



DRAFT

Corporate Strategy

2020 to 2024

Proud of our Borough's history, ambitious for its future

Introduction

Welcome to Boston Borough Council's Corporate Strategy.

This Strategy sets out the Council's direction of travel over the coming four years; identifying where the Council will focus its efforts and resources to improve the Borough for our community.

This Strategy has been produced at a time when the Council and community are beginning the long process of recovering from Covid-19. However, we now have an opportunity to secure up to £25m of Government funding for regeneration in our Borough. In addition, we have entered into a strategic alliance with East Lindsey District Council that will enable us to save £5m over the next ten years, whilst also improving services to those we represent.

As a Council we are ambitious for the Borough of Boston. We will continue to deliver high quality services that our community needs in their everyday lives, whilst at the same time looking to the future with a view to addressing some of the key challenges the area faces.

Whilst this Strategy sets out what we aspire to achieve, it is recognised that we will need to be both flexible and adaptable as the environment around us continues to change.

We cannot do everything we want to on our own. We recognise that to achieve our goals and maximise the opportunities for Boston we will need to work with new and existing partners.

Our Strategy focuses on four priorities:

1. People
2. Future prosperity and growth
3. Environmental awareness and accountability
4. Delivering high quality services and maximising the use of technology to support residents.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this Strategy.

As a Council and community, we should all be immensely proud of Boston as a place to live, work and visit, and we all have a role to play in championing the Borough and everything it has to offer.

Councillor Paul Skinner, Leader of the Council

Rob Barlow, Chief Executive

About Boston

The Place

Boston is the historic town in the Lincolnshire Fens from where, almost 400 years ago, a group of citizens were central in the founding of the now famous city in America of Boston Massachusetts.

Boston's historical status and wealth led to the construction of its parish church on a grand scale. During the 12th and 13th centuries Boston was a thriving port, and by the 14th century Boston had become the fourth-richest provincial town in England. A reminder of those great times, the tower of St. Botolph's, affectionately known as the "Stump", remains one of the east of England's most enduring and imposing landmarks.

Boston has seen a rapid increase in its population in recent years with the growth mainly from incoming eastern European migrants. This has brought challenges in terms of rapid increase but also significant benefits in the provision of a workforce for local employers. ONS estimates the Borough of Boston population at 69,000. Approximately 50% of the Borough's residents live within the town of Boston, with the remaining 50% living in the surrounding rural communities.

Boston lies at the centre of some of the country's most fertile land. Because of this the economy of the Borough of Boston is dominated by agriculture and horticulture. Other businesses are largely ancillary to this; namely engineering, food processing/ manufacturing and logistics (with a few notable exceptions).

The town of Boston is the administrative centre and the main economic hub for both retail and commercial activity. Outside the town, the wider Borough consists of 18 distinct parishes, each looking to Boston for its main services.

The Borough of Boston's business base by VAT/PAYE activity and size is nearly 2,200 with 1,855 falling in the 0 to 10 employee band. However, it also has 15 businesses including Bakkavor, Freshtime, Turners Distribution, Mason Brothers Distribution, Pilgrim Foods that are within the 250+ employee band, all creating opportunities in sector-related supply-chain management. Other large employers include Boston College and the Pilgrim Hospital. There is a consistently low unemployment rate in Boston (lower than the national average).

As the main economic centre, Boston also has a fully operational international Port supplying the UK with coiled aluminium and steel for the automotive and construction industries as well as importing raw materials such as timber and paper.

The Borough has a well-established business base that has created a resilient place of work and a strong place to invest. The Borough is an affordable location for home ownership and is now delivering confidence within the construction sector as a place to develop, capturing further economic potential and accelerating growth.

Boston Borough Council

Boston Borough Council is one of seven district councils within the county of Lincolnshire, which currently is a two tier area of Local Government. The council has 30 elected members and operates the Leader and Cabinet executive model of governance.

The Council employs around 300 people.

A Strategic Alliance with East Lindsey District Council came into effect from 1 July, 2020. This Alliance sees both councils operate with a shared management team. Both councils continue to retain their own identity and to be accountable to their local communities, however sharing expertise, teams and resources will allow the councils to make significant savings. By coming together in this way, we will jointly save £15.4m over the next 10 years and be able to improve the delivery of services to local people.

The move will also provide both councils with a stronger voice when it comes to securing future Government growth funding and influencing how services are delivered locally in the future.

PRIORITY 1 – PEOPLE FOCUSED (OUR MAIN PRIORITY)

Boston – live, work and visit

Amazing Place to Live

We want Boston to be a place where people want to live, a place where they can thrive in their local communities, feel safe, secure, healthy and welcome.

We will:

- Help ensure our community continues to feel safe by maintaining our existing community safety funding/resources.
- Invest and support growth to meet local housing needs by co-funding affordable housing delivery.
- Provide affordable and accessible leisure opportunities for all.
- Work in partnership to deliver improved transport networks, both road and rail, particularly to Lincoln as well as other cities.
- Work in partnership to secure excellent broadband to all homes in the Borough.

Fantastic Place to Work

We want people to THINK BOSTON, think business.

We will:

- Make Boston a healthy and safe place to work.
- Promote growth and infrastructure including improved rail, road networks and waterways.
- Work with utility companies to ensure that local infrastructure is fit for purpose (i.e broadband, electricity supply and mobile phone networks)
- Promote Boston's economy, industry and opportunities.

Memorable place to visit

We want Boston to be a diverse and vibrant town to explore and discover, with a range of quality national and independent shops, wonderful dining experiences and a unique history and heritage. We want to build on this to further develop the visitor economy and position Boston as a leading visitor destination.

We will:

- Manage and enhance the heritage assets of Boston to increase tourism.
- Seek new opportunities to encourage visitors to Boston through culture, arts, events and sport.
- Increase the promotion of Boston as a visitor destination and improve its public spaces.
- Work with external agencies towards achieving water level management on the Haven through the town.

PRIORITY 2 – FUTURE PROSPERITY, REGENERATION AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

As a regional sub-centre of the county, we want to grow Boston's economy to ensure it remains a thriving town where people choose to live, work and visit. In doing so it is important we understand the needs of our communities and achieve growth in a way that is inclusive.

This includes ensuring the Council is fit for purpose and maintains its robust financial governance, remains financially sustainable and continues its journey towards becoming truly commercial.

Sustainable Economic Growth

We will:

- Support existing business.
- Further develop our relationship with the port and increase international trade links.
- Ensure potential investors recognise Boston as a Borough open for investment.
- Signpost opportunities for funding, partnering, learning skills and business growth support.
- Promote skills and enterprise through partnerships with education providers and businesses.
- Use available evidence to inform the decisions we make about growth initiatives.

Inward investment

We will:

- Promote and facilitate inward investment by working with strategic partners to make Boston a location of choice.
- Work with Boston Town Deal Board to prepare the Investment Plan and interventions and deliver the identified projects.
- Develop the bold investment plan and explore delivery models for the PE21 ambition.
- Equip the town centre to adapt to behavioural change and economic growth more generally, including developing the retail experience.
- Implement the Local Plan and undertake specific master planning and policy reviews to support delivery of growth within the Borough.

Promote Boston's potential

We will:

- Promote Boston regionally, nationally and internationally as a place to live, work and visit.
- To continue to develop existing commercial and other arrangements to further promote Boston internationally.
- Promote trade and tourism opportunities created by the multinational community of the area.
- Promote Boston as a visitor hub for the area.
- Develop our membership of the New Hanseatic League (*Die Hanse*), to promote tourism in Boston Borough and Lincolnshire in general.
- Build on the transatlantic relationship with Boston USA.

PRIORITY 3 – ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Council declared a climate change emergency in January 2020, committing to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint and become net zero carbon in advance of the timetable declared by UK Parliament. The Borough Council will play its role to ensure we begin to reverse the impact on climate change. We will encourage others to follow our example.

We will:

- Develop a Carbon Reduction Plan for the Council to achieve the target agreed.
- Ensure that every service and policy deliver on the climate change commitments of the Council to support positive environmental impact on the Borough.
- Be climate aware and spearhead the change in thinking about the impact that our actions have, not only on the local environment here in Boston but also on the entire planet.

PRIORITY 4 – DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY SERVICES AND MAXIMISING USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS

There is continued pressure on funding to Local Government, whilst at the same time the demand is increasing for many of the services we deliver. Making use of the latest technology will increase the efficiency of our services so we can deliver more for our communities. There is also the opportunity to be more creative in the ways we generate income to fund our core services.

We will:

- Make better use of technology and data to reduce costs and improve performance and efficiency.
- Produce and deliver a Workforce Development Strategy that supports the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.
- Seek new and more creative ways to generate income to support the Council’s ambitions.

MEASURING SUCCESS

It is important that we tell you how we are doing. We monitor and manage our performance and report this to our scrutiny committees and Cabinet. This information is published on our website.

The priorities will also underpin the development of annual service plans and will cascade through this process to individual employee appraisals to support the delivery of this Strategy.