

Boston Borough Council

Minutes of a Special meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR on Thursday 13th November 2025 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Dale Broughton (Leader), in the Chair.

Councillors Mike Gilbert (Deputy Leader), John Baxter, Callum Butler, Sandeep Ghosh, Chris Mountain and Sarah Sharpe.

Officers:

Director of Economic Development, Assistant Director – Culture and Regeneration, Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme Manager and Democratic Services Team Leader.

20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Rylott and Helen Staples.

The Leader welcomed Maria Cotton, the new Assistant Director – Culture and Regeneration, to her first Cabinet meeting in Boston, noting that she had started in post earlier that week.

21 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

22 Pride in Place Programme (Boston)

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Gilbert, presented a report by the Director of Economic Development which outlined the purpose of the Pride in Place Programme that represented a significant opportunity for Boston to secure up to £20 million of investment over the next ten years. This funding would build on the £50 million already received through the Towns Fund and Levelling Up initiatives.

Members noted that the programme was designed to deliver long-term regeneration and community empowerment, with three overarching Government priorities:

- Creating thriving places
- Building stronger communities
- Helping communities take back control

The submission required by 28th November 2025 comprised a ten-year Regeneration Plan and Vision for Boston and a detailed four-year investment profile. The plan had been developed in partnership with the Boston Town Board and informed by extensive community consultation, which had attracted over 1,100 responses.

The introduction highlighted the eight priority themes for Boston, including town centre revitalisation, heritage and culture, community safety, housing, health and wellbeing, education and skills, green spaces, and youth engagement. The first four years would focus on quick wins such as public realm improvements, cultural activation, and safety

hubs, alongside preparatory work for Boston 400 in 2030 and a potential bid for UK Town of Culture status in 2028.

Thanks were extended to officers, members, Town Board representatives, and partners for their work in preparing the submission.

Members expressed strong support for the proposals, recognising the scale of the opportunity to transform Boston through the Pride in Place Programme. The discussion highlighted that the £20 million investment over ten years represented a major commitment from the Government and would build on the success of previous regeneration initiatives, including the Towns Fund and Levelling Up programmes.

The importance of the programme's three core objectives, creating thriving places, building stronger communities, and enabling local people to take back control, was emphasised and members welcomed the alignment of the proposed interventions with these priorities.

The potential to revitalise the town centre was seen as critical, with suggestions that improvements to public realm, shop fronts, and leisure facilities would help attract visitors and encourage more people to live and work in the centre. The cultural quarter and heritage activation proposals were strongly supported, with members noting the opportunity to position Boston as a leading cultural destination and to prepare for the Boston 400 celebrations in 2030. The possibility of bidding for UK Town of Culture status in 2028 was considered an exciting prospect that could raise Boston's national profile.

Community safety was identified as a key priority, with members welcoming plans for dedicated safety hubs and measures to reduce anti-social behaviour. It was noted that while CCTV and infrastructure improvements were important, these needed to be complemented by effective policing and partnership working to deliver meaningful outcomes.

The discussion also covered housing and skills development, with members stressing the need to address non-decent dwellings and improve educational attainment, particularly in areas of high deprivation. The inclusion of youth engagement and community capacity building within the programme was welcomed as a means of fostering long-term resilience and civic pride.

Specific reference was made to the Public Sector Partnership Services (PSPS) Transformation and Service Modernisation Programme, particularly in relation to IT systems and capital expenditure. Members stressed the need to avoid duplication and ensure that Pride in Place funding was used for additional investment rather than replacing existing commitments. Officers confirmed that any projects funded through the programme must be aligned with agreed priorities and approved by the Town Board, and that statutory duties or pre-committed expenditure could not be covered by the funding. It was agreed that further checks would be undertaken to ensure that proposals complement, rather than conflict with, the PSPS transformation work.

Members also discussed the importance of converting vacant retail properties into residential accommodation as part of the wider town centre strategy. This approach was seen as essential to creating a more vibrant and sustainable centre, reducing commercial vacancies, and supporting a 24-hour economy.

In addition, there was recognition that while the programme focused on Boston town centre, opportunities should be explored to invest in the wider Boston area, including neighbourhoods beyond the immediate centre, to ensure that benefits were felt across the community. Members welcomed confirmation that some funding streams could support projects outside the core town centre, subject to alignment with programme priorities.

The importance of clear communication and engagement with residents and businesses was emphasised, both to promote the programme and to encourage participation in shaping future projects. Members noted that the consultation undertaken to date had been extensive and should continue throughout the delivery phase.

Finally, members recognised the ambitious timetable, with submission required by the end of November and delivery commencing in April 2026. Officers confirmed that resources were in place and additional capacity would be secured through the programme, supported by the Town Board and partner organisations.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Mike Gilbert and seconded by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh.

Resolved:

- 1. That the submission of the ten-year Regeneration Plan and Vision for Boston, attached within Appendix 2, be approved;**
- 2. That the proposed four-year investment plan profile for Boston, as set out at section 3 within the report, be approved;**
- 3. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economic Development to agree any amendments to the final draft Regeneration Plan and Investment Profile during the submission and assessment phase with UK Government, in consultation with the Chair of the Boston Town Board, the Section 151 Officer and the Deputy Leader of the Council; and**
- 4. That authority be delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the submission of the Pride in Place Programme information for Boston to UK Government by 28th November 2025.**

The Meeting ended at 6.29 pm.