Minutes of Spalding Town Board held on Monday 21 July 2025 at 5pm at MR1, South Holland District Council & via Teams

Present: Robin Hancox (Chair) - Lincolnshire Field Products, Jacqui Bunce - NHS, Councillor Rob Gibson SHDC & LCC, Joanne Davison - Lincolnshire Police Crime Commissioners Office, Sarah Fletcher - BID, Alistair Main - Lighthouse Church, Stewart Elderkin - Pedals, Councillor Nick Worth - SHDC, Petronella Keeling & Dustin Frazier Woods - Spalding Gentlemen's Society, Dr Batul Dungarwalla - Lincs CVS, Claire Foster - Boston College, David Ball - Bridge Farm, Simon Wright - LCC & Sir John Hayes, MP

Spalding Town Board Officer Team - Pranali Parikh, Jon Burgess, Michael Dow, Matthew Hogan, Emilie Wales, Amy Beckett, Michelle Gant, John Mullen and Luisa Stanney

---

1 Chair's Welcome & Introductions

RH welcomed attendees and acknowledged that as the recent workshop was not a formal meeting of the Board, there were no minutes to sign off. He introduced Michael Dow, who had recently joined the team to support the development of the Town Plan. Sarah Fletcher was also welcomed as a new member of the Board, representing the Business Improvement District (BID).

2 Declarations of Interest & Apologies

No declarations of interest were made and apologies were received from Lizzi Van Egmond, Councillor Gary Taylor and Emma Tatlow.

3 Minutes of the Spalding Town Board Meeting held on 6 February 2025

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 6 February 2025 were reviewed and approved.

4 Chair's Message

RH referred to the circulated Chair's messaged and it was noted that Debbie McLatch had left her role and Michael Dow had stepped in as her replacement. RH emphasised the urgency of the work, with a submission deadline for the Town Plan now set for November and reassured the Board that the team were on track and that foundational work had already begun. Michelle Gant was acknowledged for her ongoing efforts in communications and engagement.

5 Plan for Neighbourhoods – Programme Manager Update

MD provided an overview of the Neighbourhood Plan, which involved a £20 million investment over the next decade, with £2 million allocated annually. He explained that this funding built on previous Government initiatives and included a substantial amount of capacity funding, which was intended to support engagement, feasibility studies and meaningful community involvement. He advised Board members to direct any questions about capacity funding to him, as guidance from the MHCLG was still evolving.

Since joining, MD had prepared a Cabinet report for South Holland District Council (SHDC) to approve the drawdown of capacity funding and to delegate authority to PP.

The plan preparation process was underway, with a submission deadline of 28 November. Consultants Greig and Stephenson had been appointed to lead the work and would be visiting Spalding shortly. Board members interested in attending their visit were encouraged to contact MD. The plan would articulate a ten-year vision and a compelling case for change, drawing lessons from previous funding rounds. Focus Consultants had also been appointed to ensure a robust pipeline of projects and a commercially viable model for external engagement.

A series of workshops would be planned, each lasting two hours and focusing on key themes such as business development, heritage and tourism, visitor economy, arts and culture and health and wellbeing. The draft plan was expected to be ready by October.

While the cost of consultants was acknowledged, it was clarified that their expertise was essential for identifying viable capital interventions. The Board was reminded that capacity funding can be rolled over into the first year of delivery, allowing for a flexible and evolving planning process.

6 Communications Update

MG provided a communications update, thanking everyone who contributed to the annual report, which had now been published and distributed. MG outlined plans for the next stage of engagement, including a stakeholder mapping exercise and collaboration to ensure meaningful public involvement. MG highlighted growing press interest and confirmed that another press release would follow the meeting.

The MHCLG's expectations were discussed, with Sir John Hayes emphasising the need for tangible, measurable outcomes. He suggested focusing on visually impactful projects, such as revitalising Johnson Hospital and enhancing river usage. There was some confusion among the public regarding the relationship between the Board and the BID, which had now been clarified.

7 Heritage Workstream Update

EW presented an update on the heritage workstream. As a conservation officer, she was leading a team to identify and address gaps in Spalding's heritage assets. PP noted that heritage was a key priority in last year's consultation and a design guide was being developed using capacity funding. The presentation was based on a strategy developed with support from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, outlined six thematic areas for action. The potential for collaboration with Police and schools was discussed and PK shared updates on funding applications and engagement activities.

DFW proposed using vacant shop fronts as temporary gallery spaces featuring historic images of Spalding's buildings. NW mentioned similar initiatives by the Civic Society and suggested exploring funding options to cover rent for these spaces. JB felt that heritage-led schemes could also deliver wellbeing benefits.

RH thanked EW for her presentation which would be circulated to the Board.

8 Tourism/Destination Management Plan Update

Amy Beckett, who recently joined the Partnership team, gave an update on the Tourism Management Plan. She explained that increasing footfall and hosting more events were identified as priorities. Despite the closure of Destination Lincs, efforts were underway to ensure continuity of support through collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council and neighbouring authorities. AB's presentation included data on visitor economy, business growth and challenges. She emphasised the importance of a joined-up approach and confirmed that a localised action plan for Spalding was being developed.

RH thanked Amy for her presentation. NW raised concerns about limited hotel accommodation and the need to understand visitor behavior. SE shared examples of visitors utilising local amenities. The results of a retail, leisure and skills study, undertaken by SHDC, would be presented at the next meeting.

9 Sheep Market – Pedals' Proposal

SE presented a proposal from Pedals to install a bike stand in the market area to promote cycling and health. The Board agreed to include the project in the wider plan, with a possible second location outside NatWest Bank. RH pledged to contribute personal funding if necessary to this scheme. RG noted upcoming changes to town centre parking, which may affect the project's location.

10 Any Other Business

Hot Spot Policing - JD shared an interim report on the Hot Spot Policing pilot, which launched on 20 April 2025 for a 13-week period. The initiative received 108 responses and resulted in 171 additional patrol hours, four arrests and three stop-and-searches. A 50% reduction in anti-social behavior was recorded. The final report would compare data from May 2024 to May 2025. RG praised the initiative and questioned whether more regular patrols were needed.

Frequency of Board Meetings - MD proposed increasing the frequency of Board meetings to monthly during this critical planning phase. The proposal was unanimously agreed upon, with meetings scheduled for August, September and October. Workshop dates would also be circulated and attendance would be limited to relevant members. DFW would lead on the arts and culture workshop.