

Policy Development Panel 25 June 2024 - Planning Briefing Note

Planning Reform and Planning Design are acknowledged as areas of interest in terms of the Policy Development Panel work programme. They have been held in abeyance for some time. However, it is important to note that there is a current Task Group that picks up, in part design, so far as it pertains to town centres.

The Assistant Director for Planning has recently presented to the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinets of both South Holland and Boston in respect of next steps on the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

This is a function of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, which is a separate entity to both Councils. Both Boston and South Hollands statutory plan-making functions are held by the Joint Committee by way of a Statutory Instrument of Parliament i.e. the Joint Committee is the Local Planning Authority for plan-making purposes. As such, the decision to formulate and adopt new policy sits with it, not Boston or South Holland as separate entities but joint.

Policy Development Panel may of course make recommendations to Cabinet, that areas of concern be forwarded on to the Joint Committee for their consideration. It is intended that the Joint Strategic Planning Committee is reconvened during the first half of 2024. However, it's chief initial task will be to consider the plan as is and scope next steps. Design policies/guides will then obviously be considered by the Joint Committee.

It is important to note that the policy resource across Boston and South Holland currently consists of one officer. Resourcing next steps on the Local Plan and associated works will be an important forthcoming task, this resourcing is currently being considered.

In terms of planning reform the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 signals change, with particular reference to local plan-making. However, to enact this secondary legislation is required, as well as a revised National Planning Policy Framework. These are not expected until November 2024 at the earliest. However, given the time frame for a General Election, one must consider whether this is likely, or indeed whether there may be a further change of direction. Suffice to say there is uncertainty in this regard and nothing of note to report further on this matter at the present time. These matters will need to be considered by the Joint Committee in due course as future national directions of travel become clearer.

As such, and whilst not my decision, I would recommend that these items are removed from the PDP work programme. This will naturally be picked up by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee in due course.

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