



Report To:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date:	2 nd October 2025
Subject:	Update on Plan for Neighbourhoods
Purpose:	To provide an update on work done so far to develop a new Regeneration Plan and Investment Plan for Boston for submission as per Government guidance.
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mike Gilbert, Deputy Leader of the Council
Report Of:	Pranali Parikh, Director of Economic Development
Report Author:	Jon Burgess, Programme Manager (Economic Development)
Ward(s) Affected:	All Boston Town Centre Wards
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

This report provides an update on the Plan for Neighbourhoods (formerly known as Long Term Plan for Towns) for Boston.

Recommendations

That the Committee notes:

- The progress made so far for preparing the submission to the Government for Plan for Neighbourhood;
- The extent of consultation and engagement with communities and businesses and outcome of this work identifying key priorities; and
- Next steps for submission and delivery of the approved Plan.

Reasons for Recommendations

The preparation and submission of the Plan for Neighbourhood is an excellent opportunity to shape and influence the future of Boston town centre by working with local communities and businesses. The Neighbourhood Board is tasked with preparing the Plan in accordance with Government guidance. Boston Borough Council is the accountable body for the funding received from the Government and hence has a significant role to play in influencing the Plan. The Council will also play an important role in enabling and facilitating the function of the Board as well as delivery and monitoring the benefits of the Plan.

Other Options Considered

It is not considered appropriate for the members of this Committee to not have input in this key strategic document shaping the future of Boston Town Centre.

1. Background

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 In March 2025, the Government published a new Plan for Neighbourhoods 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. The new prospectus has amended the focus of the previous programme to prioritise three key themes of:
 - Thriving Places, Revitalizing areas with better amenities & 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
- 1.3 By 28th November 2025, 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.
- 1.4 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. A separate capacity funding revenue pot has also been made available as a non-ringfenced grant to enable local areas to embed the necessary governance structures and build local capability to be ready to hit the ground running from April 2026.

- 1.5 It is intended that the submission of the final Plan for Boston will be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet before the 28th November to authorise and approve the submission into MHCLG that will release the delivery funding from April 2026.
- 1.6 Boston is already benefitting from major regeneration programmes delivering multiple projects across the town centre, such as:
- Town Deal: £21.9m
 - Levelling Up Fund: £14.8m
 - Levelling Up Partnership Fund - £17m
 - UKSPF & REPF: £2.62m

Plan for Neighbourhood interventions must demonstrate additionality, complementing but not duplicating these schemes.

2. The role of the Council and the Town Board

- 2.1. 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 current Town Board membership is set out at Appendix 3 and will be subject to ongoing review.
- 2.2. The Council is the accountable body and will 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.
- 2.3. Councils are required to consult with the Town Board on their preference for using the capacity funding available, which could include.
- establishing and running the Town Board, including any process to establish the board as a charity, community interest company, or other bottom-up organisational model, to sustain long-term investment
 - performing community engagement, which could include passporting money directly to voluntary and community sector groups to assist with engagement
 - developing Regeneration Plans
 - securing advice and expertise for Town Boards for the technical elements of plan development and delivery
 - ensuring capital and infrastructure interventions can hit the ground running, for example, by kickstarting the planning application process, securing architectural plans and obtaining legal advice, or any other activity that councils and boards consider will progress their plans
- 2.4 Under the PfN Governance & Boundary Guidance, the Board must include diverse, non-elected membership (e.g., from local businesses, faith communities, voluntary groups), with a clearly defined Chair (non-elected person of local standing).

3. Community engagement and co-production

- 3.1. The Boston Town Board is committed to engaging local people in the development and delivery of plans for Boston, ensuring that they are supported and empowered to have their say. The engagement approach is guided by the principles of being inclusive, creative, empowering, listening, and easy to access.
- 3.2. During June–August 2025, the Board delivered a multi-layered engagement programme under the Let's Talk Boston banner. This built on previous consultation work and sought to ensure robust and meaningful input from residents, businesses, and community groups.
- 3.3. Key elements of engagement activities included:
- a. Boston College Consultation – engagement at Futurefest (careers festival) and Sparkfest (50th anniversary), with 120 young people engaged at Futurefest and 449 participants of all ages at Sparkfest. Young people were trained and supported as community interviewers.
 - b. Let's Talk Boston Surveys:
 - General survey (338 responses), translated into nine languages and available online.
 - Incentivised freepost leaflet survey (responses still being returned).
 - Dedicated youth survey (70 responses) in partnership with Boston Youth Hub, supported by on-site iPads.
 - Events Programme – consultation at Boston Community Day, Craft Market, Pride, weekly Market, and Teenage Market, reaching a broad cross-section of residents, traders, and businesses
 - c. Community-led Engagement – Board supported community groups to lead engagement using a funded toolkit. Highlights include:
 - Boston Lithuanian Community (drop-in sessions, art workshops, translated surveys – 26 Lithuanian and 24 Russian returns to date).
 - Boston Mosque (survey promoted at Friday prayers, with iPads provided).
 - Boston Youth Hub (graffiti wall and digital engagement).
 - Boston Centrepont (art workshops to capture views).
 - d. Online and media campaign generated significant awareness
 - 77,509 Facebook views, 16,080 reach, and 742 link clicks during July–August.
 - Paid web banners generated over 270,000 impressions.
 - Press releases, Chair's Updates, and Boston Vibe coverage amplified reach
 - e. Stakeholders' workshops – From September to November and beyond there will be a series of thematic and other stakeholder workshops to ensure each plan is embedded in local ecosystems, has broad and meaningful opportunities for stakeholders across public, private and VCFSE to shape, guide and comment upon emerging priorities and proposals.
Workshops planned and delivered so far include:
 - Strategic Workshop with Boston Town Board Members
 - Safety and Security planned for the week commencing 6th October
 - Town Centre Improvement also for the week commencing 6th OctoberFuture workshops in the planning phase but with dates to be determined are:

- Pride in Place/A Brand for Boston
- Health & Wellbeing
- Employment, Skills & Learning

3.4. Reach & Impact.

- Over 1,000 pieces of feedback collected to date, with further freepost surveys still being returned.
- Strong youth voice, achieved through collaboration with Boston College and Youth Hub, alongside participation at youth markets.
- Inclusive engagement ensured via translation of surveys, collaboration with migrant and faith groups, and targeted outreach
- Priorities identified by the Board following collation of comments received from the engagement activities highlighted above:
 - Safety and Security
 - Town Centre Improvement
 - Boston 2030

3.5. Together these provide a clear “road map” for the next stage of engagement and plan development. The programme team is now focused on deepening insight through focus groups and thematic workshops, while continuing to embed co-production and ensure that Boston’s PfN plan is genuinely community-owned.

4. **Next steps:**

4.1 Internal workshops and community engagement point to several early priorities:

- Town Centre Vitality – public realm, shopfronts, markets, wayfinding signage, support for events
- Community Infrastructure – building on recent UKSPF investment to support community led efforts to build capacity and resilience.
- Safety & Perceptions – tackling anti-social behaviour and crime, particularly in the town centre.
- Pride in Place & Culture – festivals, Boston 2030, stronger and safer night-time economy offer

4.2 The Board is working with appointed consultants to prepare the 10 year vision of the Regeneration Plan and the four year investment plan to meet the priorities emerging from the consultation in conjunction with the challenges faced by the community as highlighted in the data packs shared by the Government.

4.3 The regeneration and investment plan will identify key interventions for investment (both capital and revenue), phasing of delivery over the next ten years and delivery mechanisms where appropriate.

4.4 The Plan for Neighbourhoods prospectus provides a long list of pre-approved interventions for delivery. Where the final Regeneration Plan for Boston includes any projects linked to these ‘on-menu’ interventions they will not be subject to any further assessment or approval from Government. They may however still require the use of

local capacity funding to progress the necessary design and feasibility to ensure effective delivery.

- 4.5 It is to note that the guidance is clear that localities retain significant flexibilities to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise across the 10-year funding programme. The guidance further supports flexibility on the content of the submission, enabling each Plan to be as specific or indicative as decided by the Neighbourhood Board. In many cases it is expected that each plan will contain a smaller set of costed projects with the remainder of the allocation over the first 4 years to be indicative allowing Neighbourhood Boards, and their respective Local Authorities, to further co-produce projects post-submission.
- 4.6 The Government has set a deadline of 28th November 2025 for the submission of the updated Regeneration and Investment Plan for all towns. The first tranche of delivery funding is to be released from 1st April 2026. The Town Board and Council will agree a final draft plan for submission before the 28th of November 2025.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Plan for Neighbourhoods programme provides an opportunity for the Council, in consultation with the Town Board, to secure additional new investment of up to £20million for Boston over a ten year period.
- 5.2 The development of the Regeneration Plan is supported by the provision of a dedicated revenue capacity funding pot, which forms part of the overall grant award for Boston.
- 5.3 All funding expenditure will be managed in accordance with the relevant contract and financial procedures of the accountable body and in line with all current and subsequent policy guidance from MHCLG.
- 5.4 A further report is anticipated once a draft plan is ready to be considered by Cabinet to agree as the final submission for Boston to release the delivery funding from MHCLG.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

The Plan for Neighbourhoods supports several direct Council ambitions and priorities around delivering improved lives for our local communities by increasing opportunities to bring people together and improving facilities to ties through improved social cohesion and economic growth. Whilst the funding is limited to the agreed intervention boundary for Boston (Appendix 2), Skegness and Spalding are also approved towns for the same funding. Wherever possible the Council will seek to achieve value for money by aligning resources to address any common or consistent themes across the three towns which the respective community consultation identifies.

Corporate Priorities

The Plan for Neighbourhoods programme provides the opportunity for services to deliver additional benefit in the approved towns under the agreed themes and proposed interventions. Service Managers will be consulted as part of the development phase.

Staffing

Additional project management resource is secured to support the team in delivering this significantly increased level of work.

Workforce Capacity Implications

The delivery of the Plan may require additional capacity within the teams. Capacity implications of any actions included in the regeneration plan will need to be considered and monitored on ongoing basis.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

The Council will act as the accountable body for the funds with responsibility for 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.

As an accountable body, the Council must comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 when administering public money under the programme. Accountable bodies should familiarise themselves with the Subsidy Control Act, and the statutory guidance which is updated periodically.

The Council may need to recover funding from project deliverers where subsidy control or state aid law has not been complied with.

The Council will be responsible for ensuring that all funding is managed in accordance with relevant public contract regulations.

Data Protection

Any exchange of data and information with Town Board and other partners will be subject to data protection regulations.

Financial

Taking on accountable body status for the Plan for Neighbourhoods (PfN) programme would mean Boston Borough Council becomes responsible for receiving, holding, and distributing the grant funding, ensuring that it is spent in line with government requirements. This role brings oversight and governance responsibilities similar to those the Council already exercises for other major external funds such as the Levelling Up and Towns Fund. It is anticipated that staffing and administrative costs may be met through the programme's management allowance, although if this proves insufficient, the Council may need to draw on existing resources.

The main financial risk relates to potential clawback of funding if ineligible expenditure is identified. Strong due diligence, audit, and monitoring arrangements will therefore be essential to mitigate exposure. On balance, provided adequate safeguards are maintained, the accountable body role should not create a net cost to the Council and will enable Boston to ensure PfN resources are effectively directed towards local priorities

Risk Management

The key risks to be managed in the process of the submission of the Regeneration Plan are:

1. Capacity - to prepare the Regeneration Plan in compliance with the guidance and in timescales prescribed by the Government.
2. Inclusive engagement - Boston communities from all quarters have an opportunity to influence the Regeneration Plan.
3. Partnership - relationship between the Council, the Town Board and partners is constructive and collaborative to maximise the benefits of the community.
4. Deliverability - the Regeneration Plan is aspirational and deliverable to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved.
5. Accountability – the Council as accountable body is responsible for compliance to a range of issues as identified in the legal implications above.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

The Town Board membership was reviewed in March 2025 in alignment with the priority themes of the Plan for neighbourhood. The Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Gilbert, sits on the Town Board for Boston. Engagement with stakeholders and communities is part of the programme of activities that the Town Board is leading in preparation of the Plan. The main body of the report provides detailed discussion of stakeholder engagement undertaken to date and of further scheduled activities. The guidance for PfN makes clear that Board are expected to undertake stakeholder engagement and consultation across the full 10-year funding period to ensure Plans are aligned to emerging priorities. There will be Member Briefings during October 2025 to provide members with assurance as well as an opportunity to shape and steer the submission.

Reputation

None arising from this report

Contracts

All contracts for the use of capacity fund will be in accordance with the Council's financial procedural rules and the contract procedure rules.

Crime and Disorder

Safety and security is one of the key themes as part of the Plan.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

Equality, inclusivity and accessibility are key principles for the preparation of the Plan.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing is one of the key priority themes for the Plan.

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

None arising from this report

Acronyms

MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
FY – Financial Year

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix 1 Funding Profile
Appendix 2 Boston Intervention Area
Appendix 3 Current Town Board membership

Background Papers

Links to the guidance published to date on the new prospectus are provided below:

- [Plan for Neighbourhoods: prospectus - GOV.UK](#)
- [Plan for Neighbourhoods: pre-approved interventions - GOV.UK](#)
- [Plan for Neighbourhoods: list of powers - GOV.UK](#)
- [Plan for Neighbourhoods: governance and boundary guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- [Plan for Neighbourhoods: Regeneration Plan guidance - GOV.UK](#)

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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Appendix 1: Plan for Neighbourhoods Funding Profile (as per Government prospectus)

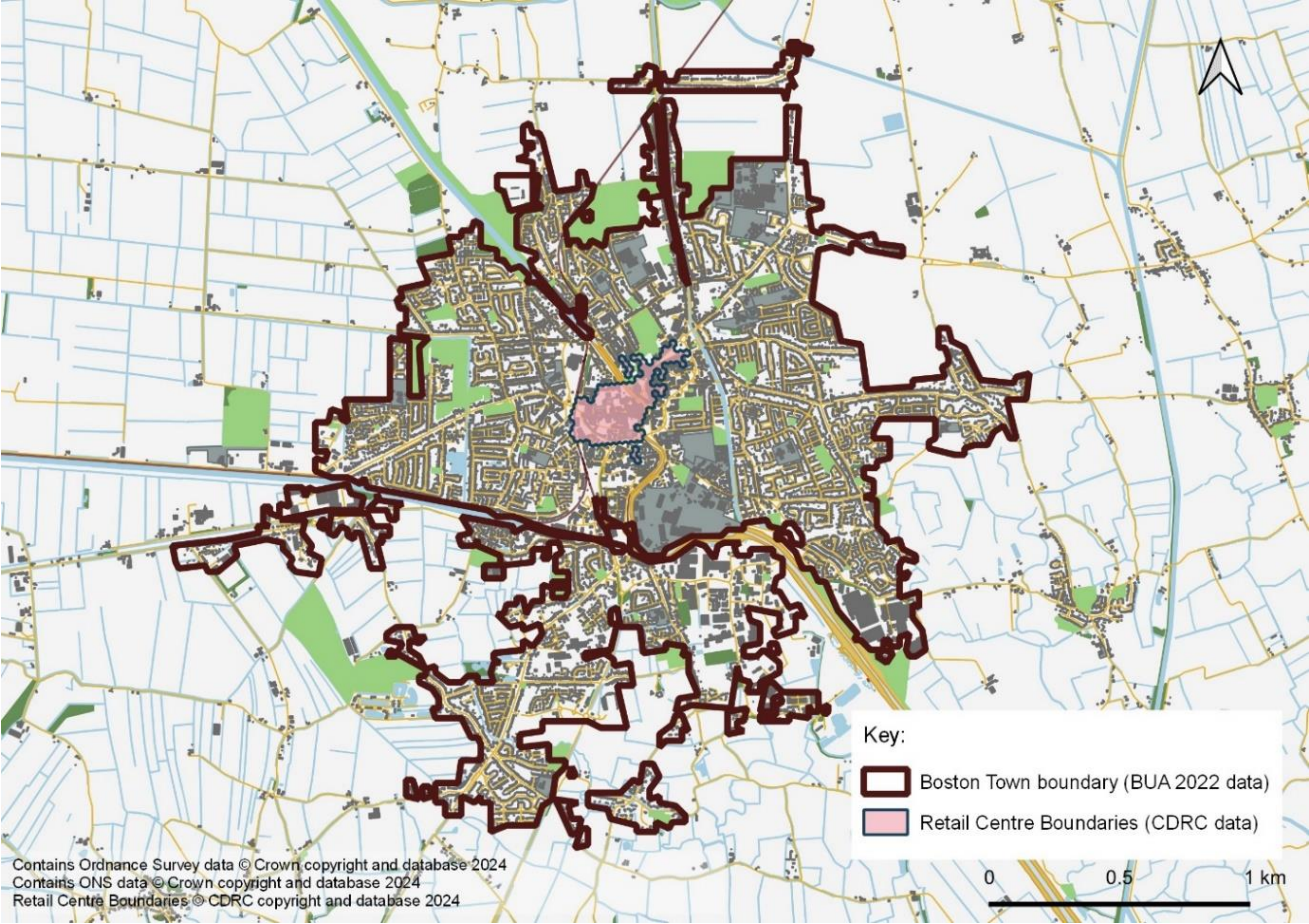
Grant type	Previous Years	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	Total
Revenue funding (capacity)	250	200	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	600
Revenue funding (grants)	0	0	232	256	432	432	432	432	437	450	450	450	3,999
Total revenue funding	250	200	382	256	432	432	432	432	437	450	450	450	4,599
Capital funding (grants)	0	0	360	1,736	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	14,936
Total	250	200	742	1,992	2,037	2,037	2,037	2,037	2,042	2,055	2,055	2,055	19,535

For noting: there are some minor anomalies in the funding totals published by Government due to rounding errors.

Bold: funding received

Green: the Plan for Neighbourhoods submission for Boston must include an investment plan for the first four years of delivery

Appendix 2: Boston Intervention Area



Appendix 3: Current Town Board Membership (revised March 2025)

Mandatory Roles (as per MHCLG guidance)		
Independent Chair	Jo Brigham	
Leader of Boston Borough Council	Cllr Dale Broughton	Deputised by Mike Gilbert, Deputy Leader
MP	Richard Tice MP	
Police & Crime Commissioner	Mark Jones	
Proposed Theme Leads (in line with Plan for Neighbourhoods prospectus)		
Safety & Security	Inspector Ian Cotton	Lincolnshire Police
Housing	Neil Kempster	Chestnut Homes
Arts, Culture and Heritage	Tracy Stringfellow	Heritage Trust Lincolnshire
Visitor Economy	To be confirmed	
Education and Skills	Claire Foster	Boston College
Health and Wellbeing	Jacqui Bunce	NHS
Sport and leisure	Emma Tatlow	Active Lincolnshire
Community (interest groups)	Alison Fairman Jurate Matulioniene	Eastern European Group
Community (cohesion)	Abdul Hamid Qureshi	UKIM Boston Mosque
Community (young people)	New Youth Group being set up via community leaders	
Community (voluntary and charity)	Richard Tory David Fannin	Boston Big Local CVS
Physical Infrastructure	To be confirmed Sandra Dowson	Lincolnshire County Council One Public Estate
Work and Productivity	Simon Beardsley Andy Lawrence	Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce Port of Boston
Town Centre	To be confirmed	Town Centre Forum