

Minutes of a meeting of the **JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 21 October 2025 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)

B Alcock
D Ashby
A C Beal
M D Booth

C J T H Brewis
N Chapman
L J Eldridge
M Geaney

M Le Sage
J Whitbourn
D J Wilkinson

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors P Barnes, R A Gibson and I Sheard

In Attendance: The Leader of the Council, the Director of Economic Development, the Assistant Director - General Fund Assets, the Head of Special Projects (Leisure) the Assistant Director - Leisure and Local Services, the Democratic Services Officer and the Democratic Services Support Officer.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Andrew Woolf was elected as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were none

3. PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMME (PRIDE IN PLACE)

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Economic Development which provided an update on work being undertaken with the Spalding Town Board to develop a new Regeneration Plan and submission for Spalding, in line with the published Government guidance and requirements.

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Economic Development were in attendance for this item.

The Director of Economic Development provided a presentation and outlined the background to the programme, including the £20 million funding allocation over a ten-year period, of which, 75% was designated for capital projects and 25% for revenue.

Action By

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Members were informed that the Council would act as the accountable body and that the Town Board, chaired independently, would steer the plan's development.

The Director of Economic Development highlighted the ongoing consultation activities, including public events, stakeholder workshops and online surveys. Over 220 responses had been received to date, with further engagement planned until the end of October 2025.

Key themes emerging from the consultation included:

- Town Image and Identity;
- Retail and Market Offer;
- Safety and Security;
- Heritage, Culture and Events;
- Community Facilities; and
- Transport and Connectivity.

The Director of Economic Development confirmed that all feedback would be considered in the development of the four-year investment plan and the ten-year vision. A member briefing session had been scheduled for 3 November 2025 and the report would be considered at a Special Cabinet meeting scheduled for 24 November 2025.

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

- Members asked if rent or rate support could be offered to encourage new businesses to occupy vacant units.
 - The Director of Economic Development confirmed that options such as purchasing properties to control rent levels, offering grant funding, and incentivising new occupiers were being explored.
- Members enquired about the feasibility of using compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) to acquire long-term vacant or derelict properties.
 - The Director of Economic Development acknowledged that CPOs were a potential tool, though complex and time-consuming, and that alternative approaches may be more practical.
- Members enquired about the potential for indoor market spaces or craft hubs to support local traders and artisans.
 - The Leader responded that cultural and community

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uses for vacant buildings were being considered, and that similar models had proven successful elsewhere.

- Members debated the benefits of markets to town centres which included a suggestion that Spalding market hours be extended into the afternoon to reflect changing demographics and shopping habits.
 - The Director of Economic Development explained that market trader contracts were under review and that a balance would need to be struck between footfall and trader viability.
- Members asked whether shop owners and absentee landlords had been consulted on the Plan for Neighbourhood Programme, and whether their views had been captured in the current consultation. Would the full analysis of the survey responses be provided?
 - The Director of Economic Development responded that:
 - Engagement had taken place via the Business Improvement District (BID), which sits on the Town Board, and that further outreach to property owners was planned; and
 - The survey responses, including feedback from shop owners would be included as part of the member briefing scheduled for 3 November 2025.
- Members highlighted the importance of regular events and cultural programming to attract footfall and support the town centre economy.
 - The Director of Economic Development agreed and stated that events, heritage, and community-led activities were key components of the plan. The 10-year vision would incorporate a wider aspiration for which grant external funding could/would be sought.
- Members raised concerns about the condition of pavements, cleanliness, and public realm in the town centre.
 - The Director of Economic Development acknowledged these issues and confirmed that quick-win interventions were being considered alongside longer-term regeneration.

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- Members noted the need to improve connectivity between the town centre and key destinations such as Springfields and the planned Health Hub.
 - The Director of Economic Development confirmed that pedestrian and cycle routes, signage, and gateway improvements were part of the plan;
 - The Leader added that the Spalding BID was working closely with Springfields to promote town centre businesses.

- Members raised accessibility concerns, including car parking and public transport links.
 - The Director of Economic Development noted that transport connectivity was being reviewed and that the partnership was currently working with transport providers.

- Members highlighted the importance of engaging young people in the development of the plan.
 - The Director of Economic Development confirmed that youth engagement was a key theme and that the feedback from the recent Youth Democracy Week sessions would be incorporated.

- Members highlighted the need for visitors to feel safe and secure when visiting the town centre.

- Members queried whether significant and longstanding vacant sites could be acquired by the council for viable use, feeding into the plan and long-term vision.

Members were advised that a Member Briefing would be held on the 3 November 2025, to review the draft submission, with a Cabinet meeting scheduled to consider the final documents on 24 November 2025.

AGREED:

- a) That the preparation to submit the Plan for Neighbourhood Programme by the 28 November 2025 was noted

- b) That key priorities would be identified after consultation had been undertaken with local communities and businesses.

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c) That the Plan for Neighbourhood Programme be noted.

Cllr Whitbourn left the meeting after this item.

4. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED:

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

6. CONTRACTING OF LEISURE FACILITIES WITH AN EXTERNAL OPERATOR AS AGENT FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Consideration was given to a presentation in respect of the S&ELCP Sub-regional Leisure Operating Agent Procurement.

AGREED:

Following consideration of contracting of Leisure Facilities with an external operator as agent for service delivery, that the comments of the Panel be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.38 pm)

(End of minutes)