of councillors voted in wish to do.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Anne Dorrian to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Because sometimes the majority of elected members don't want to do what you just said and there is an egregious incident that I'm aware of and I'm sure you're aware of when Councillor Gilbert gave a direct quote to The Target on the 30th of July 2025 stating that, and I quote, "Anne Dorrian engineered a vote against me because she claimed that I made racist comments because I discussed Islam as an ideology."

You Councillor Broughton know that is factually incorrect and nothing could be further from the truth. When that issue arose you also know for a fact that rather than lead anyone to a conclusion, I emphasised the fact that all of you had to make your own choice without being led by anyone at all.

Is this willingness to allow your group to feed false information to the public the best that we can expect now?

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Thank you, Councillor Dorrian. I am more than happy to give you with a written response.

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

**Question 13 was withdrawn by Councillor Anne Dorrian.**

**14. Question to Councillor Dale Broughton from Councillor Anne Dorrian:**

One of the most important Nolan Principles is integrity, which can be defined as "acting with honesty and according to strong, consistent moral and ethical principles, even when no-one is watching." Do you fully understand this meaning and if so, give an example of a time that you acted in this vein.

**Response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

May I thank Councillor Dorrian for her question. It would be misguided to claim a full understanding of matters which are often subject to personal judgements. It's perhaps not about giving an example, more about endeavouring to achieve these principles each day and learn from where they challenge us.

During a supplementary question to Councillor Broughton, Councillor Dorrian did not pose a question and was advised by the Mayor to conclude her remarks. Following this, the Mayor moved, and Councillor Andy Izard seconded, that Councillor Dorrian be not heard further in accordance with Procedure Rule 25.4 of the Council's Constitution. The motion was put to the vote and was carried by a majority, without discussion.

**37 Questions from Members of the Public**

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

### 38 Audit & Governance Committee Minutes

The Mayor, as Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the draft Audit and Governance minutes from the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 for councillors to note.

### 39 2024/25 Outturn Report

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Growth, Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, introduced the report which presented the Council's final outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year and sought approval for the transfer of the resulting surplus to earmarked reserves.

Members were advised that the Council had delivered a General Fund revenue surplus of £1.015 million, representing a significant improvement on the forecast position reported at Quarter 3. The surplus was attributed to a combination of disciplined cost control, delayed capital programme delivery, and higher-than-anticipated investment income.

The Portfolio Holder provided a breakdown of the key variances across service areas:

- Leisure and Culture reported the largest underspend of £398k, primarily due to the postponement of works at the leisure pool (£272k), staffing savings across events and markets, and reduced costs in shared management and museum services.
- Neighbourhoods achieved an underspend of £151k, with savings arising from a new vehicle washing contract, reduced fuel costs, and vacancies in street cleansing.
- Wellbeing and Community Leadership delivered an underspend of £195k, including savings on CCTV staffing and Bed & Breakfast provision.
- Corporate Services underspent by £84k, largely due to reduced software licensing costs.
- Economic Growth underspent by £58k, reflecting a vacancy in the inward investment officer post.
- Finance underspent by £64k, following a correction to the rent allowance provision.

It was noted that Governance and Monitoring had overspent by £105k, primarily due to increased Members' allowances. General Fund Assets also reported an overspend of £210k, driven by higher repairs and maintenance costs.

In addition to service-level variances, Members were informed that:

- Investment income exceeded expectations by £658k, due to favourable interest rates and higher cash balances resulting from capital programme slippage.
- The capital programme underspent by £5.7 million, with unspent grant funding carried forward.
- The Council's earmarked reserves would increase to £19.345 million following the proposed transfer.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the surplus would be transferred to the Volatility Reserve, in line with the Council's financial strategy to mitigate future risks and support budget resilience.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh and seconded by Councillor Stuart Evans.

**Resolved:**

**That the transfer of the £1,015,000 General Fund surplus for 2024/25 to the Volatility Reserve be approved.**

**40 Democratic Arrangements - Appointments to Committee Vice-Chairmen and to Outside Bodies 2025/26**

The Assistant Director – Governance & Monitoring Officer introduced the report, which sought Council approval for appointments to Committee Vice-Chairmanships and to outside bodies where vacancies had arisen since the Annual Meeting in May 2025. The current vacancies were attached as Appendices 1 and 2 within the report and nominations received were tabled at the meeting.

Members were advised that the following Vice-Chairmanships were vacant:

- Audit & Governance Committee – previously held by Councillor Mike Gilbert.
- Licensing / Regulatory & Appeals Committee – previously held by Councillor Suzanne Welberry.

Group Leaders had been invited to submit nominations in advance of the meeting. The following nominations were tabled and considered:

- Councillor James Cantwell was nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee.
- Councillor Stuart Evans was nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Licensing / Regulatory & Appeals Committee.

In addition, Council was asked to consider appointments to outside bodies where vacancies had arisen:

- Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board – two vacancies were reported.
- Wash and North Norfolk Partnership Members Group – one vacancy was reported.

The following nominations were considered:

- Councillors Richard Austin and Suzanne Welberry were nominated to sit on the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board.
- Councillor Peter Bedford was nominated to sit on the Wash and North Norfolk Partnership Members Group.

Council also considered a formal invitation from the John Laughton Educational Foundation, a registered charity, to nominate a trustee to serve on its board for a five-year term. This followed recent constitutional changes to the charity.

- Councillor Mike Gilbert was nominated as the Council's representative trustee to the John Laughton Educational Foundation.

**The recommendations were moved by Councillor Dale Broughton and seconded by Councillor David Scoot.**

Councillor Anne Dorrian proposed an amendment for the Vice-Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee and nominated Councillor Emma Cresswell. Officers confirmed that as Councillor Cresswell was not a member of the committee she was ineligible for the appointment. Councillor Cresswell subsequently nominated Councillor Dorrian and this was seconded by Councillor David Middleton.

A vote was held on the proposed amendment. The amendment was not carried. The original nominations were then put to the vote and approved. Councillor Dorrian requested that her vote against the recommendations be recorded. Councillor Stephen Woodliffe abstained from the vote.

- 1. That Councillor James Cantwell be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year;**
- 2. That Councillor Stuart Evans be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Licensing / Regulatory & Appeals Committee for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year;**
- 3. That Councillors Richard Austin and Suzanne Welberry be appointed to the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board;**
- 4. That Councillor Peter Bedford be appointed to the Wash and North Norfolk Partnership Members Group; and**
- 5. That Councillor Mike Gilbert be appointed as the Council's representative trustee to the John Laughton Educational Foundation for a five-year term.**

#### **41 Designation of Section 151 Officer**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Dale Broughton, introduced the report which sought formal designation of Mr Russell Stone as the Council's Section 151 Officer, in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members were advised that Mr Stone had been appointed as Director of Finance for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership following a competitive recruitment process undertaken by the Joint Chief Officer Employment Panel. His appointment had been supported by all three partner councils and was due to commence on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025.

The designation of a Section 151 Officer was a statutory requirement and would ensure continuity in the Council's financial governance arrangements. The designation would also apply across the Partnership, with each authority confirming the appointment through its own governance processes.

The Leader paid tribute to the outgoing Interim Director of Finance, Mr Brendan Arnold, acknowledging his significant contribution to the Council's financial stability and performance during his tenure.

During debate, the following queries regarding the recruitment process were asked:

- What had been the cost of engaging the executive search firm, Gatenby Sanderson, to support the appointment?
- Which local authority Mr Stone had previously served as Chief Financial Officer for 15 years, as referenced in the report?
- Why East Lindsey District Council did not appear to have been consulted on the designation, given its role as a partner authority?

In response, the Leader confirmed that East Lindsey District Council had been represented on the Joint Chief Officer Employment Panel and had participated fully in the recruitment process. He undertook to provide written responses to the remaining questions regarding costs and Mr Stone's employment history.

**The recommendation was moved by Councillor Dale Broughton and seconded by Councillor Mike Gilbert.**

**Resolved:**

**That Mr Russell Stone be designated as Boston Borough Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025.**

#### **42 South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Performance Report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Dale Broughton, introduced the six-monthly performance report for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP), which provided an update on progress against the Alignment and Delivery Plan for 2025/26.

Members were advised that of the 102 activities set out in the plan, 82% were either completed or on track, with the remainder subject to revised timelines or external dependencies. The Partnership had secured £9.03 million in external funding during the first quarter of the financial year, supporting a range of strategic initiatives across Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council, and South Holland District Council.

Councillor Broughton highlighted that the Partnership remained on course to deliver cumulative efficiency savings of £39.17 million by 2032, with further opportunities being explored through shared service development, digital transformation, and workforce alignment. He emphasised that the collaborative model continued to strengthen the councils' regional influence and ability to attract investment.

**The recommendation was moved by Councillor Dale Broughton and seconded by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh.**

**Resolved:**

**That the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Performance Report for 2025/26 be noted.**



**43 Motions on Notice**

The following Motion was received:

**Planning Committee Chairman**

Under the previous administration Councillor David Middleton was appointed as Chairman of the Planning Committee of Boston Borough Council on Monday 19/5/2025.

It is proposed that he is replaced by Councillor Peter Bedford.

Councillor Bedford has had 8 years' experience as Chairman of Planning Committee as well as 7 years as Portfolio Holder of Planning and Development, after first being elected as Coastal Ward councillor in 1991.

He has experience of steering through complex planning applications, whilst maintaining both the integrity of the Boston Borough Council planning process as well as retaining the public confidence in this Council.

We therefore move that:-

The Council resolves to remove Councillor David Middleton as Chairman of the Planning Committee of Boston Borough Council, and appoint Councillor Peter Bedford as the new Chairman of the Planning Committee with immediate effect.

**The motion was moved by Councillor Helen Staples and seconded by Councillor Sarah Sharpe.**

Councillor David Middleton addressed the Council, expressing disappointment at the proposal and outlining the improvements made to the Planning Committee during his tenure. He highlighted the committee's strong performance record, including timely decision-making, reduced appeal rates, and enhanced member training. He also referenced his efforts to strengthen collaboration between officers and members and to ensure that planning decisions were made in accordance with legislation and policy. Councillor Middleton stated that he had taken pride in chairing the committee and believed the motion was not reflective of the committee's achievements under his leadership.

During debate, a range of views were expressed. Some Members supported the motion, citing concerns about the tone and conduct of recent meetings and the need for a refreshed approach to public engagement. It was suggested that the committee would benefit from experienced leadership and a renewed focus on professionalism and consistency.

Other Members opposed the motion, questioning the rationale for the change and expressing concern about the process by which it had been brought forward. It was argued that the committee had operated effectively under Councillor Middleton's chairmanship and that the motion risked undermining continuity and stability.

**Resolved:**

**That Councillor David Middleton be removed as Chairman of the Planning Committee and that Councillor Peter Bedford be appointed as Chairman of the Planning Committee, for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal Year, with immediate effect.**

The Meeting ended at 7.52 pm.

## Supplementary Questions and Written Responses Full Council – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025

### 4. Supplementary question from Councillor Jonathan Noble to Councillor Claire Rylott

Well, given that response it's very clear that this Council, or the Cabinet anyway, supports the net zero target. Now my point is this - we have electricity costs in this country which are the highest in the Western world, our costs are a third higher than they are in Germany.

Therefore, because of net zero and green energy subsidies, we are paying exorbitant electricity prices. So, my question to Councillor Rylott, do you think that that is a price worth paying in order to get to a notional net zero target of 2040. Thank you.

#### Supplementary response from Councillor Claire Rylott:

Just recently, the Royal Yacht Association announced they would prefer us not to use the old saying "man overboard". We should now say "person in the water". By my recollection, Councillor Noble, the next time you jump ship, it could be third time lucky. I wonder which political party will be top of the polls then.

I will respond to the supplementary question in writing.

#### Written response from Councillor Claire Rylott:

Whilst this Council can do little to address the national challenges around electricity costs, working towards a net zero target through the reduction of carbon emissions from the built environment has the added benefit of also reducing their energy demand and in turn lowering utility bills. We can only seek to address what is within our control and taking considered steps, where the cost/benefit analysis stacks up. Improving energy-efficiency has multiple benefits for our communities; reducing financial pressures, tackling fuel poverty, improving building comfort and improving health and well-being.

### 7. Question to Councillor Barrie Pierpoint from Councillor Anne Dorrian

Please provide a list of all Mayoral duties which you have attended to between the dates of 21st July 2025 until 24th September 2025.

#### Details provided by Councillor Barrie Pierpoint:

#### Mayoral Engagements 21 July – 24 September 2025

Month	Day & Date	Time	Event Details
July	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup>	10.00	Haven High Learning Awards – Tollfield Campus
	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup>	12.30	Haven High Learning Awards – Marian Campus
	Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>	13.00	RAF Coningsby Families Day
	Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>	17.15	Opening of the newly refurbished Castle Pub and Restaurant
	Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>	18.45	Hakusan Students Farewell
August	Friday 1 <sup>st</sup>	13.30	Pulmonary Fibrosis Support Group

	Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup>	12.00	RAFA Commemorative Lunch
	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 onwards	Mayor's Charities introductions: 11.00 Headway, Lincs  12.00 Boston Mens Shed  13.00 Adults with Autism  14.30 Boston Foodbank, feeding the Children's project at the Stump
	Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	Swineshead Art Group in Pescod Square Gallery
	Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	11.00	Children's Ward Charity Fair
	Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	Allotments Visits with Jen Moore 10.15 Spilsby Road Allotment  12.30 Willoughby Road Allotment
	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	Boston Foodbank Visit
	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	12.00	Mayor's Charities introductions
<b>September</b>	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	14.00	BTAC Small Grant Scheme Event in Council Chamber
	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	17.30	Fenside Youth Club
	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	Allotments visits with Jen Moore 10.15 Wyberton West Allotment
			15.00 Toot Lane Allotment
	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup>	12.45	Start RAF Boston Slog
	Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	14.00	Mayor's Sunday
	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Battle of Britain Day Service
	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup>	13.30	Funeral Service of John Blackwell
	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	13.30	Deputy Chairman of Scope visit
	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	18.45	Institution of the Rev Adrian Morton at Holy Trinity Church
	Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	Boston Library Summer Reading Challenge Celebration
	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	11.30	Battle of Britain Sunday Service and Parade
	Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	Old Leake Community Hub

## 9. Supplementary question from Councillor Anne Dorrian to Councillor Helen Staples:

I was actually keen to discover if you had any sayings or mantras to give us an insight into your approach to your portfolio. You wrote to me earlier this year and I quote: "Never trust a Tory or an Austin is my mantra", and I'm curious to know how that translates now that you're in an administration with two Austin councillors and you're sitting around the

Cabinet table with a Tory, perhaps both the Austins and the Tories, should take a very cautious approach in getting involved with you.

**Supplementary response from Councillor Helen Staples:**

No, I find it totally inappropriate, Councillor Dorrian and I will not answer that publicly, but I'll give you a written answer.

**Written response from Councillor Helen Staples:**

Cllr Dorrian

First of all I would like to see a copy of what you allegedly say I wrote to you as the word mantra is certainly not one I use ,and you will recall earlier this year I was Mayor and refrained from getting into any political discussions ,and in fact had very little contact with you during my year as Mayor.

I think it is human nature to say and do things we later regret, fortunately my relationship with Councillors Alison and Richard Austin transcends a comment that I may have made.

It was my idea to form a rainbow cabinet to help bring about a more cohesive council whilst we navigate LGR, so I am extremely happy to be working alongside Councillor Clare Rylott who most definitely upholds the Nolan Principles in her approach to being a Councillor.

Trust Councillor Dorrian is something that can be developed or lost and the Conservative Councillors in this Council have always shown me respect and therefore gained my trust .

I do not have a mantra as you put it as a way for you to judge how I perform as a Portfolio Holder for Communities, what I will say though is that I am a proud Bostonian and I care about the people of this town. I think within the first two months of holding the portfolio for communities I have demonstrated my commitment to the role, the Autumn Days Event was incredibly well attended and achieved much of what Father David Stephenson and I hoped it would in terms of helping and sign posting people.

I am more than happy to share with you the results of the Evaluation Sheets people and organisations filled in.

**10. Supplementary question from Councillor Emma Cresswell to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

I'm sure that you will agree that proper oversight of PSPS and the Board of Directors is extremely important. To add to what Councillor Noble raised earlier about the point to yourself about LGR. As a Cabinet, I think you will agree, we did not feel we could work with East Lindsey or South Holland while they removed some of our class rights on PSPS and that was part of our bargaining chip before we actually agreed.

Regarding staffing issues, as well as many other issues, the Board of directors of PSPS is really important. Councillor Rylott raised a legal matter at the last meeting of Full Council and claimed that neither you nor the rest of the Cabinet were aware of the costs incurred when you know and the rest of the Cabinet who were the last administration know that's

not true. Councillor Dorrian kept all of Cabinet fully briefed. She gave us multiple packs of information to do with PSPS and sought support and guidance from us on at least three Cabinet meetings. I would like to know who gave you authority or why you discussed a confidential legal matter with the opposition instead of going through the deputy monitoring officer?

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

I didn't quite catch all your question, Councillor Cresswell, but I'm happy to give you a written response.

**Written response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Councillor Cresswell I reiterate what I have said previously I have not had a conversation or given confidential information to councillor Rylott, which councillor Rylott made a point of order to clarify at Mondays full council meeting.

**12. Supplementary question from Councillor Anne Dorrian to Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Because sometimes the majority of elected members don't want to do what you just said and there is an egregious incident that I'm aware of and I'm sure you're aware of when Councillor Gilbert gave a direct quote to The Target on the 30th of July 2025 stating that, and I quote, "Anne Dorrian engineered a vote against me because she claimed that I made racist comments because I discussed Islam as an ideology."

You Councillor Broughton know that is factually incorrect and nothing could be further from the truth. When that issue arose you also know for a fact that rather than lead anyone to a conclusion, I emphasised the fact that all of you had to make your own choice without being led by anyone at all.

Is this willingness to allow your group to feed false information to the public the best that we can expect now?

**Supplementary response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Thank you, Councillor Dorrian. I am more than happy to give you with a written response.

**Written response from Councillor Dale Broughton:**

Councillor Gilbert is not a member of my group, and all councillors can speak to, and have their own opinions on, any issue.