

Boston Borough Council

At the meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR on Tuesday, 4th June, 2024 at 6.40 pm.

Present:

Councillor Anne Dorrian (Leader), in the Chair.
Councillors Councillor Dale Broughton (Deputy Leader), John Baxter, Callum Butler, Emma Cresswell and Sandeep Ghosh.

Officers:

Deputy Chief Executive - Communities, Assistant Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Team Leader.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sarah Sharpe.

2 Declarations of Interest

The Leader declared that she represented Boston Borough Council on the Boston Town Deal Board.

3 Long-Term Plan for Towns Funding and Town Board

The Leader presented the report which sought consideration of the Long-Term Plan for Towns Funding and the governance arrangements required for a repurposed Boston Town Board.

Boston Borough Council was the accountable body for the new Long-Term Plan for Towns funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Boston was 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 was centred on local stakeholders acting in the interests of local people. A fundamental prerequisite of the funding allocation was the requirement of a Town Board.

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

The Council had communicated to the 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 had developed revised Terms of Reference for the Town Board to reflect the Government's requirements as set out in various guidance documents. These were attached in Appendix 1 within the report.

Members noted that the next meeting of the Town Deal Board was on Wednesday 5th June 2024 and therefore it was necessary to review and approve the repurposed Terms of Reference beforehand. The terms of reference took into account the principles of public life, the code of conduct, declarations of interest, membership and governance arrangements.

The Leader outlined the following differences between the original and the new terms of reference:

- Section 2 (Roles and Responsibilities) included the revised roles and responsibilities of the town board with updated links to relevant guidance documents and funding streams.
- Section 3 (Membership) referenced the requirements relating to the Chair, Deputy Chair and membership of the Board. The main difference was that the term of office for members had been increased from two to three years which reflected the suggested government guidance to review membership at the end of the three year investment plan cycle.
- Sections 6 (Notice of Meetings) and 10 (Reporting) included the transparency guidance as set out by the Government. Agendas would be published 5 working days in advance of the meeting and draft minutes would be published within 10 working days of the meeting.
- Section 8 (Declaration of Interest) incorporated the transparency requirements as set out by the Government. It reiterated that members should adhere to the seven principles of public life and sign up to the code of conduct.

The Leader highlighted some minor amendments, as follows:

- Paragraph 3.4 (d) should read 'to approve the draft minutes of the meeting allowing them to be distributed no more than 10 working days after the meeting'.
- Paragraph 7.1 should read 'A quorum shall be 5 Board Members present in person or in accordance with clause 5.5.'.
- Paragraph 9.1 should read 'Each member of the Board shall have one vote which may be cast on matters considered at the meeting by a show of hands. Votes can only be cast by members attending a meeting of the Board in person, in accordance with clause 5.5, or by proxy vote.'.

The Leader referred to paragraph 9.4 'Where a conflict of interest exists as set out in the Board's Code of Conduct, a Board Member may not vote.' to which she had received some feedback from a board member in respect of where a conflict of interest existed. She queried whether some additional wording could be added, such as 'Where a conflict of interest exists the member must recuse themselves from the vote and where deemed appropriate may be requested by the Chair to recuse themselves from the debate.'

The Assistant Director – Governance confirmed that it was usual practice within a local authority meeting, where a member had an interest under the code of conduct, to declare that interest and leave the room. He highlighted that the Town Board already had an existing Code of Conduct and agreed to check to see whether that condition was already contained. If not, it could be put forward as a recommendation to the Board for adoption within their Code of Conduct.

Councillor Dale Broughton referred to paragraph 3.12 ‘An elected member of Lincolnshire County Council shall be a Board member to meet LTPfT Guidance (December 2023).’ and queried how the membership would be decided in light of the County Elections taking place in May 2025, particularly if a member lost their seat. The Leader advised that the County Council would make nominations to appoint members to the Board in the same way that Boston Borough Council did at their Annual Council meeting.

Councillor Callum Butler referred to paragraph 3.1 ‘The independent Chair of the Town Board shall be appointed by Boston Borough Council in consultation with the local Member of Parliament and in line with guidance from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.’ and queried what the situation was in relation to the current purdah period as a result of the General Election in July. The Leader advised that she had spoken to the ‘then current’ MP prior to the election being called who was understanding and supportive of the vision of the Council in relation to the Town Board.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by the Councillor Dale Broughton.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the information relating to the Long-Term Plan for Boston, detailed within the report, be noted; and**
- 2. That the revised set of Terms of Reference for a repurposed Town Board as detailed within Appendix A be endorsed and recommended to the Town Board for adoption, subject to the amendments that had been discussed during the meeting.**

The Meeting ended at 6.48 pm.