



# B O S T O N

## B O R O U G H C O U N C I L

REPORT TO:	Full Council
DATE:	26 October 2020
SUBJECT:	Boston Town Deal Board - Town Investment Plan
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Deputy Leader
REPORT AUTHOR:	Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

### **SUMMARY**

To consider the Boston Town Deal Board's Town Investment Plan (TIP) prior to submission to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Each Town Investment Plan includes proposals for up to £25 million to invest in regeneration, skills and connectivity to secure transformational levels of economic growth. The deadline for submission of the Town Investment Plan is 30 October 2020.

Following the agreement of Heads of Terms with MHCLG, towns will have up to 12 months to complete comprehensive business cases for selected projects and submit a Summary Document to show that this has been completed in line with the agreed conditions and requirements in the Heads of Terms. Once towns have developed detailed business cases for their agreed projects and submitted all the required documentation as part of the Summary Document, government will carry out a high-level assessment of the document before releasing funding.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. To note the Town Investment Plan.**
- 2. To note the Chief Executive will submit to MHCLG the Town Investment Plan, as approved by the Boston Town Deal Board by the 30 October 2020.**
- 3. To note that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Boston Town Deal Board may make refinements to the Boston Town Deal Investment Plan.**

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Town Investment Plan with project proposals totalling up to £25 million (in addition to the £13million of matched funding) for each town interventions will form the basis for a Town Deal - an agreement in principle between Government, the Lead Council and the Town Deal Board, confirmed in a Heads of Terms document. The Town Deal sets out a vision and strategy for the town and what each party agrees to do to achieve this vision.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Prospectus from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) states that agreeing a Town Deal with investment from the Towns Fund of up to £25m per place will be dependent on Government receiving high-quality proposals that meet the objective of the fund and follow the further guidance published.

The Boston Town Board has confirmed submission of the Town Investment Plan in Cohort 2, the deadline of which is 30 October.

Failure to submit to the agreed deadline will impact the likelihood of funding remaining available due to the impact of COVID on the wider national economy.

## **REPORT**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Government invited 101 places in England to develop proposals for a Town Deal, forming part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund announced by the Prime Minister in 2019. The Towns Fund is at the centre of Government's ambition to level up this country and make it a better place for everyone to live and work.
- 1.2. The Council was invited to act as Lead Authority in the preparation of a Town Investment Plan for Boston as the basis for entering into a Town Deal with Government. A fundamental prerequisite of a Town Deal is strong governance arrangements, which will be exercised through a Town Board.
- 1.3. The Boston Town Deal Board was established to prepare a Town Investment Plan for Boston. The Board was structured to give full voice to local and community stakeholders to maximise the advantages, assets and opportunities that Boston as a place has to offer.

- 1.4. The Boston Town Deal Board includes a wide range of stakeholders, including local businesses and investors, public sector, the Member of Parliament, the Local Enterprise Partnership, educational establishments and community representatives. It incorporates the breadth of membership as set out in the guidance published in November 2019.
- 1.5. The authority is the accountable body only and has taken responsibility for ensuring that decisions are made by the Town Deal Board in accordance with good governance principles. As the lead council, we have developed a delivery team, delivery arrangements and agreements to support the development of an evidenced based Town Investment Plan and engagement with stakeholders, businesses and the local community.
- 1.6. The Council is not the decision maker in this instance. It is the role of the Boston Town Deal Board to agree the Town Investment Plan.
- 1.7. Publication of the members of the Boston Town Deal Board, information relating to the Board meetings and details of the evolving Plans are published on the Boston Town Deal website – [www.bostontowndeal.co.uk](http://www.bostontowndeal.co.uk)
- 1.8. Community, stakeholder and business engagement has been part of the development of the Town Investment Plans. The #MyTown initiative saw Boston come top in England for the number of suggestions made by the community. There were over 60 Expressions of Interest submitted to the Boston Town Deal Board for idea development and these were assessed against the criteria agreed by the Town Deal Board in February 2020. The Boston Town Deal Facebook group has been used as a platform to engage with the community and has seen significant engagement and the page has over 1,090 followers. The impact of interaction on social media has generated public interest, for example the video on the Mayflower Centre has been viewed over 98,000 times and generated 370 direct engagements.
- 1.9. The Boston Town Deal Board has met 7 times. In addition, the Technical Sub-Group of the Board has met to examine the interventions in detail, to support the compilation of an evidence base, to agree the theory of change, vision and strategy for each town deal intervention. They have considered the long-term challenges and sustainability, alongside the need for recovery from Covid-19 and future resilience.
- 1.10. Town Deal Boards are responsible for producing the Town Investment Plans, including putting forward suitable projects which align with the objectives of the Towns' Fund. The project approval process has taken into account the level of alignment with the intervention framework set out in the Further Guidance from MHCLG.
- 1.11. The draft Town Investment Plans were submitted for a Check and Challenge with MHCLG at the end of September. The feedback has shaped

the refinement of the Town Investment Plan and proposals for up to £25 million from the Towns Fund.

- 1.12. The Town Investment Plan is in two sections; section 1 setting out the context, strategy and process planning; and section 2 setting out the details of project proposals. The project proposals have been agreed by the Town Deal Board.

## **2. The Town Investment Plan**

- 2.1 The draft Town Investment Plan (TIP) may be found at Appendix 1. All Members were sent the link to the Boston Town Deal Board meeting and the papers, which included the draft TIP, on Tuesday 13 October, at which time it was a word document.
- 2.2 The draft TIP appended is presented in the format for submission - it is a document that highlights the strengths and opportunities that Boston has to offer, whilst evidencing the threats that Boston faces, together with the needs of the wider communities and businesses.
- 2.3 The list of interventions are outlined in the TIP and support the Boston Town Deal Board's vision.
- 2.4 To date there is match funding of approximately £13m from partner organisations, meaning the total value that the Towns Fund is seeking to leverage into Boston is £38m.

## **3. The Town Deal Platform and Future of the Town Board**

- 3.1 The Boston Town Deal has created many opportunities to bring several strategic partners together that may not have had an opportunity to work collectively without this platform. A clear example of this may be found within the skills and education sector where we have seen Boston College and the University of Lincoln working in a collaborative relationship for the benefit of both learners and business.
- 3.2 The guidance relating to the Towns Fund makes clear that Town Boards will be in existence for at least the lifetime of the current Parliament, with an expectation of longer. Officers are in discussions with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) on how the Town Boards in Lincolnshire may continue to develop a pipeline of projects to enable the GLLEP to be in a strong position to bid for future funding.
- 3.3 The Boston Town Board will continue to work on the current interventions as set out within the TIP, as part of the 12 month business development period. The Board will also seek to develop new interventions through other funding streams and through continued partnership working and by attracting new investment into the Borough.

**CONCLUSION**

The award of up to £25m from the Towns Fund creates a huge opportunity to help shape the future of both the Town and the Borough of Boston. Responding to the requirements of phase one of the prospectus will ensure that the Council is well placed to deliver phase two and continue to use the platform of the Town Deal to deliver additional investment in Boston by continuing to work with partners and business.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council is the accountable body and will ensure that any draw down of funds agreed as part of the budget envelope and subject to the Heads of Terms, which will be signed by the Chief Executive, s.151 Officer and the Chairman of the Boston Towns Deal Board, are in accordance with the conditions of the final award.

**LEGAL & EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Individual projects identified as interventions within the Investment Plan will be subject to individual legal advice and equality impact assessments where required under the legislative framework.

**ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**CONSULTATION**

This is set out in within the TIP.

**APPENDICES**

*(If none then insert the word 'None' and delete the below text/boxes).*

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

*APPENDIX 1*

*Draft Boston Town Deal Investment Plan*