

Boston Borough Council Economic Development Strategy 2011 – 2013



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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This strategy document provides strategic guidance for the development and growth of the economy within Boston Borough. It has been developed by Boston Borough Council in consultation with strategic partners who, themselves, play an important role in developing the economy of the Borough. Although the Strategy has been developed by Boston Borough Council, the Council does not have the resources to meet all of the objectives identified within the Strategy and strategic partners will take the lead in undertaking interventions to meet many of the objectives.

In writing the Strategy it has been acknowledged that the way in which Economic Development is delivered in the future is set to change. This has come about due to the disbandment of Regional Development Agencies and the establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The Lincolnshire LEP was one of the first in the country to be established and is itself currently undertaking work to develop a Strategy for Lincolnshire. Due to the changing way in which Economic Development will be delivered in the future, this Strategy has been given a limited lifespan of 2011 – 2013. At that point a new local strategy can be developed that aligns with the aims and objectives of the Lincolnshire LEP.

2. Local Area

In writing the Strategy the strengths and weaknesses of the local area were considered in order to establish the areas where economic Development interventions are required. Whilst the area does possess a high number of strengths, weaknesses were identified in a number of areas including poor educational attainment, low wage levels, poor rate of business start ups, reliance on the horticultural/agricultural industries, poor (although improving) road infrastructure and poor access to ICT in some areas.

3. Resources

Resources have also been identified within the strategy document. These resources are not limited to those within Boston Borough Council but also include the external resources that belong to strategic partners. It is the joint resources of the Council and strategic partners that will be used to meet objectives identified within the Strategy document.

4. Objectives

The Strategy has identified 4 main objectives that the Council and Strategic Partners will aim to meet. These objectives are:

Objective 1 Develop the Business Environment

The development of Boston's business environment and an enterprising culture is essential to stimulating business growth and attracting new businesses into the Borough.

This objective can be met by:

- Providing support services for new and existing businesses

- Engage with the migrant community to ensure their inclusion in Boston's economy
- Promoting Boston's potential as a location for inward investment
- Promoting the development of an enterprise culture within Boston
- Encouraging local businesses to embrace and adopt innovation
- Developing programmes or projects that assist local businesses
- Encouraging use of ICT for improved business performance
- Promoting retail opportunities with the town centre

Objective 2 Improving the Built Environment

Boston Town Centre is at the heart of the Borough and its heritage and appearance contribute to the success of the town. Improving the built environment and the appearance of the town centre should increase retail and business opportunities within the town centre and act as a catalyst for further regeneration activity.

This objective can be met by:

- Deliver improvements to the town centre environment to create a place where business can start-up, grow and thrive
- Develop projects that recognise and enhance the heritage/history and uniqueness of Boston's town centre
- Develop projects that realise opportunities associated with the waterways that run through Boston
- Promote Boston as a destination for retail and leisure activities in order to increase visitor numbers
- Develop and manage Boston's evening economy
- Work with partners to develop and promote Boston's tourist attractions
- Support the development of the Port of Boston

Objective 3 Develop the Skills Base

Boston's residents have historically attained educational qualifications below the national average. Although the number of young people not in employment, education or training has reduced, skills levels remain behind national levels. In order to develop a more enterprising culture it is essential to improve educational attainment at all ages and promote greater engagement in higher education.

Whilst Boston Borough Council cannot directly deliver interventions that improve the indigenous skills base it can work with partners and assist them towards delivery of this objective.

This objective can be met by:

- Improve access to further education
- Provide skills training that meets the needs of local businesses.
- Match labour supply with local employment opportunities
- Work with local residents to identify and overcome barriers to educational attainment

- Promote greater use of apprenticeships in particular by SMEs
- Support development of the College estate to attract learners and expand provision

Objective 4 Improve the Transport Infrastructure

Due to Boston's rural location the transport infrastructure has a major impact on the economy of the town. This applies equally to retail, employees and business freight movements. In order to ensure that people and goods can reach their destination it is essential for traffic to flow relatively unhindered, shoppers are able to access parking, signage is accurate and that public transport meets local needs.

In order for businesses to remain competitive it is also vital that major freight links through the Port of Boston and via the rail network are also developed.

Boston Borough Council is working in partnership with the County Council and other responsible agencies to develop an infrastructure that supports the local economy and encourages inward investment.

This objective can be met by:

- Improve signage on Boston's roads that will assist motorists reaching their destination and reduce congestion.
- Develop a parking strategy and policy that encourages use of the town centre.
- Develop schemes to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.
- Improve public transport in order to serve the more rural areas of the Borough.
- Support the development of the Port of Boston.
- Support improvements to the rail infrastructure
- Support transport policies that encourages access to education and social mobility
For 16 – 18 year olds
- Improvements to cycling and walking provision

5. Action Plan

The final part of the Strategy is an Action Plan that sets out activities that will be delivered to meet objectives, identifies resources that will be used and names the lead agency for each action point.

1. Introduction

The Vision for Boston Borough

Throughout history Boston Borough has played an important role as a trading centre, a destination for visitors and tourism and a high quality place to live and work. This strategy aims to strengthen and build upon these attributes in order to improve both the economic performance and function of the Borough. Our vision for the Borough is to provide

An easily accessible, dynamic and successful area where business and the visitor economy flourishes and residents have the opportunity to learn, work and enjoy a high quality of life

In order to deliver this vision the strategy will focus on four key areas for development. These key areas include:

Development of the Business Environment in order to allow existing business to grow and to also attract new and competitive industry to the Borough.

Improving the Built Environment in order to showcase the heritage of the Borough and also to provide infrastructure for new businesses.

Development of the skills base within the Borough in order to provide a highly skilled and competitive workforce.

Development of the transport infrastructure in order to meet the needs of business, tourism and leisure activities within the Borough.

Background

Economic Development activities are not a “statutory duty” of Boston Borough Council; however within the Local Government Act 2000 all local councils were given legal powers to allow them to safeguard the “economic, social and environmental well-being” of their local areas. Moreover the Governments Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill (Dec 2008) seeks a strengthening of the Economic Development role as a duty for local councils. Following the election in 2010 the Coalition Government announced that the Regional Development Agencies, which currently deliver Economic Development at a regional level, will be closed down and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) formed to take on the role within more clearly defined economic boundaries. The Greater Lincolnshire LEP, which was given approval in December 2010 was one of the first LEPs to be established and has started to develop its strategy for delivering economic development within Lincolnshire. This strategy will be shaped by the Localism Bill, which was introduced in December 2010 and sets out the arrangements for the delivery of services at a local level. Once the Greater Lincolnshire LEP’s Strategy is finalised and the Localism Bill is formally adopted it will have a significant impact on how Economic Development is delivered at a local level. Boston Borough Council has, in recent years, embraced the need to support sustainable economic development and has, both alone and in partnership with other agencies, delivered initiatives that have improved the business environment within the Borough. Such initiatives include, but are not limited to, the building of Boston Enterprise Centre, supply of small industrial units, provision of car parking, support for visitor attractions, refurbishment of the Guildhall, pro-actively seeking inward investment and helping to establish a town centre Business Improvement District.

As a demonstration of its commitment to the local economy Boston Borough Council developed the Boston Masterplan in 2004; a strategy document developed to address a wide range of economic and social issues within the Borough. This document was refreshed in 2006 to reflect changes in the external environment and internal council resources. The Boston Community Plan was developed in 2008 to narrow down the priorities identified within the Masterplan and the Council has also identified Corporate Priorities for short term delivery.

Since 2006 we have experienced a period of significant change, both in the economy itself and in the way economic development activities could be delivered in the future at district, county and regional level. Furthermore the recession has had a major impact on the economy and the environment in which we operate and has created uncertainty about future prosperity.

There have also been changes in public administration structures including the shift of responsibility for education from the Learning and Skills Council to Lincolnshire County Council and the merger of Lincolnshire Enterprise with the County Council, leading to a new delivery strategy for Lincolnshire. At the time of writing this strategy the County Council is also completing an “Economic Assessment” of the whole county, which may result in the development of a further wide ranging county strategy. As discussed above a further twist in the delivery of economic development, at a regional level, was the announcement that Regional Development Agencies (the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) for our region) will close by March 2012 to be replaced by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The Greater Lincolnshire Partnership is the LEP with responsibility for promoting economic development in Lincolnshire. This organisation was

formed in December 2010 and is starting to take responsibility for promoting economic development in Lincolnshire.

In view of the changes to the macro-economic and local external factors coupled with changes to the administrative structure in which economic development is delivered there is a clear need to develop a new short term economic development strategy to cover the period 2011 – 2013. A further review might be undertaken in 2013 when a long term Economic Development Strategy could be developed align with the County wide strategy that will be developed by the LEP. This strategy will also align with the Local Development Framework that has been developed for the Borough.

In writing this interim strategy it is also acknowledged that Boston's economy is now competing in a global market place. Advancement in technology has led to the "death of distance" and the ability for businesses to compete worldwide from a single remote location. To compete at this level and achieve a competitive advantage businesses have to be innovative and be prepared to embrace new technologies.

2. How Boston’s Economic Development Strategy Fits in with Regional and County Policy

UK Economic Development Policy is shaped by economic conditions and international trade. The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is the Government Agency responsible for economic policy. Following the elections in 2010 the Coalition Government has undertaken to change the way Economic Development is delivered at a regional and local level. Changes introduced by the Coalition Government will see the closure of Regional Development Agencies and the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) operating within defined economic areas. The Government has published a white paper “Local growth: realising every place’s potential” which sets out the changes in the delivery of economic development at a local level and identifies government priorities to aid growth. This shift away from Regional to locally defined economic areas has involved the development of a Local Economic Assessment and will also see the development of a formal Local Economic Development Strategy. This new strategy is still being developed and once complete will act as a catalyst for district authorities to revise existing policies to align with the LEP strategy.

The Lincolnshire LEP was one of the first in the country to be approved and has now established its priorities for the area.

The Boston Borough Council Economic Development strategy has been aligned to priorities set out by the Lincolnshire LEP and the Government, within it’s white paper.

Table 1 below, identifies how Boston’s Economic Development Strategy fits with the other regional and local strategies identified above.

Table 1. Local, Regional and National objectives

Local Objectives	LEP Objectives	Government Objectives
Develop the Business Environment through increased business support services, encouraging inward investment and embracing innovation and technology.	Driving forward the Enterprise and Innovation agenda locally: The LEP believes there is a strong case for local interventions to provide tailored and specific support to businesses, and the Local Enterprise Partnership will have a key role in planning and co-ordinating that support The Local Enterprise Partnership will continue to deliver a current programme that includes schemes to help businesses innovate and benefit from the opportunities associated with alternative	Simplify Government approach to business support and re-launch a streamlines Solutions for Business support portfolio. The Technical Strategy Board to lead on supporting business innovation. Attracting inward investment is crucial to growth. Develop effective network for supporting the attraction and retention of foreign direct investment through strong partnership working between central and local government.

	energies and schemes to put our food producers in touch with the buyers from restaurants, catering establishments and major multiples	
Develop the built environment by improving the appearance of the town, maximising tourism opportunities and improved marketing.	The size, rurality and sparseness of Greater Lincolnshire means that the Local Enterprise Partnership will need to work with providers and agencies to address issues relating to Infrastructure and Physical Regeneration .	Investment in infrastructure. Support for tourism.
Develop the skills base by improving access to further education, matching skill to business demands and overcoming barriers to educational attainment.	The Partnership will oversee the development of a sizeable vocational training scheme, building on an existing programme that helps people gain the skills to start their own business and building up skills in the adult care sector.	New skills strategy to be developed. Within this, a refocused network of business led Sector and Skills Councils and National Skills Academies will work with employers to ensure skills provision is tailored to employers.
Improve the transport infrastructure by reducing congestion and developing transport links.	The Local Enterprise Partnership would expect to have influence over Local Transport, Housing and Planning : as a result of the physical diversity of the area and current organisation of local government, democratic accountability for planning and housing best sit with individual District and Unitary Authorities, and delivery of the key requirements housing growth in the Growth Point areas is overseen by local Growth Point Boards.	Investment in infrastructure- working with the market to enable growth and tackle barriers such as transport congestion, improving connections between and within cities, towns and villages.

3. About Boston

Boston is a rural market town located in the south of Lincolnshire. And importantly it is a sub regional retail centre, second in the county to Lincoln, and provides retail employment and a variety of visitor attractions. The Borough has a strong food and agricultural sector as well as a stable historic industrial base.

Some facts about the Borough

- Boston Borough is located in the south of Lincolnshire, it covers an area of 362 square kilometres and has a total population of 59,100 (ONS 2009); however due to the high number of transitory migrant workers in the area the actual population in 2011 is believed to be considerably higher than this figure.
- The percentage of Boston's population that are of working age is below the national average with 61.1% of Boston's population being of working age compared with a national average figure of 65%. This is mainly due to high numbers of retirees who live in the borough.
- Unemployment, measured by the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance, in Boston has historically been below the national average. However during 2010 unemployment rates in Boston Borough did rise above the national average. At the start of 2011 this level has returned to historical levels below the UK average.
- There have been no major redundancies or business failures in Boston but rather a trickle of low number redundancies across a range of firms.
- Whilst unemployment has fluctuated during 2010 the number of job vacancies has decreased over the last 24 months.
- People in Boston are trapped in a low skills - low wage equilibrium:
 - Boston has only 21% of residents qualified to NVQ 4 compared to the UK average of 29.9%.
 - Historically the proportion of residents in Boston Borough with no qualifications has far exceeded the UK average (in 2004 the proportion of Boston's residents with no qualification was 26.1% compared with a UK average of 15.1%) however recent figures for 2009 show that 12.4% of Boston's residents have no qualifications compared to the national average of 12.3%.
 - Boston has almost twice the national average of employed people working in elementary jobs and well below the national average of employed people working in managerial and professional occupations.
 - Overall average full time pay in Boston is well below the regional and national average.

(Source ONS 2010)

- The number of people visiting Boston town centre has increased year on year over the last 24 months (measured by car park usage and footfall count).
- Boston's retail offer has not been impacted too hard by the recession when compared with other parts of the UK; although some national retailers have closed down, small independent retailers have fared well.
- During and following the recession managed workspaces and start up industrial units have experienced limited success in attracting new and developing small to medium enterprises.
- The number of VAT registered businesses in Boston has grown by only 4.7% between 1994 and 2007 compared with national growth of 25.8% demonstrating a lack of enterprise culture within the area.
- Recent flood risk assessment has had a major impact on future housing development and inward investment.
- The rurality of the area has impacted negatively on access to broadband internet. Whilst Boston has better broadband connections compared with some other areas in Lincolnshire it is still poor when compared with other areas in the UK.
- There is a predominance of agriculture and associated food industries with the Borough. However there is also a stable engineering and print/labelling industry.
- There is limited research and development activity and a lack of high tech industry within the Borough.
- Boston College offers full and part time further education in all the major vocational and employment sectors for students of all ages from Boston and the surrounding area. The College is also a major employer in the town.
- There is increased use of educational services provided by the University of Lincoln, especially at the University's Holbeach Campus
- Boston hosts Pilgrim Hospital, which is the second largest hospital in the County and a major source of employment in the Borough.
- Boston Port, which is operated by the Victoria Group, handles 850,000 to 900,000 tonnes of freight per year and is strategically important to the UK's motor industry in terms of steel import.

4. The External Environment

The environment in which an organisation operates is what gives them their means of survival; however the environment is also the source of threats. It is therefore vital to analyse and understand the environment in which an organisation operates in order to identify the issues, opportunities and threats that should be considered as part of strategy development.

A PESTEL analysis is an analytical tool that provides a comprehensive list of influences on the possible success or failure of particular Strategies. Within this analysis the **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **E**nvironmental and **L**egal factors that can affect an organisation are identified and their effects can then analysed.

Table 2 below is a PESTEL analysis of the macro-environmental factors that will impact upon the Economic Development Strategy for Boston.

Table 2. PESTEL Analysis of the External Environment

Political	Economic
Extension of the EU	Unemployment levels
Role of Central Government/Local Government/LCC	Educational
LEP	Inward investment
Localism Agenda	Funding opportunities
Deregulation	Competition from developing countries
Privatisation	Inflation
Taxation policies	GDP trends
Social Welfare policies	Seasonality issues
Political structure/leadership	Type of employment
Uncertainty General/Local elections	Impact of business rates
Town Centre Focus – in Boston Borough	Leakage of skilled workforce
Complex tiers of local government	Limited growth
County Council Policy on Transport	Port for imports exports
	Agricultural land in Boston
	Business confidence to invest
	Job Creation
	New Business Development

<p>Social</p> <p>Demographics Increase in immigration Education levels Income Attitudes to work Lifestyles Property prices Ethnic and religious issues Limited aspiration levels Limited engagement from industry regarding training requirements Lack of affordable housing Poor health – obesity issue</p>	<p>Technological</p> <p>Spend on R & D Information sharing Internet/Broadband availability Adoption of new technologies New developments Speed of transfer Barriers to entry Innovation potential Global communications Graduate opportunities poor</p>
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<p>Environmental</p> <p>Green energy agenda Waste disposal Energy consumption controls Flood risk Transport issues/Bypass</p>	<p>Legal</p> <p>Employment law Health and safety Competition policy Planning legislation State aid issues</p>
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Whilst the factors identified above apply mainly at the macro-environment level, their impact on economic development in Boston Borough will vary considerably. However rather than getting overwhelmed by a multitude of details it is necessary to step back and identify the “*key issue’s*” that will impact directly on Boston. These issues are broken down according to their potential impact on Boston’s economy.

High Impact

The following local factors fall into the high impact category:

- Qualifications attained and average earnings are below the national average.
- Extension of the EU has led to an influx of migrants from the Accession Countries
- According to ONS (2009) the number of people employed in Boston Borough in elementary occupations is much higher than the UK average whilst those employed in professional occupations is lower.
- According to ONS (2008) new business growth in Boston Borough is well below the UK average.
- The Political structure within a two tier authority.
- Creation of the Lincolnshire LEP and the devolvement of responsibility from EMDA to the LEP.
- Creation of the Regional Growth fund administered by BIS.
- Changing nature of Business Link Business Support services from face to face to web based support..
- Effect of flood risk on future housing, inward investment and existing businesses.

- Transport issues – congestion on main traffic routes.
- New political focus on private sector led employment growth amid reductions in public sector employment.
- There is a predominance of agriculture and associated food industries.
- Opportunities for regeneration led economic development. Making good use of heritage assets and funding opportunities.

Medium Impact

- Fluctuating unemployment rates.
- The rurality of the area has impacted negatively on access to broadband internet.
- Limited research and development activity.
- Lincolnshire Advice guidance, which was created to promote innovation in Lincolnshire promote innovation in Lincolnshire has experienced a limited response for the support provided within Boston Borough.
- Low aspirations.
- Limited high tech business growth and associated graduate opportunities.
- Impact of planning legislation.

Low Impact

- Food industry heavily regulated.
- Emergence of energy consumption controls.

The analysis undertaken above provides a framework of external factors at the macro-level and key drivers for change at the micro-level that will help to shape Boston Borough Council's Economic Development.

The PESTEL analysis above provides an overview of the forces and trends in the macroeconomic environment in which the economy Boston Borough must compete and sets a context for the local Economic Development Strategy.

A further analysis is required to identify those local factors that will enable, or indeed hinder, Boston's economy to compete at a local, national and even a global level. A SWOT analysis will help to identify those internal and external factors at the local level, which will provide a framework to help decide the objectives and aims of the Economic Development Strategy.

Table 3 below is a SWOT analysis of the local environment in which Boston Borough Council will operate its Economic Development Strategy

Table 3 SWOT Analysis of Boston Borough

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of life • Low unemployment • Low property prices • Good quality residential areas • Historic buildings/townscape of national importance • Good range of retail provision in the town centre • Boston Market • Good range of sports facilities • Increasing economic development activity in recent years • The Port • Sub-regional Centre • Strong agricultural sector • The Wash • Increasingly diverse population • Wide geographical influence of the borough and strong sub-regional role for the town. • Business Improvement District • Managed office spaces/industrial units offering business start up units • Boston College offering education and skills training to degree level in vocational and academic fields. The College has an Outstanding Judgement from Ofsted. • Business support programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pockets of rundown housing • Poor pedestrian links into the town centre • Lack of open space in some areas/informal open space • Under development of waterfront locations • Poor educational achievement • Loss of young people from borough • High youth unemployment in some wards • Low weekly pay • Some pockets of deprivation • Congestion and poor transport links • Public transport including rail links • Culture of car dependency • Run down historic buildings • Lack of services in rural areas and outlying residential areas of the town • Approaches to the town/poor signage • Lack of quality employment opportunities • Training provision for key sectors • Low landscape or environmental value of surrounding rural areas • Transport infrastructure • Recruitment and retention • ICT infrastructure • Poor marketing and image of Boston • Local delivery infrastructure • Rural area dependence on agricultural sector • Low levels of training, especially in rural areas • Lack of facilities for young people • Lack of employment sites in rural areas other than agriculture • Poor highway maintenance • Lack of affordable housing in rural areas • Low qualification levels • Low number of business start ups

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the out migration of young people from the borough • The Port • EU enlargement • Improved educational achievement • University presence in Lincoln • Alternative forms of transport • Tourism • Hotel developments • Development of Waterways • Cultural Quarter developments • Development opportunities in the town centre • Industrial expansion/inward investment • Employment sites • New sectors – niche markets • ICT / Internet trading business opportunities • Evening Economy • Strengthen retail offer including niche retailing • Integration and social inclusion of migrant workers and ethnic minority population in the borough • Engaging with young people • Reducing congestion/improving accessibility • Community engagement and capacity building, including rural communities • Stronger community cohesion and community leadership • Flexible approach to planning within the context of the LDF • Potential of the Wash • High levels of self employment and home-working in rural areas • Business Support • Hospital in the town • Added value opportunities within the Agri-food industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on a few business sectors • Poor educational achievement • Loss of young people from the town • Car dependency • Congestion • Impact of tourism • Port – capacity and potential loss of rail line • Marginal location • Flood risk • Peripheral location deterring inward investment • Lack of quality employment sites, especially in rural areas • Access to affordable housing • Fear of crime • Recruitment and retention • Access to services • Arts provision – constraints of existing venues • Lack of community/youth engagement • Poor community engagement and community leadership • Lack of ICT investment/interest • Growth of internet retailing • Non-integration and social inclusion of migrant workers and ethnic minorities and their families. • Weak local delivery infrastructure • Poor marketing and image of Boston • Lack of flexibility in approach to planning • Conflicts between through traffic and rural communities • Lack of affordable housing in rural areas • Lack of rural policing • Lack of facilities for young people • Low levels of training, particularly in rural areas • Poor highway maintenance • Poor community cohesion • Low qualification levels • Poor routes to markets

The Tables above provide an overview of the environment in which Boston Borough Council operates, the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and the opportunities and threats that exist in the Borough.

5. Resources

Previous sections have focused on the environment in which Boston Borough Council operates, the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and the opportunities and threats that impact on the economy. It is now essential to identify the resources that are available to Boston Borough Council both internally and externally through formal or informal partnership arrangements.

Table 4 below is a resource audit of internal and external resources that impact on the local economy.

Table 4 Resources – Internal (Boston Borough Council) and External (Stakeholders)

	Internal	External
Physical Resources	Boston Enterprise Centre with offices for business start ups Industrial units for business use Boston Market Guildhall/Assembly Rooms Local Development Framework to promote investment	Tourist Attractions – St Botolph’s Church, RSPB reserves, Festivals and events Boston Town Centre Abundance of development land Port of Boston Heritage assets Waterways Green corridors Boston College Lincoln University Excellent sporting facilities
Human resources	Borough Council Members/Officers – knowledge of legislation Motivation to deliver economic improvements collaboratively Effective Communications within the organisation	Lincolnshire County Council officers LEP support Local informal partnerships – with private and voluntary sector Private/third sector expertise of local area Business Link (service to be reduced from Autumn 2011) Boston College/Lincoln University Chamber of Commerce Heritage Trust Lincolnshire Federation of Small Businesses Boston BID English Heritage Princes Trust Young Enterprise Environment Agency
Financial Resources	Budgeted funding of £30,000 per year	EU (ERDF) transitional funding of £1million for the Boston area County Council funding Private sector investment

		Wash Fens Partnership (RDPE) Environment Agency
Intellectual Capability	Business database	Business networking club Business Support programme
Intangibles	Embedded Culture Reputation	Enterprise Culture Credibility of organisation

6. Strategy Objectives

From the Analysis above it is possible to identify priority areas and issues within those priorities that this strategy needs to address. Table 5 below identifies these factors and also identifies the organisation who can lead in delivering interventions to address the priority areas.

Table 5 Economic Development Priorities and Issues

Priority	Issues	Lead organisation
Business Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Support and services infrastructure • The integration and social inclusion of the increasing and diverse migrant worker and ethnic minority population • Boston image marketing and awareness • The importance of agriculture to the rural economy • Creation of an enterprise culture • Embracing innovation and use of ICT 	Boston Borough Council Lincolnshire County Council Wash Fens Partnership Business Link Lincolnshire Advice and Guidance programmes Boston BID Boston College Commercial Agents
Built Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterways • Town centre environment and heritage/history • Development and management of the evening economy • Boston image marketing and awareness • The potential of the Wash for recreation and tourism 	Boston Borough Council Lincolnshire County Council English Heritage Environment Agency RSPB Frampton and Freiston Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire Boston Preservation Trust

Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to higher education and local provision • Skills training in key sectors • Local labour supply • People who live and work in rural areas are less likely to take up training and more likely to be in lower paid work 	Boston College Job Centre Plus Business Link Private Sector Training Providers
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion • Poor public transport/reliance on car • Car Parking issues • Poor signage 	LCC Highways Boston Borough Council Port of Boston Rail transport providers

Table 5 provides the basis for Objectives that the Boston Borough Council, its partners and some private sector organisations will seek to meet. These objectives are expanded upon below whilst more detailed action plans are attached at Annex A to this document.:

Objective 1 Develop the Business Environment

The development of Boston's business environment and an enterprising culture is essential to stimulating business growth and attracting new businesses into the Borough.

This objective can be met by:

- Providing support services for new and existing businesses
- Engage with the migrant community to ensure their inclusion in Boston's economy
- Promoting Boston's potential as a location for inward investment
- Promoting the development of an enterprise culture within Boston
- Encouraging local businesses to embrace and adopt innovation
- Developing programmes or projects that assist local businesses
- Encouraging use of ICT for improved business performance
- Promoting retail opportunities with the town centre

Delivery

Boston Borough Council will work with the following external partners to deliver this objective.

Lincolnshire County Council
Wash Fens Partnership
Business Link
Lincolnshire Advice and Guidance Programmes
Commercial Agents
Boston Chamber of Commerce
Boston BID

Risk

Business Link currently employs business advisers in Boston who support both start up and existing businesses. In autumn 2011 this service will be withdrawn and Business Link will only offer an on-line advice service. The reduction in the Business Link service may impact upon the ability to develop the business environment.

Objective 2 Improving the Built Environment

Boston Town Centre is at the heart of the Borough and its heritage and appearance contribute to the success of the town. Improving the built environment and the appearance of the town centre should increase retail and business opportunities within the town centre and act as a catalyst for further regeneration activity.

This objective can be met by:

- Deliver improvements to the town centre environment to create a place where business can start-up, grow and thrive
- Develop projects that recognise and enhance the heritage/history and uniqueness of Boston's town centre
- Develop projects that realise opportunities associated with the waterways that run through Boston
- Promote Boston as a destination for retail and leisure activities in order to increase visitor numbers
- Develop and manage Boston's evening economy
- Work with partners to develop and promote Boston's tourist attractions
- Support the development of the Port of Boston

Delivery

Boston Borough Council will work with the following external partners to deliver this objective.

Lincolnshire County Council
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire
Boston Preservation Trust
Port of Boston
Boston BID

Risk

Boston Borough Council has secured funding to deliver the refurbishment of the Market Place and a conservation area partnership scheme but has limited funding to deliver further regeneration projects.

Boston Borough was, until mid 2010, amongst the 12 most deprived district authority areas in the East Midlands and was eligible for European Regional Development Fund funding. In mid 2010 Boston moved out of the bottom 12 most deprived district authorities and is no longer eligible for this funding. However transition funding of £1million from ERDF has been granted to the Boston area in order to continue regeneration projects.

Failure to attract further funding could restrict future regeneration projects being delivered.

Objective 3 Develop the Skills Base

Boston's residents have historically attained educational qualifications below the national average. Although the number of young people not in employment, education or training has reduced, skills levels remain behind national levels. In order to develop a more enterprising culture it is essential to improve educational attainment at all ages and promote greater engagement in higher education.

Whilst Boston Borough Council cannot directly deliver interventions that improve the indigenous skills base it can work with partners and assist them towards delivery of this objective.

This objective can be met by:

- Improve access to further education
- Provide skills training that meets the needs of local businesses.
- Match labour supply with local employment opportunities
- Work with local residents to identify and overcome barriers to educational attainment
- Promote greater use of apprenticeships in particular by SMEs
- Support development of the College estate to attract learners and expand provision

Delivery

Boston Borough Council will work with the following external partners to deliver this objective.

Boston College
Job Centre Plus
Business Link
Private Sector Training Providers
University of Lincoln
Chamber of Commerce
Federation of Boston Grammar Schools

Objective 4 Improve the Transport Infrastructure

Due to Boston's rural location the transport infrastructure has a major impact on the economy of the town. This applies equally to retail, employees and business freight movements. In order to ensure that people and goods can reach their destination it is essential for traffic to flow relatively unhindered, shoppers are able to access parking, signage is accurate and that public transport meets local needs.

In order for businesses to remain competitive it is also vital that major freight links through the Port of Boston and via the rail network are also developed.

Boston Borough Council is working in partnership with the County Council and other responsible agencies to develop an infrastructure that supports the local economy and encourages inward investment.

This objective can be met by:

- Improve signage on Boston's roads that will assist motorists reaching their destination and reduce congestion.
- Develop a parking strategy and policy that encourages use of the town centre.
- Develop schemes to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.
- Improve public transport in order to serve the more rural areas of the Borough.
- Support the development of the Port of Boston.
- Support improvements to the rail infrastructure
- Support transport policies that encourages access to education and social mobility For 16 – 18 year olds
- Improvements to cycling and walking provision

Delivery

Boston Borough Council will work with the following external partners to deliver this objective.

LCC Highways

Port of Boston

Rail transport providers

7. Conclusion

Boston Borough Council is operating in an environment that has seen many changes over the last several years. The changing nature of business in terms of globalisation and advancement in technology means that businesses have greater opportunities but need to be more competitive and innovative in the way they do business. In order to grow Boston's economy it is essential that businesses are offered support to enable them to compete successfully. Building a stable business base will also provide the foundations for new inward investment into the area.

Boston's town centre and visitor attractions also need to thrive and it is therefore essential that interventions are undertaken that ensure that the town centre is an attractive destination that visitors want to come to and dwell. The town centre is also a successful retail environment which contributes to increased employment opportunities.

To ensure sustainable development in Boston it is important that the level of skills is improved. A higher skills base offers the potential to attract more high tech businesses into the town and presents opportunity for higher wages.

Transport infrastructure is another factor that needs to be improved in order to ensure the free flow of traffic bringing employees, visitors and freight into and around Boston. Short term measures will have an immediate impact on the flow of traffic but the Council must continue to support the development of a measures to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion in the town centre.

This strategy aims to address the above factors through actions that will be delivered by Boston Borough Council itself and other partners identified within this document.

ANNEX A to Boston Borough Council Economic Development Strategy 2010 – 2013

2011 – 2013 Action Plans

Objective 1 Develop the Business Environment

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
						Internal	External		
Provide Business Support Services	1.1	Provision of Managed Office Space at Boston Enterprise Centre	M	NE Group	<p>Opportunities. State of the art offices available for new or existing SMEs. Easy in and out leases.</p> <p>Risks. Low occupancy rates.</p>	BBC officer time for liaison meetings	Management undertaken by NE Group	85% Occupancy by April 2011	80% occupancy by end of 2010
	1.2	Facilitate Business Advice through signposting of Business Link services	M	Economic Development Team Business Link	<p>Opportunities. Facilitate business advice by signposting to the Business Link web site</p> <p>Risk. Autumn 2011 will see the reduction of the Business Link service due to the withdrawal of local Business Advisers.</p>	BBC officer time to pro-actively direct people to the Business Link Website	Business Advisers to liaise direct with clients	BBC Ec Dev staff provided with knowledge to advise on use of Business Link systems before Nov 2011	Business Link support staff removed by Nov 2011

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
						Internal	External		
Promote Boston's potential as a location for inward investment	1.3	Promote Boston through the Invest Lincolnshire website and promotional literature Attend Business and Trade Fairs to promote Boston as a place to live and work	M	Economic Development Team LCC	Opportunities. Promotes Boston to a wide range of business investors Risk. Dependant on input from LCC.	BBC officer time	LCC Economic Development team officer time	Ongoing	
	1.4	Use the Tractivity database to promote investment opportunities in Boston Tractivity is a property database that identifies vacant properties and invest opportunities	M	Economic Development Team LCC Commercial Agents	Opportunities. Promotes development sites currently available in Boston Borough Council. Risk. Poor usage of the system.	BBC officer time	LCC Economic Development team officer time	Ongoing	
Promote the development of an enterprise culture within Boston	1.5	Boston Enterprise Week/ Boston Business Awards Building on the success of the 2009/10 awards these events showcase Boston Businesses and promote enterprise at all levels.	M	Economic Development Team Local Partnership	Opportunities. Showcases Boston Businesses. Risk. Low turn out of businesses during Enterprise week.	BBC officer time attending meetings and organising events.	Local Partnership and sponsorship	Ongoing work to deliver the Awards in 2011.	Business Awards planned for November 2011.
	1.6	Promote the development of the Young Enterprise programme in Boston	M	Young Enterprise (YE) East Midlands Economic Development Team	Opportunities. Develop an enterprise culture amongst the younger generation. Risk. Poor uptake	Financial Support of £8k per year BBC officer time	YE officer time	Ongoing YE Events	

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
						Internal	External		
Encourage local businesses to embrace and adopt innovation	1.7	Promote the Lincolnshire Advice and Guidance programme in Boston	M	University of Lincoln Economic Development team Angle PLC	Opportunities. Businesses can access expert knowledge and advice to help their business grow. Risk. Poor take up. Poor communication of the programme.	BBC officer time attending meetings	Funding and business advisers from Angle PLC	Ongoing	Local Agents in place by summer 2010
Encourage the use of ICT for improved business performance	1.8	Support the E Business programme being developed by the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce	M	East Mids Chamber of Commerce	Opportunities. Advice for business on how to use ICT to improve their business. Risk. Lack of engagement with Boston Businesses	£5,000 per year for 3 years starting 2011	Chamber of Commerce staff time	Delivery starting autumn 2011	Funding agreed 5 programmes of 4 workshops

Objective 2 Improving the Built Environment

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
						Internal	External		
Develop the Town centre environment to create a place where business can start-up, grow and thrive	2.1	Market Place Refurbishment £2 million Scheme	H	Economic Development team LCC	<p>Opportunities. Improvements to the Market Place in terms of visitor experience, vehicle and pedestrian conflict and investment potential.</p> <p>Risk. Slippage in project delivery Not liked by some residents</p>	BBC £450k BARC £250k and ERDF (£1.1 Million) BBC officer time to develop the project and undertake consultation events	ERDF £1.1 Million LCC £200k LCC officer time to develop the project and undertake consultation events	3 Phases Phase 1 Council approval granted by Dec 2010 Phase 2 Design Completed by Jan 2011 Phase 3 Building work to be completed by Spring 2011	Council approval was granted in Dec 2010. Work to start by July 2011.
	2.2	Support West Street Development opportunities	H	Economic Development Team Planning Team	<p>Opportunities. Redevelopment of an underutilised part of the town. Improved retail offer.</p> <p>Risk. West St redevelopment opportunities may not proceed</p>	BBC officer time meeting with developers		Ongoing	
Develop projects that recognise and enhance the heritage and uniqueness of Boston's town centre	2.3	English Heritage Conservation Area Partnership Scheme	H	Economic Development and Planning teams English Heritage	<p>Opportunities. Provides funding to improve buildings in the town centre.</p> <p>Risk. Low take up of scheme</p>	BBC £150k Officer time	English Heritage £500k	Cabinet approval granted December 2010	Scheme to be launched by Summer/Autumn 2011

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
						Internal	External		
Develop projects that realise opportunities associated with the waterways that run through Boston	2.4	Support the Boston Barrage scheme	H	Economic Development Team LCC EA	Opportunities. Will provide investment opportunities within Boston. Risk. Project may not proceed if funding not available.	BBC officer time	EA and LCC funding LCC EA officer time	Ongoing	The barrage will be delivered outside of the life of this strategy. However enabling works will commence during 2013 to 2015.
	2.5	Support the creation of a new marina in Boston	M	Economic Development Team External Developers	Opportunities. Will create business opportunities within a new marina. Extra spend associated with increased visitor numbers. Risk. Reliant on external developers. EA must approve development.	External funding	Officer time	Ongoing discussions with Environment Agency to seek approval for the Marina site	
Promote Boston as a destination for retail and leisure activities	2.6	Develop a project to promote and market Boston. Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with University of Lincoln.	H	Boston BID Economic Development team	Opportunities. KTP will provide expert advice and attract external funding (RPE). Risk. Dependant upon BID taking the lead.	BBC officer time	BID Funding	Develop project over 3 year period	KTP established February 2011

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
						Internal	External		
Develop/Manage Boston's evening economy	2.7	Support external partners in projects that will improve Boston's evening economy	L	External partners Economic Development team Planning	Opportunities. Safer more attractive evening economy. Risk. No interest from external partners	BBC officer time		Low priority at the moment. No specific actions currently planned.	
Work with partners to develop and promote Boston's tourist attractions	2.8	Improvements to facilities within St Botolphs	M	St Botolphs Economic Development team	Opportunities. Will enhance the attraction of one of Boston's primary tourist attractions. Risk. Relies upon securing external funding.	BBC officer time	RDPE funding St Botolphs to lead and attract funding		RDPE funding agreed April 2011
	2.9	Undertake actions to promote Boston as a tourist attraction.	M	Boston Preservation Trust Economic Development team Boston BID	Opportunities. Will increase tourism and have a positive impact on the local economy. Risk. Lack of funding.	BBC officer time Existing BBC tourism budgets	BID support and funding	Control of the Arts Heritage and Tourism moved to Economic Development in December 2010 in order to allow a joined up approach to tourism and town centre activities.	Development of a new town centre map by July 2011. New Town Centre Visitor Guide by February 2011. New History book on the Guildhall to be developed by August 2011-06-27

Objective 3 Develop the Skills Base

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications	Target and Date	Milestones
Improve access to further education	3.1	<p>Projects within this objective will be delivered by external partners with support from Boston Borough Council</p> <p>Better transport for 16-18 year olds</p> <p>Apprenticeships and Degrees delivered at Boston College centres</p> <p>Engagement of employers with college</p> <p>Development of college estate to attract learners and extend range of provision</p>						
Provide skills training that meets the needs of local businesses								
Match labour supply with local employment opportunities								
Work with local residents to identify and overcome barriers to educational attainment								
Promote greater use of apprenticeships in particular by SMEs								
Support development of the College estate to attract learners and expand provision								

Objective 4 Improve the Transport Infrastructure

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
Improve signage on Boston's roads that will assist motorists reaching their destination and reduce congestion	4.1	Implement actions following the Signage Audit undertaken by LCC	H	LCC Economic Development team	Opportunities. Will improve visitor experience. Risk. Lack of engagement between LCC and BBC.	BBC officer time BBC funding for pedestrian signs	LCC Officer time and funding for road signs	Ongoing	Signage Audit completed Summer 2010 Improved signage installed during Summer 2011
Develop a parking strategy and policies that encourage use of the town centre	4.2	Develop a parking strategy for Boston to meet the needs of the town for the next 10 years.	H	Economic Development team	Opportunities. Will enable the Council to rationalise use of car parks and to set a pricing structure to attract more visitors Risk. Strategy will depend on external developments.	BBC officer Time		Final strategy to be adopted by end 2011	Draft Strategy to be completed by Autumn 2011
Develop schemes to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion	4.3	Support the LCC road widening scheme along the A16, Liquor Pond Street and Queen St.	H	LCC Highways	Opportunities. Improve traffic flows will attract more visitors to Boston. Risk. Impact on traffic during road works.	Total project costs of £10.3 million. £2.547 million from BBC.	LCC funding of £7.753 million	Completed by May 2011	Phased approach A16 completed in October 2010. Work now being finished on other phases.

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
Improve public transport in order to serve the more rural areas of the Borough	4.4	Support the development of the Into-Town Bus Service	M	LCC	Opportunities. Increased visitor numbers to town centre. Education opportunities Risk. Poor uptake of service provided.	LCC officer time		IT Bus service is currently operating successfully. Other public transport improvements required	
Support the development of the Port of Boston	4.5	Support the development of Boston Port. Boston Port plays an important role in the import, export and storage of goods to and from the East Midlands. Expansion of the Port facilities and the capacity to handle larger ships will greatly improve the offer of the Port.	L	Boston Port Economic Development team	Opportunities. Increased use of the Port. Business opportunities. Risk. Lack of investment.	Officer time to support the Port when making funding applications.	External private sector funding	Ongoing	Meetings with the Port during early 2011 to discuss external funding options
Support improvements to the rail infrastructure	4.6	Support rail infrastructure improvements. Currently goods in and out of Boston are delivered predominantly by road. Improved rail infrastructure could reduce freight costs and improve traffic flows by removing delivery vehicles from the roads. Improved public transport could also be achieved and bring more visitors to Boston	L	Network Rail Economic Development team	Opportunities. Improved freight and public transport links. Risk. Boston may not be included in rail improvements	Officer time		Ongoing support	

Actions	No	Projects	Priority	Lead Role	Opportunities and Risk	Resource Implications		Target and Date	Milestones
						Internal	External		
Help 16-18 year olds to access college or sixth form	4.7	Support development of public transport to allow 16-18 year olds to access college or sixth form	M	LCC Highways College	Opportunities. Increased access to education opportunities Risk. Not currently planned for	BBC officer time College support	LCC officer time		