

Boston Borough Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee** held in the Meeting Room 1, South Holland District Council, Priory Road, Spalding , PE11 2XE on Monday 24th February 2025 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Boston Borough Council

Councillors Councillor David Middleton, Alison Austin (substitute for Peter Bedford), and John Baxter (substitute for David Scoot).

South Holland District Council

Councillor James Avery, in the Chair, and Bryan Alcock.

Lincolnshire County Council

Councillor Ian Fleetwood.

In attendance:

South Holland District Council

Councillor Allan Beal

Officers:

Assistant Director – Planning & Strategic Infrastructure, Group Manager – Planning and Development, Senior Planning Lawyer, Principal Planning Officer – Infrastructure, LCC and Democratic Services Team Leader.

9 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Bedford (Boston Borough Council), with Councillor Alison Austin substituting, David Scoot (Boston Borough Council), with Councillor John Baxter substituting, Councillor Henry Bingham (South Holland District Council) and the Interim Local Plan Lead – Planning and Strategic Infrastructure.

10 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

11 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12 Government Reform of the Planning System

The Assistant Director – Planning & Strategic Infrastructure presented a report and accompanying presentation outlining the Government's reforms to the planning system. The Committee was updated on the implications for both Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council, and the review of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Key points from the presentation included:

- Background and objectives of the reforms
- Main changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Impacts on housing delivery and the 5-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS)
- New Standard Method housing figures
- Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results
- Proposals within the Devolution White Paper
- Implications for the Local Plan Review
- Conclusions and next steps

Members discussed the report and commented as follows:

- Members queried the availability of funding to support the reforms. It was noted that funding would initially be drawn from existing local plan budgets, with further clarity expected from central government.
- The potential for a hybrid strategic plan under a future Mayoral authority was discussed, though members acknowledged that structural details remained uncertain pending further policy announcements.
- Concerns were raised regarding the availability of development sites and the risk that existing authorities may delay progress pending unitary reorganisation.
- Members discussed the adequacy of resources, including officer time and consultancy support. It was confirmed that a service review had been undertaken and planning services would be aligned across the partnership.
- The importance of maintaining both the quantity and quality of development was emphasised, particularly under tighter deadlines.
- Members considered how to attract developers to meet increased housing targets and the need to identify new land for development.
- Affordability and the cost of house purchases were discussed, with members noting the need for government intervention and clearer policy on affordable housing.
- Concerns were expressed about developers securing land without building, and the additional costs associated with flood mitigation.
- The use of reserve sites and the lack of guidance on their development were highlighted as risks.
- Members expressed frustration at the lack of clarity from central government, particularly regarding the 30-month planning rule and the timeline for further announcements.
- Members were understanding and supportive of the challenges with local plan making and were broadly supportive of the approach outlined.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

13 Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

There was no other business.

The Meeting ended at 10.40 am.