

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 6th November 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Paul Gleeson, in the Chair.

Councillors Alison Austin, Richard Austin BEM, Stuart Evans, Andy Izard, Ralph Pryke, Lina Savickiene, David Scoot and Suzanne Welberry.

In attendance:

Councillor Sarah Sharpe (Portfolio Holder - Heritage, Culture and Tourism) and Councillor Helen Staples (Portfolio Holder - Communities).

Officers:

Assistant Director - Regulatory, Assistant Director - Leisure and Local Services, Head of Special Projects (Leisure), Group Manager – Insights & Transformation, Community Leadership Manager, Communities & Events Manager and Democratic Services Officer.

52 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Neil Drayton, Patsie Marson and Barrie Pierpoint.

53 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

54 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2nd October 2025 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

55 Public Questions

No questions were received from the public.

56 Annual Monitoring report - South and East Lincolnshire Council's Community Lottery Scheme

The Committee received a detailed report from the Group Manager for Community Leadership on the performance of the Community Lottery Scheme since its inception in November 2022. The report confirmed that the scheme continues to support local good causes, community groups and clubs by enabling them to raise funds through ticket sales. Each ticket costs £1, with 50% of the ticket price going directly to the nominated good cause, 10% to the central fund, 20% to the prize fund and 20% to running costs.

Members were advised that the scheme had raised £91,000 across the Partnership to date, with 22 good causes registered in Boston. The annual cost to Boston Borough Council is £295, which is met from the central fund. The remainder of the central fund has been used to support community initiatives, including the Boston Heroes campaign.

The report also highlighted measures in place to mitigate the risk of problem gambling, including:

- A maximum purchase limit of 20 tickets per transaction.
- No instant reward or gratification (tickets cannot be purchased for the same day's draw).
- Self-exclusion options for players.
- Monitoring processes by Gatherwell Ltd to identify and support vulnerable players. Quarterly returns are submitted to the Gambling Commission to ensure compliance.

During debate, Members noted that ticket sales had remained steady following an initial drop-off, with approximately 1,000 players per week. Marketing has primarily been through social media, supplemented by printed leaflets, which were circulated to Members and placed in the Members' Lounge.

Members discussed the need for a stronger communications plan to increase awareness and attract additional good causes, recognising that greater participation could boost ticket sales. It was agreed that this should be a priority for the new year.

Questions were raised regarding prize distribution. Officers confirmed that while 3,272 winners had been recorded, most received small prizes or additional tickets. No £25,000 or £2,000 prizes had been won locally, although such prizes have been awarded nationally. The odds of winning the top prize were reported as 1 in 1,000,000, and the odds for the £2,000 prize as 1 in 55,000.

Concerns were expressed about whether the advertising of large prizes could be perceived as misleading. Officers clarified that the scheme operates under gambling commission standards and that all prize structures are transparent.

Further discussion focused on the distribution of funds and whether good causes could request specific amounts. Officers confirmed that each good cause retains 50% of ticket sales, meaning income varies according to their own promotional efforts. Some causes earn over £100 per month, while others generate minimal income. The Council does not monitor how funds are spent once allocated, but eligibility checks are carried out when groups register.

Members queried whether there was any monitoring of promotional practices by good causes. Officers confirmed that while the Council does not regulate individual marketing, annual checks are undertaken to ensure continued participation and compliance.

The Committee requested comparative ticket sales data year-on-year and a breakdown of sales by good cause. Officers agreed to provide this information and confirmed that geographic data is not currently available, although performance by individual groups can be reported.

The Committee acknowledged that the scheme remains a positive initiative for supporting local voluntary and community organisations but emphasised the importance of renewed promotional activity in the new year to maintain momentum and increase engagement.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

[Councillor Alison Austin entered the meeting at 6.40pm, during consideration of the above item.]

57 Quarter 1 25/26 Performance Report

The Committee received a report by the Group Manager – Insight and Transformation on Quarter 1 performance, covering the period to the end of June 2025.

Members were reminded of the structure of the performance dashboard, including the use of red, amber, and green indicators. Attention was drawn to the following key areas:

- Amber Indicator – Industrial Unit Occupancy: One of the Council's 28 units was vacant at the end of Quarter 1, with a new tenant scheduled to sign a lease in July. An update was expected in the next quarterly report.
- Red Indicator – Homelessness Decisions: A newly introduced measure tracking the timeliness of homelessness decisions was off target. Officers advised that further data would be available in future reports as trends became clearer.
- Red Indicator – Household Waste Recycling: The Council had not met its 45% recycling target. Officers confirmed this was a stretch target aligned with regional performance expectations and that significant work was ongoing, including anticipated impacts from the Environment Act and future food waste initiatives. This measure would be reported annually going forward.

Members welcomed the clarity of the report and acknowledged its value in shaping the Committee's future work programme. During debate, Members queried the performance of industrial units, including occupancy history and specific uses. Officers undertook to provide further background information on the units and confirmed that an update would be included in the next quarterly report.

Clarification was sought on the homelessness measure, noting that it was a new indicator and trends were still emerging. Officers explained that the measure had been introduced to monitor responsiveness and ensure decisions were made within statutory timescales. It was agreed that updated commentary should be provided in future reports to reflect progress and any remedial actions.

Significant discussion took place regarding the recycling target. Members questioned whether the 45% target was realistic given current performance levels. Officers advised that the target was based on regional benchmarks and had been deliberately retained as a stretch target. Work was underway to improve recycling rates, including preparations for food waste collections and compliance with the Environment Act. Members requested that future reports include updates on these initiatives and their anticipated impact on performance.

The Committee noted that the performance report was a useful tool for identifying areas requiring deeper scrutiny and agreed that homelessness, recycling and industrial unit occupancy should be considered for inclusion in the work programme. Officers encouraged Members to use quarterly data proactively to inform topic selection.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

58 Work Programme and Forward Plan

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the Council's Forward Plan.

Members were reminded that the Work Programme was populated through to March 2026 but contained space for additional scrutiny items. Officers emphasised the importance of aligning scrutiny activity with performance reporting and encouraged Members to use quarterly performance data proactively to identify topics for deeper investigation.

The Committee noted that the Forward Plan provided visibility of key policy decisions scheduled for Cabinet consideration over the coming months. Members were invited to review the Forward Plan and suggest items for pre-decision scrutiny where appropriate. It was highlighted that the Forward Plan included significant matters such as the Plan for Neighbourhoods submission, the Destination Management Plan, and updates on housing standards and environmental strategies.

Members agreed that quarterly performance reports should be used as a strategic tool to inform the Committee's future agenda. Areas identified for potential scrutiny included homelessness performance, recycling targets, and industrial unit occupancy, reflecting concerns raised during consideration of the Quarter 1 Performance Report earlier in the meeting.

The Committee also discussed pending matters, including the Town Centre Task and Finish Group. An update was provided confirming that the group would meet within the next fortnight to identify outstanding issues and prepare a draft report for submission to the Committee. Members welcomed this update and reiterated the importance of progressing this work.

The Chairman encouraged Members to review the Forward Plan regularly and to notify Democratic Services of any items they believe warranted scrutiny. It was agreed that the Committee should remain flexible and responsive to emerging issues, ensuring that its work programme continued to reflect corporate priorities and community needs.

Resolved:

That the content of the current Work Programme and Council Forward Plan be noted.

59 Exclusion of Public and Press

The recommendation was moved by Councillor David Scoot and seconded by Councillor Andy Izard.

Resolved:

That under Section 100(A)(iv) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

60 SELCP Sub-regional Leisure Operating Agent Procurement

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Special Projects (Leisure) on the outcome of the procurement process for appointing a leisure operating agent to deliver services across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP). The presentation included details of the contract scope, anticipated service standards, and financial implications relating to the preferred bidder.

Resolved.

That the presentation be noted, with support given to the outcome from the procurement exercise.

[Councillor Lina Savickiene left the meeting at 7.42pm, during consideration of the above item.]

The Meeting ended at 7.59 pm.