



Public Document Pack
Boston Borough Council

**Chief Executive
Rob Barlow**

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Lincolnshire PE21 8QR
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Monday 9 June 2025

Notice of meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
on **Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 6.30 pm**
in the Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR

**Rob Barlow
Chief Executive**

Membership:

Chairman:	Councillor Paul Gleeson
Vice-Chairman:	Councillor Neil Drayton
Councillors:	Alison Austin, Anton Dani, Stuart Evans, Mike Gilbert, Andy Izard, Patricia Marson, David Middleton, Ralph Pryke, Claire Rylott, Lina Savickiene, David Scoot, Helen Staples and Suzanne Welberry

Quorum 5

Members of the public are welcome to attend the committee meeting as observers except during the consideration of exempt or confidential items.

This meeting may be subject to being recorded.

Agenda

Part I - Preliminaries

A Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutes (*if any*).

B Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

C Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To sign and confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.

D Public Questions

To answer any written questions received from members of the public no later than 5 p.m. two clear working days prior to the meeting – for this meeting the deadline is 5 p.m. on Thursday 12th June 2025.

Part II - Agenda Items

1 H.M.O. Update (Pages 7 - 14)

(A briefing note by Jonathan Challen – Safer Communities Service Manager)

2 Plan for Neighbourhoods (Pages 15 - 18)

(A briefing note by Pranali Parikh, Director- Economic Development)

3 Work Programme (Pages 19 - 22)

(For Members to note/discuss the Committee's current work programme)

Notes:

Please contact Democratic Services (demservices@boston.gov.uk) if you have any queries about the agenda and documents for this meeting.

Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Democratic Services as soon as possible.

Alternative Versions

Should you wish to have the agenda or report in an alternative format such as larger text, Braille or a specific language, please telephone 01205 314502.

Boston Borough Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held in the Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR on Thursday 29th May 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Paul Gleeson, in the Chair.

Councillors Councillor Neil Drayton, Alison Austin, Mike Gilbert, Andy Izard, Lina Savickiene, David Scoot and Suzanne Welberry.

In attendance:

Councillor Richard Austin BEM.

Officers:

Assistant Director - Regulatory, Domestic Abuse Officer, Group Manager - Organisational Development (virtual attendee), Scrutiny and Policy Officer (virtual attendee), Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Officer.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Patsie Marson, Ralph Pryke and Helen Staples.

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the following meetings were agreed and signed by the Chairman:

- Environment and Performance Committee – 11th February 2025;
- Corporate and Community Committee – 6th March 2025; and
- Special Corporate and Community Committee – 8th May 2025.

In respect of the minutes of the Environment and Performance Committee meeting held on 11th February 2025, clarification was sought on whether a response had been received to a question previously raised concerning the drop-off in swimming lesson attendance. A further query was raised in relation to the same set of minutes regarding whether the implementation of a call-back system had resulted in a reduction or extension in response times. Officers confirmed that these matters would be followed up and a written response would be issued to the Committee.

Subject to these matters being addressed, the minutes of all three meetings were agreed as a correct record.

4 Public Questions

No questions were received from the public.

5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

The Group Manager – Organisational Development presented a report by the Assistant Director – Corporate which sought views on the proposed Partnership Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy. The strategy was attached at Appendix A and the High-Level Action Plan was attached at Appendix B within the report.

The strategy set out four key objectives:

1. Understand the needs of our communities and bring local people together.
2. Create a diverse and inclusive leadership team and embed inclusion in decision-making.
3. Ensuring Council services meet the diverse needs of residents and make it easy for local residents to access services.
4. Being an inclusive and fair employer with a diverse workforce at all levels.

The accompanying action plan focused on training and development, policy review, community engagement, and monitoring and evaluation.

Members discussed the report and commented as follows:

- A number of members expressed concerns regarding the practical value and effectiveness of the strategy. It was suggested that such policies often failed to address the root causes of inequality, such as income disparity, class, and political disengagement, and may serve more as a performative exercise than a meaningful intervention.
- Concerns were raised about the language used in strategy, which some members felt was overly abstract and lacked clarity. It was suggested that the document be revised using more accessible and plain English to ensure it was understandable to a wider audience.
- Members queried the accuracy and consistency of demographic data presented in the report, particularly in relation to the 2021 Census. The Group Manager – Organisational Development advised that she would review the figures and provide clarification.

Questions were raised regarding the extent of community engagement in the development of the strategy. In particular, members asked whether representatives from Eastern European communities, such as Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and Romanian residents, had been consulted. The Group Manager – Organisational Development confirmed that engagement had taken place with a cross-section of staff, councillors, residents, and partner organisations, including Citizens Advice and local community groups. However, members requested that future engagement efforts be broadened to ensure wider representation.

- The legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty were discussed. The Group Manager – Organisational Development clarified that while a formal strategy was not mandatory, the Council was required to publish equality

objectives and demonstrate due regard to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality.

- Members proposed that the strategy be broadened to include additional dimensions of inclusion not covered by the nine protected characteristics, such as economic hardship and political exclusion, which were considered highly relevant to the local context.
- The estimated cost of implementing the strategy was confirmed to be approximately £7,000 for Boston Borough Council, representing a share of a part-time fixed-term post across the partnership.
- Members sought clarification on how the success of the strategy would be measured. The Group Manager – Organisational Development advised that outcomes would be monitored through resident surveys, hate crime data, and feedback from community partners.

The Committee noted the report and acknowledged the statutory context underpinning the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. However, members expressed a strong preference for the draft strategy to be revised prior to adoption. It was recommended that the revised document more clearly reflect local priorities, incorporate simpler and more accessible language, ensure the accuracy of demographic data, and adopt a broader and more inclusive approach that considers local socio-economic realities.

Members further requested that:

- The language be made clearer and more accessible to all audiences;
- The scope of inclusion be expanded to address issues such as economic hardship and political disengagement;
- Greater emphasis be placed on measurable outcomes and the practical relevance of the strategy to the local community; and
- Scrutiny members be actively involved in shaping future iterations of the strategy.

The Chairman thanked Officers for the report. He concluded that whilst the Committee recognised the importance of meeting statutory obligations, it was essential that the final version of the strategy be meaningful, locally grounded, and capable of delivering tangible benefits to the community. The revised strategy would be expected to return to the Committee for further scrutiny.

Resolved:

- 1. That the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan be noted;**
- 2. That the strategy be revised to:**
 - **Use clearer and more accessible language;**
 - **Broaden the scope of inclusion to reflect local socio-economic realities, including economic hardship and political disengagement;**
 - **Ensure the accuracy and consistency of demographic data; and**
 - **Place greater emphasis on measurable outcomes and local relevance.**

3. That the revised strategy be brought back to the Committee for further scrutiny.**6 Joint Scrutiny of the Partnership Enviro Crime Enforcement Contract**

A member of the Partnership Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, Councillor David Scoot, presented a report by the Partnership Scrutiny Task Group which sought consideration of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

The joint environmental crime enforcement contract with Kingdom Services Group had commenced in March 2023 for a three-year term, with an option to extend for a further two years. The contract covered enforcement of environmental offences such as fly-tipping, littering, and dog fouling, and included CCTV operations. The report of the Task and Finish Group was attached as Appendix 1 and the Agreed Project Scoping Document was attached at Appendix 2 within the report.

Members noted that Boston Borough Council had performed particularly well under the contract, partly due to its prior working relationship with Kingdom. The Task and Finish group had reviewed the contract's performance across the three partner councils and made 13 recommendations.

Members discussed the report and commented as follows:

- Members engaged in a detailed discussion on the performance and public interface of the environmental crime enforcement contract with Kingdom Services Group. A key focus was the accessibility and effectiveness of public reporting mechanisms. Members queried whether reports submitted via the FixMyStreet app were integrated into Kingdom's operational workflow. The Assistant Director – Regulatory clarified that FixMyStreet was a Lincolnshire County Council platform and was not directly linked to the councils websites for the most efficient response. Whilst it was acknowledged that some FixMyStreet reports may eventually be redirected to the appropriate authority, it was not considered to be the most effective method. Members emphasised the importance of residents providing contact details when using FixMyStreet in order to receive updates, and noted that the app was effective when used correctly.
- Several members highlighted the convenience of apps such as FixMyStreet, particularly for younger and more digitally engaged residents, and suggested the development of a Boston-specific reporting app to improve accessibility and responsiveness. The Assistant Director – Regulatory confirmed that Recommendation 3 within the report addressed the need to improve public reporting mechanisms and he acknowledged the value of adopting best practice from other authorities.
- Members raised long-standing concerns regarding wheelie bins being left on public footpaths, particularly in the context of the forthcoming Boston 400 celebrations. The visual impact on the town and the obstruction caused to pedestrians, including disabled residents and those with pushchairs, were highlighted. Members discussed the potential for enforcement officers to be tasked with addressing this issue and suggested exploring longer-term solutions, such as reopening rear alleyways to facilitate bin storage. The possible use of Town Deal funding to support such improvements was also raised.

- A committee member shared positive experiences using the ClearWaste app, which allowed users to report fly-tipping with photographic and location data. It was noted that reports submitted via ClearWaste were typically resolved within 48 hours and that the app communicated effectively with Boston Borough Council.
- In addition, members commented on the broader utility of FixMyStreet for reporting issues to other public bodies, including Network Rail and the NHS, and cited examples of successful outcomes. The importance of public education and communication was emphasised, with members recommending that the Council do more to publicise successful enforcement actions and promote community engagement in tackling environmental crime.
- Members noted the potential for Town Deal funding to support infrastructure improvements that enhance the town's appearance and accessibility, particularly in the context of the forthcoming Boston 400 celebrations.

The 13 recommendations of the Task and Finish group, as set out within the report, were endorsed by the Committee. The Chairman thanked members of the Task and Finish Group and Officers for the report.

Resolved:

That the report be noted and that the associated recommendations be agreed.

7 Work Programme

The Assistant Director Regulatory presented the Work Programme and asked members if they wished to add any additional items into the programme.

The Committee considered the Work Programme, which consolidated items previously scheduled under the former Environment and Performance (E&P) and Corporate and Community (C&C) Committees.

The Chair proposed holding an informal workshop in June or July to allow members to discuss potential topics in a more open and collaborative setting, which would enable members to raise ward-level issues and shape the work programme around local priorities.

The Chairman proposed two immediate additions to the work programme:

- An invitation to the Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police to attend a future meeting to discuss the findings of the latest PEEL inspection report and outline plans for improvement; and
- A scrutiny session with Lincolnshire County Council Highways to address concerns about unresolved maintenance issues, including persistent flooding at the South End/John Adams Way junction and the general condition of roundabouts and verges.

The accessibility of licensing and planning application processes was raised, particularly for non-English speakers. It was suggested that the Committee review the clarity and

usability of application forms and consider whether improvements could be made to support greater engagement.

The issue of wheelie bins obstructing narrow streets was revisited, with members considering the options around establishing a Task and Finish group to explore long-term solutions, including the reopening of rear alleyways and the use of Town Deal funding to support infrastructure improvements. The impact on accessibility and the town's appearance ahead of the Boston 400 celebrations was emphasised.

Members discussed the importance of pre-scrutiny, particularly in relation to upcoming changes to waste collection services. It was agreed that this would be a suitable topic for early consideration at the proposed workshop.

The Committee also noted the inclusion of a forthcoming report on the "Plan for Neighbourhoods" within the Forward Plan. Members requested that this item be brought to a scrutiny meeting prior to its consideration by the Cabinet in July, in order to allow for early engagement and input.

The Committee agreed to proceed with the proposed workshop and to incorporate the suggested topics into the work programme. It was noted that the effectiveness of the new single-committee scrutiny structure would be reviewed after six months.

The Assistant Director – Regulatory advised that he would liaise with the Chairman to determine the most appropriate course of action for addressing the matters raised.

Resolved:

- 1. That, subject to the addition of the above items, the work programme be noted; and**
- 2. That an informal workshop session be scheduled for Scrutiny Members to support member-led topic development.**

The Meeting ended at 7.38 pm.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HMO UPDATE

1.BACKGROUND

HMOs present the highest risk properties within the private rented sector of the Borough and are often occupied by some of the most vulnerable residents.

The Environment and Performance Committee last discussed the approach to HMOs in 2022, with the resulting report being considered at Cabinet in 2023. The conclusions were:

- To lobby Central Government to introduce a mandatory requirement for all privately rented accommodation to be registered with Local Authorities, including those rented through letting agents.
- To consider the introduction of a Selected Licensing Scheme for specific wards within the Borough of Boston. The specific wards would need to be identified by the gathering of further quantitative and qualitative evidence.
- As an alternative to Recommendation 2, to consider the reinvestment of income received through fixed penalty notices issued to private landlords to fund posts within the Housing Standards Team to carry out proactive inspection work within the private rented sector.
- For Corporate & Community Committee to consider the following as a future topic – An investigation in to the issues being faced by the migrant community of Boston, to include; housing, education, employment, access to public services and funding, translation services.

2.ENFORCEMENT

HHSRS

Part 1 of the Act provides local authorities with duties and powers to tackle poor housing conditions. The idea behind the Act is that local authorities will give priority to dealing with the greatest risks to health and safety in dwellings. When local authority officers inspect a dwelling, they will look for any risk of harm to an actual or potential occupier of a dwelling, which results from any deficiency that can give rise to a hazard. They will judge the severity of the risk by thinking about the likelihood of an occurrence that could cause harm over the next twelve months, and the range of harms that could result.

Officers will use the formal scoring system within HHSRS to demonstrate the seriousness of hazards that can cause harm in dwellings. If the officer finds a serious hazard (i.e. one in the higher scoring bands A – C, called a Category 1 hazard in the Act) the local authority will be under a duty to take one of the courses of action outlined in the section on enforcement in this Guidance. Category 2 hazards (i.e. those in scoring bands D - J) will be ones that the officer judges are not as serious. For these less severe hazards local authorities will still be able to take action if they think it necessary.

HMOs

The Housing Standards Team is responsible the investigation of complaints in relation to housing conditions across the private sector, which includes HMOs. Certain types of HMOs are also required to be licensed by the Council. A HMO will require a licence if all 3 of the following criteria are met.

- The property meets the standard test, the self-contained flat test, or the converted building test (Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004).
- The property is occupied by 5 or more people.
- The property is occupied by persons living in two or more separate households.

Additional Licensing

The Housing Act 2004 provides a power for Local Authorities to licence HMOs which are not covered by Mandatory Licensing. Part 2 of the Housing Act provides for Additional Licensing of HMOs for example, in a particular area or the whole borough for those not covered by Mandatory Licensing. An Additional HMO Licensing scheme would require all Houses in Multiple Occupation, irrespective of the number of stories that are occupied, by three or four persons to be licensed. The licence will be issued with licensing conditions, that must be adhered too.

Rationale for additional licensing:

- improve property conditions within these HMOs
- improve management standards
- ensure residents will be afforded the same protection as people in licensed HMOs

Selective Licensing

Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (the Act) sets out the scheme for licensing private rented properties¹ in a local housing authority area. Under section 80 of the Act a local housing authority can designate the whole or any part or parts of its area as subject to selective licensing. Where a selective licensing designation is made it applies to privately rented property in the area. Subject to certain exemptions specified in the Selective licensing of Houses (Specified Exemptions) (England) Order 2006², all properties in the private rented sector which are let or occupied under a licence, are required to be licensed by the local housing authority, unless the property is a House in Multiple Occupation and is required to be licensed under Part

2 of the Act³. There is now no longer a need to apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation of any scheme which would cover more than 20% of their geographical area or that would affect more than 20% of privately rented homes in the local authority area

A selective licensing designation may be made if the area to which it relates satisfies one or more of the following conditions. The area is one experiencing:

- low housing demand (or is likely to become such an area)
- a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour
- poor property conditions
- high levels of migration
- high level of deprivation
- high levels of crime.

Renters Rights Bill

Within the upcoming Renters Rights Bill there are proposals to introduce a Private Rented Sector Database to help landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance (giving good landlords confidence in their position), alongside providing better information to tenants to make informed decisions when entering into a tenancy agreement. It will also support local councils – helping them target enforcement activity where it is needed most. Landlords will need to be registered on the database in order to use certain possession grounds.

Councils are likely to be issued with a range of new investigatory powers.

There is also the proposal to increase the number of individual offences that can be enforced by financial (civil) penalties in hope of reducing time at Magistrates' with the statutory maximum increasing to £40,000 per offence and a proposed minimum penalty amount of £7,000 per offence.

Rent Repayment Orders are also proposed to change. Increasing the maximum amount of rent payable to tenants from 12 to 24 months.

Awaab's Law is to be extended to the private sector. This will set timescales within which landlords must make homes safe when they contain serious hazards, and empower tenants to challenge unsafe conditions.

There is to be a 12 month no re-let period for landlords and a measure to prohibit rental bidding with a potential £7,000 penalty per offence for failing to comply. This includes rental discrimination.

It is proposed that there will be over 20 new housing offences enforceable under financial penalties of which one includes 'unlawful eviction and harassment' carrying a statutory maximum of £40,000.

Appendix 1 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System: The 29 Hazards

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assesses 29 housing hazards and the effect that each may have on the health and safety of current or future occupants of the property. The HHSRS provides a way that hazards can be assessed and the best way of dealing with them identified. If a hazard is a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety, this is known as a Category 1 hazard. If a hazard is less serious or less urgent, this is known as a Category 2 hazard.

1 Damp and mould growth

Health threats due to dust mites, mould or fungal including mental and social wellbeing health threats associated with damp, humid and mouldy conditions
Allergies, asthma, effects of toxins from mould and fungal infections

2 Excess cold

Threats to health from cold indoor temperatures. A healthy indoor temperature is 18oC to 21oC
Respiratory conditions: flu, pneumonia and bronchitis
Cardiovascular conditions: heart attacks and strokes

3 Excess heat

Threats due to high indoor temperatures
Dehydration, trauma, stroke, cardiovascular and respiratory

4 Asbestos and MMF

Exposure to asbestos fibres and Manufactured Mineral Fibres (MMF)
Asbestos: Damage to lungs

MMF: Damage to skin, eyes and lungs

5 Biocides

Threats to health from chemicals used to treat timber and mould growth
Risk from breathing in, skin contact and swallowing of the chemical

6 Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products

Excess levels of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and smoke
Dizziness, nausea, headaches, disorientation, unconsciousness and breathing problems

7 Lead

Threats to health from lead ingestion from paint, water pipes, soil and fumes from leaded petrol
Lead poisoning causing nervous disorders, mental health and blood production issues

8 Radiation

Health threats from radon gas and its daughters, primarily airborne but also radon dissolved in water Lung cancer caused by exposure, which increases amount and length of exposure

9 Uncombusted fuel gas

Threat from fuel gas escaping into the atmosphere within a property Suffocation

10 Volatile organic compounds

Threat to health from a diverse group of organic chemicals including formaldehyde that are gaseous at room temperature and can be found in a wide variety of materials in the home Allergies, irritation to the eyes, nose and skin, headaches, nausea, dizziness and drowsiness

11 Crowding and space

Hazards associated with lack of space for living, sleeping and normal household or family life Psychological distress and mental disorders, increased risk of hygiene issues, accidents and personal space and privacy compromised

12 Entry by intruders

Problems keeping a property secure against unauthorised entry and maintaining defensible space Fear of burglary occurring, stress and anguish caused by burglary and injuries caused by the intruder

13 Lighting

Threats to physical and mental health associated with inadequate natural or artificial light, including the psychological effects associated with the view from the property through glazing Depression and psychological effects due to lack of natural light. Eye strain from glare and inadequate light

14 Noise

Threats to physical and mental health due to exposure to noise within the property or within its curtilage Psychological and physiological changes resulting from lack of sleep, poor concentration, headaches and anxiety

15 Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse

Health hazards due to poor design, layout and construction making it hard to keep clean and hygienic, attracting pests and inadequate and unhygienic provision for storing household waste Stomach and intestinal disease, infection, asthma, allergies, disease from rats and physical hazards

16 Food safety

Threats of infection from poor provision and facilities to store, prepare and cook food Stomach and intestinal disease, diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach upset and dehydration

17 Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage

Threats of infections and threat to mental health associated with personal hygiene, including personal and clothes washing facilities, sanitation and drainage Stomach and intestinal disease, skin infections and depression

18 Water supply

Threats to health from contamination by bacteria, parasites, viruses and chemical pollutants due to the quality of water supply for drinking household use such as cooking, washing and sanitation Dehydration, fatigue, headaches, dry skin, bladder infections and legionnaires disease

19 Falls associated with baths

Falls associated with a bath, shower or similar facility Physical injuries: cuts, lacerations, swellings and bruising.

20 Falls on the level surfaces

Falls on any level surface such as floor, yards and paths, including falls associated with trip steps, thresholds or ramps where the change in level is less than 300mm Physical injuries: bruising, fractures, head, brain and spinal injuries

21 Falls associated with stairs and steps

Falls associated with stairs and ramps where the change in level is greater than 300mm. It includes internal stairs or ramps within a property, external steps or ramps associated with the property, access to the property and to shared facilities or means of escape from fire and falls over stairs, ramp or step guarding Physical injuries: bruising, fractures, head, brain and spinal injuries

22 Falls between levels

Falls from one level to another, inside or outside a dwelling where the difference is more than 300mm. Including falls from balconies, landings or out of windows Physical injuries

23 Electrical hazards

Hazards from electric shock and electricity burns Electric shock and burns

24 Fire

Threats to health from exposure to uncontrolled fire and associated smoke. It includes injuries from clothing catching fire, a common injuring when trying to put a fire out. Burns, being overcome by smoke or death

25 Flames, hot surfaces and materials

Burns or injuries caused by contact with a hot flame or fire, hot objects and non-water based liquids. Scalds caused by contact with hot liquids and vapours. Burns, scalds, permanent scarring and death.

26 Collision and entrapment

Risks of physical injuries from trapping body parts in architectural features such as trapping fingers in doors and windows and colliding with objects such as windows, doors and low ceilings Physical injuries such as cuts and bruising to the body

27 Explosions

Threats from the blast of an explosion, from debris generated by the blast and from partial or total collapse of a building as a result of the explosion Physical injuries, crushing, bruising, puncture, fractures, head, brain and spinal injuries.

28 Ergonomics

Threats of physical strain associated with functional space and other features at the dwelling Strain and sprain injuries

29 Structural collapse and falling elements

The threat of the dwelling collapsing or part of the fabric being displaced or falling due to inadequate fixing or disrepair or as a result of adverse weather conditions. Physical injuries

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Briefing Note: Plan for Neighbourhood (Boston)

June 2025

The purpose of this paper is to update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the current status of the Long-Term Plan for Towns/ Plan for Neighbourhood Programme.

Boston was originally selected by the previous government to be a recipient of funding through the 'Long-Term Plan for Towns' (LTPFT) programme, and the 'Town Board' was instructed to submit a Long-Term Plan by 1 August 2024 to the Government. As per the announcement Boston was to receive £2m every year for 10 years for investment into the town following the submission and approval of the 'Plan'. In line with Government guidance issued, the Boston Town Board approved the development of a draft investment plan at their Board meeting in July 2024. The plan had been informed via a bespoke programme of community consultation and engagement undertaken from May to July 2024. It was also closely aligned with the Council's broader work around the Town Centre Strategy for Boston.

The Minister for Local Growth, Alex Norris MP, took the decision to suspend the 1 August deadline for submitting Long Term Plans. The Budget Statement on 30th August 2024 confirmed that Long Term for Plans "will be retained and reformed into a new regeneration programme". On the 31st of October the Council received a confirmation from the Government that the LTPFT will be retained and reformed, as per the announcement. At a meeting with MHCLG colleagues in November 2024 it was confirmed that the funding is not formally linked to devolution and it will be awarded to the Borough Council for the enhancement of the local area.

In March 2025, the Government published a prospectus which delivered on the announcement within the Autumn Budget Statement that the previous administration's Long-Term Plan for Towns funding would be retained and reformed into a new regeneration programme, under the new name of Plan for Neighbourhoods. The new prospectus has amended the focus of the previous programme to prioritise three key themes of:

- Thriving Places: Revitalizing local areas with better amenities and high-quality infrastructure
- Stronger Communities: Rebuilding relationships and fostering a sense of belonging
- Taking Back Control: Empowering local people to shape their community's future.

By the start of the next financial year (2026/27), the Council is required to have submitted and agreed a 10-year vision and initial 4-year investment plan for Boston setting out how this will deliver in the interests of local people to improve the physical and social infrastructure of their community. Further technical guidance is expected on the submission requirements, funding and spending rules and any additional support to be provided by MHCLG in the development and delivery of the final plans. The total funding allocation remains as up to £20million of new investment over a ten year delivery period. The proposed split of the delivery grant funding is to be allocated on a 75% capital and 25% revenue basis.

The membership and priorities of the Boston Town Board were reviewed at a workshop in March 2025 to ensure the Board is suited and fit for purpose for preparation of the Plan. The Board will be responsible for providing input, steer and oversight of the preparation and delivery of the Plan.

The Council will also have responsibility for overall delivery, engagement with the Board, ensuring that public funds are distributed fairly and effectively, and that funds have been managed in line with the Nolan Principles and Managing Public Money principles. The Council will also be responsible for compliance with legal responsibilities in relation to subsidy control, state aid and procurement.

The Council has received £250,000 in capacity funding as a non-ringfenced grant to support the development of a new regeneration vision and investment plan for Boston. On the 30th May 2025, MHCLG confirmed a further capacity fund payment of £200,000 would be made to the Council within the current financial year. The key purpose of the capacity fund is to help local authorities in preparing the background work, evidence base and plans for the use of the funding over the next 10 years. The guidance so far has included activities such as:

- To convene a town board,
- To undertake community engagement
- To support the board in developing the Plan
- To provide technical expertise to the board for project development
- To prepare and submit design, feasibility, business cases, align partners and create delivery vehicles, prepare and submit planning applications etc.

£28k has been spent on preparing the vision and priorities for the LTPFT so far including consultation. The Positioning Boston Group of the Town Board agreed to commission further evidence based demand studies for a range of sectors which is likely to cost £40k, subject to procurement.

Committed use of capacity fund	
-£27,948	Preparation of evidence base and plan for submission in August 2024.
- £150,000	Resource (or two part-time /shared resources) to support the creation of the LTFT, preparing evidence base and undertaking engagement with businesses, residents and visitors.
-£80,000	External expertise and consultancy support.
-£20,000	Extending existing (contracted) resource time to undertake further, more proactive and targeted marketing, promotion, consultation and engagement activities.
-£20,000	Contingency to be allocated by the Town Board as and when appropriate
- £100,000	the continued appointment of the Community Rangers to engage with users and businesses in the town and to provide assurance of safety and security.
- £397,948	Proposed spend 25/26
52,052	BALANCE - Proposed for Shop Front wrapping with Positioning Boston / Plan for Neighbourhoods engagement theme & Heritage Town Centre maps. Any residual balance to be added to contingency provision above.

Approach and Principles for preparing the ‘Plan’:

- Prepare a 10 year plan, linked to the place and people, to build in resilience in the context of LGR.
- An aspirational and deliverable spatial plan to capture all interventions with costed projects and delivery plan with phased timescales.
- Include projects that can be delivered beyond the scope and longevity of the plan period to allow for exploration of other funding mechanism for delivery.
- Bring in additional resources directly funded from the Plan to ensure continuity and resilience.
- Proposals to include a range of capital and revenue interventions for agreed priorities.

Timescales:

- Update to Cabinet – June 2025
- Appointment of interim resource – June 2025
- Procurement of external advice – July 2025
- Engagement, evidence refinement and draft list of interventions – June to September 2025
- Consultation – October 2025
- Final draft for consideration by the Board with recommendation for approval by the Council – December 2025
- Council approval – January 2026
- Submission to MHCLG – February/March 2026

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025–26

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Report Author <i>A.D = Assistant Director D.C.X = Deputy Chief Executive</i>	Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Meeting
29 May 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan Joint Scrutiny of the Partnership Enviro Crime Enforcement Contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Manager – Organisational Development Partnership Scrutiny Task Group 	Cllr A Dorrian Cllr C Butler	17 Sep 25
17 June 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMO Update Plan for Neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer Communities Services Manager Director of Economic Development 	Cllr J Baxter Cllr A Dorrian	17 Sep 25
17 July 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Crowdfunding Scheme South & East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVC) Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Leadership Manager Community Safety Manager Group Manager – Organisational Development 	Cllr E Cresswell Cllr A Dorrian Cllr A Dorrian	17 Sep 25 17 Sep 25 17 Sep 25
4 Sept 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination Lincolnshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership Destination Management Plan and SELCP Destination Management Plan Annual Anti-Social Behaviour Report Annual CCTV Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Consultant for Culture & Regenerations Community Safety Manager Community Safety Manager 	Cllr S Sharpe	17 Sep 25
2 Oct 25				
6 Nov 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on Community Lottery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Leadership Manager 	Cllr E Cresswell	10 Dec 25
9 Dec 25				
15 Jan 26				

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025–26

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Report Author <i>A.D = Assistant Director D.C.X = Deputy Chief Executive</i>	Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Meeting
10 Feb 26				
17 Mar 26				
30 Apr 26				

Alternative options for Scrutiny working.

Task and Finish Group	Boston Town Centre (Cllr Pryke, Chairman)
Member Working Group	
Inquiry Session	
All Member Briefings <i>pending at issue of agenda</i>	Child Poverty – requested from November 2024 meeting. Update on PE21 – requested from Environment and Performance December 2024 meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025–26

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Report Author <i>A.D = Assistant Director</i> <i>D.C.X = Deputy Chief Executive</i>	Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Meeting
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Pending Confirmation:

- Overview & Scrutiny Joint Annual Report 2023/24 and Overview & Scrutiny Joint Annual Report 2024/25
- Lincolnshire Police – Peel Report (Chief Constable Gibson)
- Bus Services. Possible work streams from the SICP report on Social Impact Population Change.
- LCC Highways state of road repairs. Especially South End traffic lights flooding.

Chairman: Councillor Paul Gleeson

Vice Chairman: Councillor Neil Drayton

Lead Officer(s): Deputy Chief Executive (Programme Delivery) and Assistant Director - General Fund Assets / Assistant Director – regulatory

Clerk: Democratic Services Officer

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