



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	4 June 2024
Subject:	Long-Term Plan for Towns Funding and Town Board
Purpose:	To consider the Long-Term Plan for Towns Funding and the governance arrangements required for a repurposed Boston Town Board
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Anne Dorrian, Leader
Report Of:	John Medler, Assistant Director - Governance & Monitoring Officer
Report Author:	John Medler, Assistant Director - Governance & Monitoring Officer
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

Boston Borough Council is the accountable body for the new Long-Term Plan for Towns funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Boston is one of 55 towns across the UK to receive funding and support totalling up to £20 million to regenerate the town centre.

The Long-Term Plan is centred on local stakeholders acting in the interests of local people. A fundamental prerequisite of the funding allocation is the requirement of a Town Board.

Town Boards are required to submit their Long-Term Plans (comprising 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan) before 1 August 2024. The Plan will set out how funding will be allocated and spent, with the local authority as the body accountable for funding.

The Council has communicated to Government that it wished to repurpose the existing Town Deal Board as the Town Board for the Long-Term Plan. In support of this the Council has developed revised Terms of Reference for the Town Board to reflect the Government's requirements as set out in various guidance documents. These are presented for Cabinet's consideration as the accountable body for the funding and for onward recommendation to the Town Board for adoption.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the information relating to the Long-Term Plan for Boston contained within this report; and
2. That Cabinet endorses the revised set of Terms of Reference for a repurposed Town Board as set out at Appendix A and recommends them to the Town Board for adoption.

Reasons for Recommendations

To provide updated Terms of Reference to reflect government guidance for an inclusive and effective Town Board for Boston and to support the development of the Long-Term Plan (comprising 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan) for submission before 1 August 2024. DLUHC will assess the plan and once approved will release funding.

Other Options Considered

A Town Board (repurposed or new) is a requirement from Government to enable Boston to benefit from support and funding up to £20m. No other options have been considered.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 1st October 2023, the government published its 'Long Term Plan for Towns' with funding to support 55 towns in the UK to invest in local people's priorities.
- 1.2 Further guidance, which was published on 18th December 2023, states that while the local authority remains the accountable body for funding and executing plans, Town Boards are responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan, working closely with local people.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Long-Term Plan for Towns takes a new endowment-style approach. Funding is released over a 7-year period and local authorities have the flexibility to spend it over 10 years, with light touch assurance from DLUHC.
- 2.2 Towns will receive funding and support totalling up to £20 million, delivered through the powers as set out in Section 50 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020.
- 2.3 The Guidance documents detail the process, including the establishment and governance of the Town Board and its membership, support from DLUHC, local MP engagement, ensuring a community driven vision, and setting the strategy – a 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan.

3. Town Board Membership and Governance

3.1. While the local authority remains the accountable body for funding and executing plans, Town Boards are responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan, working closely with local people. Further technical Q&A guidance issued by Government on 28 March 2024 confirms:

- Plans may, but do not need to be, subject to internal local authority approval processes prior to submission given their role as Accountable Body in receipt of the grant under Section 151/127/114 in England and Wales and therefore towns should build in time for this to occur.
- Plans will need to be agreed by both the lead local authority and by UK government to unlock the financial allocations to the local authority.

3.2. The Long-Term Plan Town Board has to be chaired by a local community leader or local business person. An elected representative (including Parish Councillors) must not chair the Town Board.

3.3. There is emphasis on the chair to ensure the right people are around the table to fully reflect the priorities of the town. The chair will work with the local authority to consider board membership, reflecting the guidance and the needs of the town.

Membership recommendations, as per guidance:
Community partners. Such as community groups, faith groups and local charities, the neighbourhood forum, the local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS).
Local businesses and social enterprises. Such as the chair or board members for the Business Improvement District (BID), key local employers or investors in the town.
Key cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations.
Public sector agencies and anchor institutions such as representatives from schools or integrated care boards.
The local MP, relevant local authorities, including the parish or town council, where one exists, and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

3.4. The guidance recommends the Chair should engage with the local authority to consider whether further members should be appointed to the board.

3.5. The guidance identifies an independent chair for the Town Board should be invited by the local authority, considering who is best placed to convene partners and a respected figure in the community with an obvious passion for the place. The local MP should be engaged as part of the process. the guidance also encourages that where a Town Deal Board already exists that this be repurposed to act as the Town Board for the Long-Term Plan and accordingly the Council has communicated to Government that it wished to repurpose the existing Town Deal Board.

3.6. A revised set of Terms of Reference have been drafted for a repurposed Town Board to reflect the principles of public life, code of conduct, declarations of interest, membership and governance arrangements as set out in the various guidance documents.

3.7. These are presented for Cabinet's consideration as the accountable body for the funding and for onward recommendation to the Town Board for adoption.

4. Community Engagement

4.1. The pivotal role of the community is emphasised throughout the Long-Term Plan for Towns Guidance. A toolkit has also been provided to ensure community engagement is at the heart of the Long-Term Plan. Both wide and deep engagement with the community is critical to the success of both the Town Board and the Long-Term Plan.

4.2. In Boston, the Town Board will need to consider the investment already taken place into community engagement through the following Council initiatives and Partner consultation:

- Towns Fund Projects
- Destination Management Plan for Greater Lincolnshire, consultation led by Destination Lincolnshire
- Levelling Up Funding for the Rosegarth Square Masterplan
- Cultural Framework consultation, as part of the new National Portfolio Organisation for the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
- UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan
- Boston Borough Council's Town Centre Strategy

5. The Long Term Plan

5.1. The Long-Term Plan will consist of the Town Board's 10-year vision, which is a long-term, strategic document, and a 3-year investment plan annex.

5.2. Local authorities will receive the investment from the Long-Term Plan for Towns over the next 3 years, from 2024/25, to fund the Town Board's 3-year investment plan.

5.3. There is significant flexibility to tailor the Long-Term Plan across the 3 broad investment themes:

- Safety and Security
- High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration
- Transport and Connectivity

6. Conclusion

6.1. In summary, this report provides information on the Government's Long-Term Plan for Towns and the requirements of the accountable body, Boston Borough Council, in repurposing the Town Board.

Expected Benefits to the Partnership

The recommendations support the aims and ambitions of the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership. We expect there will be opportunities to work across the Partnership with the other allocated towns in Lincolnshire, including Spalding and Skegness.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None.

Corporate Priorities

None.

Staffing

None.

Workforce Capacity Implications

None.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None.

Data Protection

None.

Financial

None.

Risk Management

None.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

None.

Reputation

None.

Contracts

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None.

Health and Wellbeing

None.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None.

Links to 12 Missions in the levelling Up White Paper

None.

Acronyms

DLUHC: Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities

Appendices

Appendix 1 Revised Draft Terms of Reference for the Boston Town Board

Background Papers

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title

Where the document can be viewed

Our Long-Term Plan for Towns
October 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-long-term-plan-for-towns>

Long Term Plan for Towns Guidance
December 2023

assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65831b8a23b70a000d234d47/LTPFT_Guidance.pdf

Long Term Plan for Towns: Technical Q&A Guidance
28 March 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/long-term-plan-for-towns-technical-qa/long-term-plan-for-towns-technical-qa#governancetown-boards>

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body

Report Approval

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