



Council Plan

2016/17 – 2019/20

‘Boston - Open for business’

This document sets out a broad framework to guide the council’s work and priorities for the rest of the life of this administration.

The financial challenges faced by the council, as a result of Government cuts and austerity measures, are well documented, and this plan seeks to focus on our main services which are a priority for our residents. We will continue to seek out new ways to promote prosperity, make Boston borough a safe and pleasant place to live, sustain services and protect and support the most vulnerable while continuing to meet the challenges set by Government.

Our borough

- The Office for National Statistics' latest estimates indicate 69,500 residents and 28,760 households in our boroughⁱ
- Boston has a rich heritage dating from the middle ages with an interesting and varied history
- We are a borough with town and rural wards with agriculture being one of the most prominent industries

The Council

Our councillors are elected for a four-year term and the current term of office began in May 2015. This plan sets out the priorities and actions we will take to deliver our priorities during the remainder of this term. In their first year of office members have been getting to understand the needs of their residents and the operating context of the council to inform this plan.

Our constitution sets out how we make decisions and how the decision-making process is efficient and transparent. We have 30 councillors representing 15 wards across the borough.

Our decision-making system is made up of a Cabinet, two scrutiny committees, planning committee, licensing committee and the audit and governance committee as well as full council. The scrutiny committees hold the Cabinet to account and monitor progress of key policies and strategies.

Our operating context

We are operating in an environment where resources are continually shrinking and the council has to continually find new ways to generate income to support core services as

well as reduce our operating costs. Our priority for the way the council does business is therefore to operate within our means. We will continue to look closely at what really matters to the citizens of Boston and focus our resources accordingly.

Our staff continue to respond positively to these challenges and we will continue to support them to work flexibly and develop their skills in priority areas.

What we have achieved already

Since the inception of the last Corporate Plan in 2011 we have continued to provide the essential services that local people rely on. We have improved our performance across all services.

- We have rationalised our property portfolio to make significant savings, particularly with the development of our own depot for refuse collection, street cleaning and grounds maintenance services and the sale of the Assembly Rooms which has been brought back into use as a popular entertainment venue.
- Joined-up working with our partners to achieve cashable savings and improvements in services
- Approval of a major housing and commercial development (The Quadrant)
- Invested in green energy to reduce our carbon footprint and reap financial benefits in the future – solar panels and biomass boilers at Geoff Moulder Leisure Complex and Princess Royal Sports Arena
- Environmental improvements leading to a gold award for Boston in Bloom

- Introduction of kerbside garden waste collection and the Operation Flyswat project to tackle fly-tipping.

Making Boston a better place

Our top priority is to secure the long-term economic viability of the borough. Our commitment to devolution from central Government will encourage people and business to come to the area.

Our challenges

Our budget has reduced by £2 million since 2010 and our net revenue budget for 2016/17 is £8.662 million. Our medium-term financial forecast projects that savings of £2.2m per annum will be needed by 2020 to enable the council to set a balanced budget, in accordance with statutory requirements.

As the area which faced the largest, proportionate population growth outside of London we continue to work with partners to provide services to a growing population with reducing resources.

We have met the challenges so far by implementing a successful transformation programme where we have delivered savings of £2.4m across the whole council by doing things differently. For example:

- We now operate CCTV services for three neighbouring districts
- Securing third-party grants which have supported local businesses
- Sharing staff with other councils to share expertise and reduce operating costs

As public sector funding continues to reduce we will need to maintain our focus and commitment to delivering savings whilst

ensuring that we minimise the impact on our residents and customers.

We will endeavour to:

- Focus on services that are statutory and a priority for local people
- Work with public, voluntary and private sector partners to share services and locations to reduce running costs, and deliver our services differently to be more effective.
- Look at new and different options to sustain services which are important to local people
- Develop the use of technology to improve customer access and reduce our running costs
- Provide clarity about what we do and don't do
- Continue to protect and support the most vulnerable in our borough

What this means for our residents

- We may not provide services in the same way in the future and there will be a greater reliance on technology to access services
- Maintain the existing range of services where possible
- We will continue to help those in need by delivering our core, statutory services and those which support the most vulnerable
- We will focus our efforts on growing the prosperity of our borough.
- We will facilitate provision of services and opportunities through working in partnership with others

We have identified four priorities.

The council's Transformation Programme sets out how the savings will be achieved over the coming four years.

1. Prosperity

We need a strong economy which is growing which will generate more and better job opportunities and will attract people and businesses to the area.

Our key aims:

- Promote and support inward investment into the borough
- Support business development and growth for new and existing businesses
- Infrastructure development
- Support housing growth
- Develop our tourism, heritage and cultural opportunities

To deliver this priority we will:

- Provide support to businesses
- Support business growth and work with funding organisations to facilitate this
- Have the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan adopted during 2017 to ensure we have a five-year housing land supply, allocate land for industry and pave the way for ongoing development of a distributor road for Boston
- Continue to operate flexible planning policies to support development in the town centre and the wider borough
- Work in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council, Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards and others to seek to develop our considerable waterways opportunities and in particular delivery of the Boston Barrier

- Support delivery of more homes
- Work in partnership to develop Boston as a tourist destination
- Work in partnership to secure funding to preserve and develop our rich heritage

2. People

We must support and protect all vulnerable people within our borough.

Our key aims:

- Protect the public
- Support the most vulnerable in our borough
- Provide affordable homes
- Maintain our excellent welfare support performance
- To play a supporting role in meeting the wider health & wellbeing needs of our community by continuing to work closely with our partners.

To deliver this priority we will:

- Provide quality regulatory services to protect them from harm
- Provide quality welfare support to those who need it the most in a timely manner
- Work with all of our partners to increase the supply and range of affordable and flexible housing products available to our residents
- Continue to promote, support and enforce housing standards throughout the housing market, especially within the private rented sector
- To help and support our residents who have housing needs that they cannot meet themselves
- Working to explore all funding opportunities available to meet the

range of housing needs in our borough

3. Place

Boston is a very safe place to live and this is reflected in our low crime rates and our open, rural environment and historic market town which offers a quality way of life for residents.

Our key aims:

- Maintain community safety
- Cleanliness
- Further improve recycling rates

To deliver this priority we will

- Continue to tackle anti-social behaviour
- Promote greater opportunities for recycling and composting and reducing the amount of residual waste
- Ensure our streets and public open spaces are clean and well maintained
- Provide CCTV services to increase confidence in safety
- Work with our partners to improve the perception of community safety
- Use our powers effectively to improve the wellbeing of our residents

4. Public Service

The council has a key role to play in our local area to provide essential services and operate within the current financial context.

Our key aims

- Continue to champion devolution of powers from central Government to support development in our area and to get a fair deal for rural councils
- (continued) Transformation of our council to meet the challenge of reducing resources in an area of significant population growth
- Demonstrate excellent governance
- Ensure financial stability by operating commercially where practicable but retaining our public values
- To protect essential public services in Boston

To deliver this priority we will

- Seek to make the best use of our assets
- Seek opportunities to maximise income to support key council services
- Share resources with partners where possible
- Work with our Greater Lincolnshire partners to progress the devolution deal
- Continue to lobby for fair funding for rural councils
- Work with partners to lobby for essential public services being maintained in our locality.

Measuring our 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 each quarter. This information is published on our website.

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

ⁱ Source: ONS 2013 Mid Year Population Estimates/ GP Registrations April 2014 (NHS-HSCIC) & WasteDataFlow