

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 3rd March 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

The Mayor Councillor Helen Staples, in the Chair.

Councillors Suzanne Welberry (Deputy Mayor), Jyothi Arayambath, 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 Izzard, Patricia Marson, David Middleton, Chris Mountain, Barrie Pierpoint, Ralph Pryke, Claire Rylott, Lina Savickiene, David Scoot, Sarah Sharpe and Stephen Woodliffe.

Officers:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151 Officer, Assistant Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance (Client), Head of HR & OD, Democratic Services Manager, Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Officer.

62 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

63 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

64 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 20th January 2025 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

65 Communications

The Chief Executive confirmed that there were no communications.

66 Deputations and Petitions

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

67 Questions from Elected Members

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

1. Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Paul Gleeson

There has been significant commentary in the news and on social media regarding the council's decision to adjust member remuneration to align more closely with allowances paid to members of other councils locally and nationally

Do you as Leader of the Council have any comments or statements to make to update us on this issue?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Gleeson for notice of his question.

The decision taken by the Council follows the first review of Councillors' allowances since 2022. Most other Councils have increased their allowances since then, some multiple times. For tax purposes council members and civic dignitaries are treated in the same way as any other individual who holds an office or is an employee. Allowances received are liable for Income Tax deductions.

At Council, an amendment to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel was proposed by Leader of the Opposition, Cllr Woodliffe, seconded by Cllr Bedford, and approved following a vote. The cost of the increase that was approved is the equivalent of less than half a pence per day, per resident - a worthwhile investment that I believe offers excellent value given the level of responsibility and complexity that now comes with being an elected Councillor.

The new allowances mean the Council can continue to draw on a wider talent pool from the local area, making the role more accessible to more people. Being a councillor is a great honour and privilege. It is only right that people from all walks of life, backgrounds and experiences have the opportunity to bring their skills and knowledge to the role to help their community. By offering a fair amount, we hope to encourage a range of voices - not just those who are comfortably in a position to sacrifice time and money.

The public duty of being a Councillor is one that comes with great responsibility and commitment. Councillors give up many hours to support local residents, attend meetings, and make important decisions that impact people's lives. My week on Council business is usually between 50 to 60 hours. All Councillors, I know, seek to do the best they can for the Ward they represent and the wider Borough. I truly believe that Boston Councillors will now receive an allowance that properly reflects the tremendous responsibility we all have.

2. Question to Councillor Callum Butler from Councillor Stuart Evans

The "COMMUNITY SKIPS" Trial in town, announced and then implemented in Aug, Sep & Nov 2024, said that... "Following the pilot we will review the results. Subject to what those results show, a permanent, regular service could be introduced, with the potential to bring community skips to other areas of Boston and our villages."

I understand the Portfolio Holder has been given a final report. When can we expect to see the trial results and when will we have some dates for the implementation of the trials in the rural areas of Bicker, Swineshead, Old Leake, Kirton, Fishtoft & other rural villages in our Borough?

Response from Councillor Callum Butler

I would like to thank Councillor Evans for notice of his question.

I am pleased to say that there has been an overall reduction of flytipping in Boston Borough in the last 10 months. I have reviewed the evaluation of the community skip scheme, and it is likely that this, along with our targeted engagement and envirocrime work, has contributed to this reduction.

Subject to the overall cost of implementing a more permanent service being justifiable, we will endeavour to extend the reach of the community skips to the parishes within the wider borough of Boston. A briefing note is being drafted for Cabinet with proposals and costs for such a wider scheme.

3. Question to Councillor Callum Butler from Councillor Stuart Evans

May I also ask what expectations the Borough has of the forthcoming trials in these villages compared to the Boston Town Trials? May I remind you of the BBC statement, which said: "The council believes the programme is a positive step when it comes to keeping the borough's streets cleaner". As well as "We are taking a proactive approach, trying something different to see if that has a positive impact."

Do you agree that more areas trialled may see a more positive impact?

Response from Councillor Callum Butler

I am committed to trying different initiatives to keep the borough's streets cleaner, and I would expect residents to make good use of the skips where provided in villages. In relation to more trials having a positive impact, yes, which is why, subject to costing, we are hoping to roll out a borough wide scheme as set out earlier.

Supplementary question to Councillor Callum Butler from Councillor Stuart Evans

Thank you for that positive response. On the matter of cost, it could be argued that if there is money available for increased allowances, then there is money available for important projects like this one. Do you not agree?

Response from Councillor Callum Butler

I think that we need to be careful with the budgets that we have and we will review it and we will see where we go. At the end of the day, it will be a Cabinet decision. I'm hopeful that it will be approved, as I have said previously, the figures have been positive for the last 10 to 12 months, so I can't see any reason why not, but again, it all comes down to cost.

4. Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Claire Rylott

Madam Leader at January's Full Council meeting the Independent Remuneration Panel were invited to share their report and recommendations to Full Council with regards a review of councillors' allowances which was proposed to commence from April 2025.

Members had asked the Independent Remuneration Panel to carry out this piece of work. It was a fair review bringing allowances in line with the other 2 councils we work closely with. Full Council accepted an amendment to the report, the costs being way above and beyond what the IRP recommended, not only that but the amendment also included backdating allowance increases to April 2024.

The amendment gives you a 49% allowance increase, and you will receive £16,000 in back pay. Without the backpay the extra cost of the amendment over the IRP proposals is £55,597. We are all aware by 2028 Boston Borough Council will have disappeared, and councillors have been accused of milking the system while it is still there. What is your view on the decision taken?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Rylott for notice of her question.

With regard to my view on the decision taken, I will refer you to my statement which is published on the Council's website and which I have read out as my response to another question on the same topic.

Your claim that you have been accused of 'milking the system' can be easily refuted by the fact that Full Council took the decision about the allowances on 20th January 2025 but the letter from the Minister inviting this council to submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation did not arrive until 5th February 2025. Up to the point of receiving the letter, there were absolutely no guarantees that the government would indeed follow through with previously whispered proposals, because Sir Keir Starmer has been known to flip flop on other decisions.

I do not recognise the figure of £16,000 that you've quoted here and in actual fact, it is far from the truth. I think it is unacceptable for councillors to engage in feeding disinformation into the public domain. You should be aware of the extreme levels of vitriol and abuse that I received when the decision was taken, and it is harmful for you to introduce false information into the public discourse. You should also be aware that one of the reasons cited for recommending the increase in allowances was to encourage a more diverse field of candidates, making the role of councillor 'more accessible to more people.' A recent study by Kings College, London found that 'online harassment, abuse and intimidation directed at politicians is on the rise.....and that female politicians face such behaviour more often than their male counterparts.' Worse still, they report that, 'this kind of hostility can deter women from remaining in politics and discourages those who haven't run for office from considering it.' I would urge you then, to think carefully before making comments which have the potential to cause the maltreatment of others.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Claire Rylott

Madam Leader, your group took control in 2023 with a majority, 18 - 12 to be exact. I am only a group of five and have little say in decisions made by Boston Borough Council. You have the majority and are therefore able to do whatever you wish. You may have given Boston a Christmas tree - that was the biggest mistake the Conservatives made in the eyes of the residents.

Another thing the Tories never did was award themselves a 49% allowance increase. The anger and dismay from the residents of Boston has damaged all councillors' reputations as we are now seen to be doing this role for only one reason. Allowances should not be considered as a direct payment of working. If you think it should, you are in this role for the wrong reasons.

Since last Full Council your personal comments regarding other fellow councillors and workers were not at all professional. Councillor Cantwell did approach all members and asked if they would revisit the allowances matter. Only six said they would support this. He needed ten to reopen the matter within a six-month period.

On reflection of the harm done to this Council, will you encourage Members - you have the majority - to reconsider the amendment made, and accept the recommendation made by the Independent Remuneration Panel, with no back dating?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

You say you have little say in the decisions made in this Council. Can I suggest Councillor Rylott that if you turned up to a meeting once in a while, turned up to a briefing once in a while, you would have far more say in the decisions that are made but you are absent, it seems, more often than you are actually here. No, I will not ask my group to reconsider the decision made. You are picking at a scab, hoping that it will bleed once more. You do nothing to further the cause of this Council, of which you are a member, but you do everything you can to discredit it and shame on you for that.

5. Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Claire Rylott

Madam Leader, I understand over the last few months you have been invited to attend meetings regarding the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority board, would you please give Full Council an update on those meetings that you have attended.

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Rylott for notice of her question. The District Joint Committee has now met twice. On the first occasion four named nominations were made for the Mayoral County Combined Authority. At the second meeting it was agreed that the District Joint committee would be a formal nominating body for the MCCA. We still await confirmation from the MCCA to allow us to make further appointments.

As Leaders, we to discuss the composition of the new committee, and myself, Cllr Ashley Baxter and Cllr Trevor Young took great care to express the importance of having fair representation on this new board. We reminded the other leaders that at the district council elections in May 2023, the residents of Lincolnshire removed three Conservative-run councils and replaced them with two Independent administrations and one Lib Dem administration. We also reminded our leader colleagues that the tally of councillors in the county was as follows; Independent 115, Conservative 114, Labour 33, Lib Dem 29. All of this was to no avail and it became apparent that a deal had been struck behind closed doors and the Tory leaders swept 3 seats and Labour took the remaining seat.

Given that the three upper-tier councils are run by the Conservative Party, it is highly probable that the six constituent members of the new GLMCCA will be Tories, thus making it extremely important that the non-constituent seats were allocated in a way which represents the political configuration of the county. We failed to get an acceptable outcome but in making the decision they have, I believe that the others have shot themselves in the foot. My group here in Boston is furious and I know those feelings are shared by councillors in West Lindsey and South Kesteven. It was Theresa May who commented that people saw the Conservatives as 'the nasty party' and this type of behaviour shows me that things haven't really changed. It is my hope that folk will remember that they cannot trust the red team or the blue team when they go to the polls in May.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Claire Rylott

Madam Leader, do you not think it would have been more suitable to send a factory worker to the meetings you have attended, as they would have had the stamina to stay to the end, not walk out before a meeting has concluded?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

We're just playing into political tropes now, aren't we? You're demeaning factory workers. You are trying to insult me, knock yourself out Claire. I hope you are enjoying yourself. We're still in control.

6. Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Claire Rylott

Madam Leader, South East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership is made up of Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council. The aim of the partnership was to deliver growth and regeneration to the area, to seek greater access and vital Government funding and to find a position where it can identify and secure new investment into the sub-region, which is often viewed as being left behind for these transformative sums of money. As Leader of this Council do you have a good working relationship with the other 2 partnership council leaders?

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Rylott for notice of her question. As with all my political relationships, I base them on the Nolan Principles, particularly when it comes to honesty, integrity and openness.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Claire Rylott

Can you confirm to Council that you have withdrawn all car parking and access cards at BBC to ELDC executives and why?

Response from Councillor Dorrian

Yes, I can confirm that I have withdrawn car parking spaces and access passes from elected members at East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council and that by booking through Alison Hull, when they come here for meetings, they can have access to the building and they can have a daily pass and they can have a car parking space reserved for them. All that was communicated, but well done you've really managed to lower the tone tonight, Claire. Well done.

7. Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Anton Dani

I am very pleased to see that the Rosegarth St project is under way, I am pretty sure that once it will be finished, it will add a better landscape to Boston.

Such schemes can enhance the look and reputation of our much loved town.

Madam Leader, would you please tell us if there have been any applications submitted or will be forwarded by our Council regarding any Funds to the Government for similar Plans or Designs? Thank you.

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I would like to thank Councillor Dani for notice of his question.

I too am inspired by the fantastic development we are leading at Rosegarth Square; our Levelling up funding, together with our ongoing partnership with the NHS, stands to totally transform that area, creating real value for our community and local businesses, and delivering visible transformational change.

Whilst the current government has not opened up any new funding schemes at the financial scale of the Levelling Up Fund or the Towns Fund, we are actively planning how to maximise the 10 year, £20 million endowment fund we are negotiating under the Long Term Plan for Towns and will seize upon any opportunity to secure resources into our Borough that create value for our communities, both at the large scale but also at smaller scales.

Supplementary question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Anton Dani

All I can say is that I wish our Council good luck in the future, in attempts for gaining any other funds or any levelling up, and I will say sizing up in any opportunities is the way to go forward.

Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

I'd just like to thank Councillor Dani sincerely for your good wishes. You and I don't often meet in the middle, see eye to eye, but I accept your sincere good wishes in the manner in which you have extended them. Thank you.

68 Questions from Members of the Public

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

69 Audit & Governance Committee Minutes

Councillor Barrie Pierpoint, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the draft Audit and Governance minutes from the meeting held on 27th January 2025, which was for councillors to note.

Councillor Pierpoint highlighted: (i) page 14 of the minutes and the comments of the engagement director from KPMG who had advised that positive assurance could be taken by the Committee on the status of the organisation now and in the future; and (ii) positive comments by the internal auditor who had advised that the performance dashboard was 80% completed, that the internal audit plans had been delivered and that they had commented on good progress. There had been a 100% feedback response from officers on all audits.

Councillor Pierpoint indicated to Council that the two new lay members on the panel had been exceptionally good, were asking the right questions, understood all the papers and were a credit to the Committee.

70 Annual Budget Report 2025/26, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Capital Strategy Treasury management Policy/Strategy, and Annual Delivery Plan

The Portfolio Holder – Finance, Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, presented a report by the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151), setting out the detail of the Annual Budget Report 2025/26, the 5-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) from 2025/26 to 2029/30, Capital Programme, Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Policy/Strategy and the Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26.

Members noted that the report also included the recommended level of Council Tax for 2025/26 taking into account pressures including that of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) levy.

The budget included efficiencies that had been identified to support the short and medium term financial strategy and the remaining efficiency target still to be achieved against which a plan of activity had been developed.

Before presenting the Budget Report, Councillor Ghosh provided an overview of the position since his appointment. He confirmed that in the financial year 2022/23, there had been a budget shortfall of £282,000 without a proactive plan to address efficiencies. In the financial year 2023/24, there had been a budget gap of £664,000 and a dire need for a planned approach. Efficiency targets had been established before every Budget and had been acted on religiously. For the financial year 2024/25, 78% of those targets had been achieved by Quarter 2 and nearly all the debt left by the previous administration had been paid back. All directorates had been informed to make budgets based on previous data and avoid mid-year unplanned pressure on the budgets.

More efficient ways of working for all the services had been encouraged by working closely within the partnership and the special interest group created had resulted in receiving £5 million for this financial year, which was £2 million more than last year.

Improvements in the town and supporting vulnerable residents had been prioritised.

Engagement in communities and businesses was occurring to a greater degree.

There had been challenges and unlike before, where there had been challenges from worldwide events, the current challenges had arisen from changes to Government policy, including significantly less Government support, the removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant and changes to business rates. Local Government Reorganisation would also result in future challenges.

The enhanced section 25 statement at the end of Appendix 1 set out the risks within the Budget and contingencies. The Internal Drainage Board (IDB) continued to be a pressure, with increased contributions to them of £102,000 included in the Budget resulting in a 45% increase since 2021/22. Lobbying of Government had occurred since October 2022. The national sum provided for IDB support had increased the national sum to £5 million but it was still only a third of the increase seen by councils since 2021/22.

Efficiency targets had been introduced in the Budget since 2022/23 as a result of the legacy of the last administration, reductions in Government funding and the impact of the IDB levy.

The savings target for 2025/26 would be £510,000 and the IDB related target would be £913,000, which would be challenging. A multi-year efficiency plan had been identified, looking at the short and medium term, to ensure identified efficiencies could be achieved.

£38.25 million of existing savings was on target to be delivered and the projected savings targets of £42 million was on track and anticipated to be delivered sooner rather than later.

Councillor Ghosh indicated that the Council was continuing to support the town centre with reduced rents for market traders and member grants for local communities.

At this point, Councillor Ghosh received the permission of Full Council to continue with the presentation of the report, as required by the Constitution as his contribution had reached five minutes.

Councillor Ghosh proceeded to set out the Budget as detailed at page 23 of the agenda.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- A range of views were expressed about the national and local context and circumstances in which the Budget was being presented.
- Deliberation occurred regarding a range of issues including the competitiveness of market traders' fees compared to other local authorities following the recent price reduction and the range of other incentives to support traders and encourage new traders.

- Other issues considered included the adverse impact of IDB levies on the Budget, increased Council Tax support for the most vulnerable, the extent of Council reserves, increased members' allowances and the re-introduction of member grants for communities.
- Councillor Ghosh agreed to provide Councillor Anton Dani with a written response to his question relating to the potential future use of reserves.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh and seconded by Councillor Anne Dorrian.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Revenue Estimates for the General Fund and BTAC for 2025/26 (Appendices 1, 1a and 1b) be approved and that the Councillor Grant Scheme be reintroduced, with each Councillor being given £1,000 to allocate to projects within their ward, to be funded from the contingency reserve fund;**
- 2. That the Council Tax for a Band D property in 2025/26 be set at £223.65 (a £7.56 per annum increase on 2024/25 levels);**
- 3. That the Council tax for a band D property in 2025/26 for BTAC be set at £81.09 (a 72p per annum increase on 2024/25 levels);**
- 4. That the additions to and use of reserves (Appendix 1) be approved;**
- 5. That the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Appendix 1) be approved;**
- 6. That the Capital Programme and Capital Strategy (Appendices 2 and 3) be approved;**
- 7. That the Section 25 addendum (Appendix 1) be noted;**
- 8. That the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Strategy Statement including MRP Policy (Appendix 4a and 4b) be approved;**
- 9. That the proposed Fees and Charges Schedule (Appendix 5) be approved;**
- 10. That the Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26 (Appendix 6) be approved; and**
- 11. That the results of the Budget Consultation process (Appendix 7) be noted.**

Recorded Vote on Annual Budget Report 2025/26, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Capital Strategy Treasury management Policy/Strategy, and Annual Delivery Plan (Resolution)		
In accordance with Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the vote was taken as a recorded vote:		
For	Councillor Jyothi Arayambath, Councillor Alison Austin, Councillor Richard Austin BEM, Councillor John Baxter, Councillor Peter Bedford, Councillor Dale Broughton, Councillor Callum Butler, Councillor Emma Cresswell, Councillor Anne Dorrian, Councillor Neil Drayton, Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, Councillor Mike Gilbert, Councillor Paul Gleeson, Councillor Andy Izzard, Councillor Patricia Marson, Councillor David Middleton, Councillor Chris Mountain, Councillor Barrie Pierpoint, Councillor Ralph Pryke, Councillor Lina Savickiene, Councillor David Scoot, Councillor Sarah Sharpe, Councillor Helen Staples, Councillor Suzanne Welberry and Councillor Stephen Woodliffe	25
Against	Councillor David Brown, Councillor James Cantwell, Councillor Anton Dani, Councillor Stuart Evans and Councillor Claire Rylott	5
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

Recorded Vote on Council Tax Setting 2025/26 (Resolution)		
For	Councillor Jyothi Arayambath, Councillor Alison Austin, Councillor Richard Austin BEM, Councillor John Baxter, Councillor Peter Bedford, Councillor Dale Broughton, Councillor David Brown, Councillor Callum Butler, Councillor James Cantwell, Councillor Emma Cresswell, Councillor Anton Dani, Councillor Anne Dorrian, Councillor Neil Drayton, Councillor Stuart Evans, Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, Councillor Mike Gilbert, Councillor Paul Gleeson, Councillor Andy Izzard, Councillor Patricia Marson, Councillor David Middleton, Councillor Chris Mountain, Councillor Barrie Pierpoint, Councillor Ralph Pryke, Councillor Claire Rylott, Councillor Lina Savickiene, Councillor David Scoot, Councillor Sarah Sharpe, Councillor Helen Staples, Councillor Suzanne Welberry and Councillor Stephen Woodliffe	30
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

71 Council Tax Setting 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder – Finance, Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, presented a report by the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151), setting the amounts of Council Tax applicable for 2025/26 for each valuation band and in each part of the Borough.

The Boston Borough Council budget for 2025/26 was considered by Cabinet on 19th February 2025 and its recommendations set out the band D Council tax at £223.65, a

£7.56 (3.50%) increase on 2024/25. The Budget report was based on the finance settlement advised by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Councillor Ghosh set out the details of the Council Tax Setting documents within the agenda pack. The band D charge of £223.65 was a fraction of the County Council proposed band D charge of £1,625.85 and less than the Police and Crime Commissioner charge of £318.15. He indicated that the charge to be levied on the Council Taxpayers of Boston for services provided in their town (Boston Town Area Committee) would be £769,057 for 2025/26. This equated to a Band D equivalent charge of £81.09 (£80.37 for 2024/25), a 0.90% increase.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Comparisons were made with the less favourable position in other local authorities.
- Concerns were expressed about the charges levied by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the performance of Lincolnshire Police.
- Councillor Anne Dorrian thanked Christine Marshall for her sterling work on behalf of the Council and the support which she had provided.
- The Monitoring Officer indicated that Full Council was required to vote on the slightly revised Appendix A which had been made available to them. This document has been appended to the Minutes.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh and seconded by Councillor Anne Dorrian.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2025/26, as set out in the revised Appendix A and summarised at 4.1, be approved; and**
- 2. That the charge to be levied on the Council Taxpayers of Boston for services provided in their town (Boston Town Area Committee) be approved at £769,057 for 2025/26. This equated to a Band D equivalent charge of £81.09 (£80.37 for 2024/25), a 0.90% increase.**

72 Pay Policy Statement 2025/2026

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Anne Dorrian, presented the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/2026 which, under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, was required to be produced annually and for approval by Council, as had been a requirement since 2012/13. Councillor Dorrian confirmed that the statement set out the authority's policy for the financial year relating to the remuneration of chief officers, the remuneration of the lowest paid employees, the relationship between chief officers' remuneration and that of the other officers.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Councillor Dorrian confirmed that Brendan Arnold had been appointed as the Interim Financial Director.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Dale Broughton.

RESOLVED:

That the Pay Policy Statement 2025/2026, at Appendix 1, be approved.

73 Designation of Section 151 Officer

The Chief Executive presented a report on the Designation of Section 151 Officer. The Council had an obligation to designate a suitably qualified Section 151 Officer and that the existing Section 151 Officer, Christine Marshall, would be leaving the Council in March. The report sought the designation of an interim Section 151 Officer to ensure the statutory functions associated with the role were fulfilled. Members noted that at present, the role would be undertaken on a shared basis across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

Brendan Arnold had recently been appointed as Interim Director of Finance and it was recommended that he be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from 31st March 2025

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Dale Broughton.

RESOLVED:

That Brendan Arnold, the Council's Interim Director of Finance, be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from 31st March 2025.

74 Appointment of Returning Officer, Local Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

The Chief Executive presented a report on the Appointment of Returning Officer, Local Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer. Members noted that John Leach, Deputy Chief Executive – Communities, had been appointed to these roles by Council on Monday 18th September 2023. Following his decision to leave the authority in March, the Council was required to make a new appointment to these roles.

The Chief Executive advised that Andy Fisher, the Joint Deputy Chief Executive and Programme Delivery and Assistant Director – General Fund Assets, had previous experience working in elections acting as a Deputy Returning Officer and was willing to take on the roles.

Councillor Anne Dorrian commended John Leach on the sterling work which he had undertaken on behalf of the Council.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Dale Broughton.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Andy Fisher, Joint Deputy Chief Executive and Programme Delivery and Assistant Director – General Fund Assets, be appointed as Returning Officer (including appointment as Local Returning Officer for the Boston Borough area for Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Mayoral elections) and Electoral Registration Officer to the Council with immediate effect; and**
- 2. That an indemnity be granted to Andy Fisher for any personal liability arising from these appointments by the Council.**

75 Community Governance Review for the unparished area within the Borough of Boston

Leader of the Council, Councillor Anne Dorrian, presented a report by the Assistant Director – Governance & Monitoring Officer which sought approval to commence a Community Governance Review for the unparished area within the Borough of Boston.

The report was a result of the Leader's commitment given at Full Council on 20th January 2025 to consider the governance arrangements for the unparished areas of Boston Borough. It set out the terms of reference for the proposed Community Governance Review, should Full Council decide to proceed. If accepted, the following five members of the Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) would sit on the Community Governance Review Working Group: Councillors Anne Dorrian, Barrie Pierpoint, Emma Cresswell, Mike Gilbert and Paul Gleeson. The Working Group would consider the responses received during the two public consultations and then submit recommendations to Full Council.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- The importance of the work being undertaken in a timely manner was highlighted to avoid (i) asset stripping of the assets of the Borough Council to a distant unitary authority; and (ii) uncertainty about future Government plans for local government re-organisation.
- The Community Governance Review would give an improved status to the work of the Boston Town Area Committee.

The report was proposed by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Dale Broughton.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review, attached at Appendix 1, for publication and stage 1 consultation be approved;**
- 2. That Councillors Anne Dorrian, Barrie Pierpoint, Emma Cresswell, Mike Gilbert and Paul Gleeson, members of the Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) be appointed to a Community Governance Review Working Group to consider the responses received during the two consultation stages of the review and to present draft proposals and final recommendations to the Full Council for determination;**

3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to undertake the Community Governance Review, including making and publishing any necessary modifications (if any) to the Terms of Reference; and
4. That an initial allocation of £50k from the Funding Volatility Reserve to support delivery of the review be approved.

76 Preservation of Fenland Landscapes and Recognition of Boston Borough as a Critical Food Producing Area

The following Motion was received:

Preservation of Fenland Landscapes and Recognition of Boston Borough as a Critical Food Producing Area

This Council:

- Urges the relevant national authorities and infrastructure project planners to recognise the importance of the Fenland landscape and Boston Borough's role as a food-producing area.
- Advocates for the implementation of mitigation strategies to minimise the visual and ecological impact of infrastructure developments, including the consideration of alternative technologies and routing options.
- Encourages local stakeholders and residents, to engage in consultation processes to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns addressed in the planning and development processes.
- Recognises initiatives that promote the sustainable development of energy infrastructure while balancing the need to preserve our natural and agricultural heritage.
- Supports collaboration with other local authorities, including our partners within the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership, to present a united front in the protection of our landscapes and agricultural interests.
- By passing this motion, we reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding the Fenland landscape and ensuring the sustainability and productivity of Boston Borough as a vital food-producing area for the benefit of current and future generations.

Councillor Claire Rylott outlined the context of the Motion. She indicated that Boston Borough was faced with the threat of multiple Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), which if granted, would remove colossal swathes of land from crop production. Boston Borough was classified as the best and most versatile land in the country, something that should not be understated. It was crucial that as a local authority, Boston Borough Council should present a united front to make its stance on NSIPs clear.

The motion was moved by Councillor Claire Rylott and seconded by Councillor Stuart Evans.

Members discussed the motion and the following comments were made:

- The role of members on the Planning Committee was considered. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the motion was a general motion and that members of the Planning Committee could participate in the debate on the Motion provided they did not speak about specific planning applications, spoke in general terms and determined future applications with an open mind and in accordance with existing policies.
- Councillor John Baxter confirmed that the Council had appointed an NSIP project manager, with responsibility for looking at NSIPs. He advised that the Assistant Director – Planning & Strategic Infrastructure had decided that such projects would be considered by the Planning Committee rather than by officers.
- The impact of national policies on local communities was considered by several members, in addition to the absence of a financial benefit to the Council from NSIPs.

RESOLVED:

That this Council:

Urges the relevant national authorities and infrastructure project planners to recognise the importance of the Fenland landscape and Boston Borough's role as a food-producing area;

Advocates for the implementation of mitigation strategies to minimise the visual and ecological impact of infrastructure developments, including the consideration of alternative technologies and routing options;

Encourages local stakeholders and residents, to engage in consultation processes to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns addressed in the planning and development processes;

Recognises initiatives that promote the sustainable development of energy infrastructure while balancing the need to preserve our natural and agricultural heritage;

Supports collaboration with other local authorities, including our partners within the South and East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership, to present a united front in the protection of our landscapes and agricultural interests; and

By passing this motion, we reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding the Fenland landscape and ensuring the sustainability and productivity of Boston Borough as a vital food-producing area for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Meeting ended at 8.18 pm.

Council is recommended to approve the following resolutions:

- 1 It is to be noted that on 17 December 2024 the Council calculated: -
 - (a) the Council Tax Base 2025/26 for the District as **20,291** (item T in the formula in section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended) and;
 - (b) Dwellings in those parts of the district to which a Parish precept relates as shown in **Appendix B**
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£4,538,082**
- 3 That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act): -
 - (a) £50,857,361 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act;
 - (b) £44,919,906 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
 - (c) £5,937,455 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 31a (4) of the Act);
 - (d) £ 292.62 being the amount at 3(c) divided by the amount at 1(a) (item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
 - (e) £1,399,373 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Including Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see **Appendix B**);
 - (f) £ 223.65 being the amount at 3(d) less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) by the amount at 1(a) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its areas to which no parish precept relates;
4. That it be noted that for the year 2025/26 the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lincolnshire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Council Tax 2025/26	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Lincolnshire County Council	1083.90	1264.55	1,445.20	1,625.85	1,987.15	2,348.45	2,709.75	3,251.70
Lincolnshire PCC	212.10	247.45	282.80	318.15	388.85	459.55	530.25	636.30

5. That having calculated the aggregate in each case the amounts at 3(h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in **Appendix E** as the amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 of the categories of dwellings shown.
6. **Appendix F** provides definitions for the formal Council Tax resolution.