



# Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/2025



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# The Role and Function of Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny is about improving performance and securing better services for local people. During 2024/25, most executive decisions were taken by the Cabinet. The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions, assist in the development of policy, and monitor performance. Whilst Overview and Scrutiny committees cannot compel change, their influence is exercised through evidence-based reviews and the making of recommendations.

Within Boston Borough Council, scrutiny during 2024/25 was undertaken through two committees: the Environment and Performance Committee and the Corporate and Community Committee. On matters of mutual interest, the committees met jointly. In addition, a framework for joint scrutiny activity across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (S&ELCP), comprising Boston, South Holland and East Lindsey, enabled members to scrutinise common strategic issues that benefit from a partnership approach.

## Introduction from the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees

### Environment and Performance Committee (E&P)

Firstly, I would like to thank Councillor Lina Savickiene for acting as my Vice and Councillor Stuart Evans for filling the role as required. May I also thank the committee for all their hard work over the past year.

E and P is no longer a committee – it has merged with Overview and Scrutiny as a cost saving exercise. As an opposition Chair I have done what I should and hold the council to account, I was fortunate to have a robust committee and together we strengthened our scrutinising skills.

The only topic we wished to scrutinise and failed was with National Grid and the massive new pylons that are to be erected through our green and beautiful landscape. Disappointingly National Grid cancelled the meeting a few days before it was due to take place.

It was interesting this year to be scrutinising the Guildhall, this came under scrutiny some 9/10 years ago and sadly we are still kicking the can down the road.

May I take this opportunity of thanking our experienced officers for all the support and time they have given to the committee.

**Councillor Claire Rylott**

**Chairman of the Environment and Performance Committee**



### Corporate and Community Committee (C&C)

This year saw a consolidation of the committee with all the training and hard work of the first year bearing fruit. It was good to see that members were coming well prepared with constructive questions and ideas on how to improve policy as well as developing new areas for the committee to look at.

The committee also benefited immensely from great support from officers whose knowledge and ability enabled the committee to operate very efficiently. Councillor Paul Gleeson Chairman of the Corporate and Community Committee.

**Councillor Paul Gleeson**

**Chairman of the Corporate and Community Committee**



## Committees Memberships 2024/2025

### Environment & Performance

Cllr Claire Rylott *Chairman*

Cllr Lina Savickiene *Vice Chairman*

Cllr Alison Austin

Cllr Neil Drayton

Cllr Stuart Evans

Cllr Mike Gilbert

Cllr Andy Izzard

Cllr Patricia Marson

Cllr Ralph Pryke

Cllr David Scoot

Cllr Suzanne Welberry

### Corporate and Community

Cllr Paul Gleeson *Chairman*

Cllr Suzanne Welberry *Vice Chairman*

Cllr Jyothi Arayambath

Cllr Richard Austin BEM

Cllr David Brown

Cllr Anton Dani

Cllr Neil Drayton

Cllr Andy Izzard

Cllr Chris Mountain

Cllr Barrie Pierpoint

Cllr Helen Staples

As the role of Scrutiny is to hold Cabinet to account, neither panel can include membership from the Cabinet.

## Corporate Management Support

During 2024/2025, each scrutiny committee was supported by relevant members of the Corporate Management Team. Officer support ensured appropriate scheduling, timely reporting and follow-up, and access to specialist expertise when required.

Support for the Environment & Performance Committee was provided by:



Christian Allen the Assistant Director  
Regulatory

Support for the Corporate and Community Committee was provided by:



Andy Fisher the Deputy Chief Executive  
(Programme Delivery) and Assistant Director  
General Fund Assets

# Committee Meetings and Summary of Work

Both committees undertook a full programme of work across the municipal year. In addition to standing items such as forward plan monitoring and quarterly performance reporting, the committees received and scrutinised policy proposals, strategies, consultations and service updates relevant to their functions.

## Environment and Performance Committee

Items and reports considered:

- Crime and Disorder Partnership Update — annual report on initiatives and performance, including local ASB campaigns.
- CCTV Function — operational updates and performance; recommended the revised CCTV Policy to Cabinet.
- Quarterly Performance Reports — monitoring of service performance and identification of future scrutiny topics.
- Environment Policy — endorsement of the revised Environment Policy to support the sub-regional strategy.
- Boston Markets Policy and Severe Weather Policy — updates following service review; feedback provided to Cabinet and Full Council.
- Guildhall Action Plan — progress update on service delivery improvements; achievements and future plans noted.
- Boston Market Development Plan — progress against actions and proposed future improvements.
- Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) — proposed bird feeding controls in designated town centre areas; recommended to Cabinet following consultation.
- Joint scrutiny items — contributions to SELCP-wide task and finish activity where appropriate.

## Corporate and Community Committee

Items and reports considered:

- Artificial Intelligence Policy — draft policy reviewed with comments on scope and implementation principles.
- Street Naming and Numbering Policy — recommended to Cabinet for adoption.
- Customer Feedback Policy — considered the revised approach for implementation across the Partnership.
- South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Private Sector Housing Strategy — endorsed priorities for action and delivery.
- Boston Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2027 — Year One (2024) review; endorsed continued delivery.
- LGA Peer Review Action Plan — progress monitoring and continued oversight.
- Boston Plan 2040 — draft plan reviewed; feedback provided to inform finalisation.
- Working in Partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector — overview received and approach supported.
- Council/PSPS Transformation and Service Modernisation Programme — information considered and feedback provided (exempt).
- South & East Lincolnshire Partnership — Healthy Living Board update; supported recommendations from SELCP joint scrutiny.
- Local Council Tax Support Scheme (2025/26) — consultation proposals reviewed; feedback provided.
- Budget Overview 2025/26–2029/30 — draft budget and medium-term financial strategy scrutinised and recommended to Cabinet.

## Joint Scrutiny Panel

Where subjects warranted collective consideration, the Environment and Performance Committee and the Corporate and Community Committee met jointly. In addition, Boston members participated in S&ELCP task and finish work to review partnership-wide matters. Key joint scrutiny activity included:

- Scope and proposed arrangements for a sub-regional Leisure Facilities Operator Contract — membership agreed; recommendations progressed.
- Annual joint scrutiny of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership — findings endorsed for presentation to Cabinet and sovereign committees.
- Scrutiny arrangements review — options explored for future arrangements; preferred model recommended to Full Council.

## Suggestion/Request for Scrutiny

### Boston Task and Working Groups

- Member Working Group: Review of Car Parking in Boston (town centre) — met on 23 November 2023; outcomes reported to the Environment and Performance Committee on 5 September 2024; recommendations presented to Cabinet on 16 January 2025.
- Enviro Crime review — convened by the Environment and Performance Committee as part of SELCP joint scrutiny programme.

### Partnership Task Groups

- Sub-regional Leisure Facilities Operator Contract — task and finish group reviewed contract scope and proposed arrangements.
- Annual joint scrutiny of the S&ELCP — review of partnership progress and opportunities across the sub-region.
- Partnership Enviro Crime Enforcement Contract — review of operation, performance and benefits of the contract.

## Alternative Ways of Working

To support effective member engagement, a series of informal briefings were held to share information and invite questions. Briefings during 2024/2025 included:

- 3 June 2024 — PE21 / Rosegarth Square Development (Member Briefing)
- 20 June 2024 — SELCP Leisure Operator Procurement (BBC Member Briefing)
- 27 June 2024 — Long Term Plan for Towns Funding (Briefing for Members)
- 31 July 2024 — Data Protection (Members Briefing)
- 23 September 2024 — PSPS Councillor Briefing on Artificial Intelligence in Local Government
- 13 November 2024 — Council/PSPS Service Modernisation Programme (Member Briefing)
- 25 November 2024 — Budget (Member Briefing)
- 4 December 2024 — Partnership-wide Member briefing: Budget/MTFS Update
- 28 January 2025 — Implications of the English Devolution Bill White Paper (Briefing)
- 29 January 2025 — Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment Tool (Briefing)
- 3 March 2025 — Local Government Reorganisation (Briefing)
- 18 March 2025 — Community Flood Resilience (Member Briefing)
- 28 April 2025 — UKSPF & Funding (Boston Borough) (Briefing)
- 13 May 2025 — National Grid — Eastern Green Link 3 (EGL3) and Eastern Green Link 4 (EGL4) Stage 2 Consultation (Member Briefing)

## Looking Ahead

Following a decision by Full Council on 19 May 2025, a revised scrutiny structure for the 2025/2026 municipal year will be implemented, with a single, standalone Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising 15 members and a six-month review of the new arrangements. The committee's forward work programme is expected to include:

- Continued oversight of the LGA Peer Review Action Plan and wider transformation and modernisation programmes.
- Delivery monitoring of the Boston Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan (2023–2027).
- Progress on the Boston Plan 2040 and associated consultation and implementation activities.
- Compliance preparation for new Waste-related policies and procedures under the Environment Act 2021.
- Scrutiny of health and wellbeing priorities via the S&ELCP Healthy Living Board and related action plans.
- Consideration of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) developments and implications for governance and services.
- Use of the Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment Tool across decision-making.
- Community Flood Resilience and associated preparedness activities.
- Engagement with National Grid consultations (EGL3 and EGL4) and local impacts, as appropriate.
- Oversight of UKSPF-funded programmes and outcomes.

For more information of issues covered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, please visit the BBC website: Boston Borough Council (<https://democracy.boston.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=339&Year=0>)

## Contact



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