

BBC Peer Review - Update on Actions

Progress report against actions identified

Recommendation	Action	Status
Talk up Boston! Promoting the Borough more extensively and assertively would help to shape public perceptions to reflect your achievements and aspirations.	The Council is proactive in its communication. Over the coming months it will be reviewing its overall external communications approach which will help to achieve this action.	
Define and communicate Boston's brand and share it consistently and widely. This will embed and promote a positive place identity that the local community, businesses, and partners can coalesce behind.	Clear Council brand, using the Boston skyline. New branding around Boston Town Deal as the focal point for Place. Consistency achieved through Comms team. Part of the review above.	
Take advice from the LGA Communications Improvement team. External guidance and advice can help match the communications service to the needs and ambitions of the Council.	Recommendations from the review are included at Appendix A with a status update	
Invest in development of the administration to deliver more effective political leadership (i.e., external facilitated Cabinet vision and priority setting). This investment will support the Cabinet to perform their strategic leadership role, establish clear priorities, and ensure this vision is reflected in the Corporate Plan and associated strategies.	Work has taken place with the Cabinet to support them in developing their strategic vision for Boston. This was externally facilitated and has resulted in the Council adopting its new Corporate Strategy	
Realise this vision through allocating the right resources to support the new Corporate Plan (specifically the growth agenda) and link this to the MTFs and Transformation Plan. This will ensure the Council's priorities, as set out in the new Corporate Plan and other key strategies, are aligned with the resources needed to deliver them.	The Council has made a number of decisions over the past year that have created capacity, in both officer resource and budget, to further its priority areas of work. In addition to this, there is the potential for £41m of external funding to come into Boston through Towns Fund (already secured - £21m) and Levelling Up Fund (£20m). Economic Growth structure currently being reviewed.	
Develop a bold investment plan and explore innovative delivery models to support the PE21 project. By securing a delivery model that provides a long term income stream this will support the Council's long term financial sustainability.	The Boston Town Investment Plan has secured a town deal of £21.9m and further bid of £20m has been submitted for Levelling Up funding, which is focused on the regeneration of the PE21 area of Boston. As part of the Levelling Up Fund application, it has been identified there would be value in setting up a special purpose vehicle (SPV). This will enable the requirement to achieve spend in the 2021/22 financial year and efficiently manage the wider delivery of the regeneration of town through generating resources from the management of those assets which can be utilised for the ongoing regeneration of the town.	
Use systematic customer insight to ensure services are responsive to community and customer needs. Establishing an objective view of resident satisfaction will enable Boston BC to better target its activities and drive customer-centred service improvement.	A survey has been commissioned as part of the Empowering Healthy Communities project to encourage local people to share their views about community and life in Boston. This will take place in the next few months and be followed up by a regular resident satisfaction survey after that. A recent restructure following the creation of the partnership with ELDC aims to create some capacity so we can do more to harness and deploy customer insight to shape service delivery and policy.	
Broader member development to support community leadership and effective representation. This will support frontline councillors	A member development plan is in place and the member development budget has been doubled. The plan has been informed by the needs of councillors (identified via a survey) as well as the corporate need for	

<p>to be effective community champions and ambassadors for the authority, the Borough, and all its communities.</p>	<p>councillors. The LGA are delivering training to councillors in September 2021 around the new model Code of Conduct.</p>	
<p>Refresh the workforce strategy and consider building on LGA workforce strategy themes. By using best practice guidance, Boston BC can align the refreshed Workforce Development Strategy to the new Corporate Plan priorities and Transformation Programme and future planning.</p>	<p>A workforce development strategy has been put in place and is supported by a workforce development board.</p>	
<p>Broaden the scope and understanding of transformation to address the issues of service redesign, digital thinking, efficiency, and commercialisation. This will facilitate a step change in Boston BC's overall pace of delivery and achievement of outcomes.</p>	<p>The creation of the Partnership with ELDC has naturally provided more opportunities for service redesign as teams have come together. Each Assistant Director has put together a programme of service reviews and this will continue with the addition of the extended Partnership with SHDC.</p>	
<p>Harness capacity and willingness of local residents, community groups and businesses to 'live' and promote brand Boston. In doing so, Boston BC can leverage in additional capacity and resources to maximise added value from collaboration.</p>	<p>Boston Town Deal is a focal point for residents and businesses to come together to move the town forward with the Board itself being made up of a diverse range of people who are all positive about Boston.</p> <p>The new Portfolio Holder for Waste Services has brought together local residents, community groups, charities, and local businesses to address local concerns about fly tipping and other environmental issues, e.g., the new Upcycling Sunday initiative.</p>	

LGA Comms Health Check

Recommendation	Action	Status
Conduct a resident survey to understand how residents understand the Council, what matters to them and how they want to receive information.	As part of the Empowering Health Communities project, Social Change UK have produced a resident survey. This will help to understand how Boston's communities work and feel. Findings from the survey with desk research and social media listening exercises will support recommendations for how we best engage and empower communities in Boston in the future. The survey is expected to be live in September 2021.	
Use the survey results to benchmark against other borough councils and as a baseline to measure future improvements in residents' views and perceptions.	Links to the survey. Can't be completed until the above action has been undertaken.	
Continue to develop the Council's new Corporate Plan, jointly owned by the Leader, Cabinet, Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team.	Corporate Strategy adopted on 23 rd November 2020.	
Should the Council choose to invest in resident surveys and focus groups, the findings should influence the new Corporate Strategy, communications strategy, and forward campaign planning.	Links to the survey. The Council is looking how it can better use customer intelligence to inform policy, including behavioural insights, with the latter already underway as a specific stream of work.	
Create a communications strategy (including internal and external communications) with specific communications aims and objectives (aligned to the corporate priorities). The strategy should include key messages, measurable objectives, and clear methods for evaluation.	Links to the survey. A review of the Council's communications methods, including internal, is currently being undertaken. The results of this will inform the Communications Strategy.	
Develop an annual campaign plan, signed off by the political and corporate leadership, to help prioritise activity and enable more strategic, integrated, and coordinated communications.	A review of the Communication Team Structure has been completed resulting in Directorate aligned Communication leads. The leads work with their directorate to develop communication plans which will feed into a master annual campaign plan. April 2022 target date to align to the Corporate Delivery Plan.	
Work with the new Leader and Cabinet to develop a set of priority areas for communications (the 'what do you want to be famous for?' question).	In discussions with politicians the following priority areas have been agreed for comms: 1) Response to Covid-19 2) Waste Management 3) Economic Growth	
Establish a corporate narrative that tells the story of the Council and wider borough. The narrative will help residents, stakeholders and staff understand the councils' ambitions, priorities and plans for the future. Bring this to life so staff and public can understand it.	The Corporate Strategy contains a narrative that sets outs the Council's ambition for the Borough. There is a need to ensure that all communications activity is linked back to the Corporate Strategy so it's clear to our audience how actions deliver on the ambitions of the Council for the Borough.	
Use this narrative and strategic messaging to run through all council communications. Ensure communications are informed and involved from the beginning of key projects, such as PE21.	A review of the Communication Team Structure has been completed resulting in Directorate aligned Communication leads. Using this approach ensures that our communication experts are integral to the project process and their development and planning. The leads work with their directorate to develop communication plans.	
Explore opportunities to create an engaging place brand for Boston. This should be led by the corporate and political leadership of the council along with partner organisations across the borough.	A visual place brand has been created for the Borough and is being rolled out. Tank PR are delivering a PRIDE of place campaign for the Borough.	
Develop a rigorous approach to evaluating communications activity.	Insights are used to support activity within the service such as when best to issue information to the community. Wider evaluation within the service linked to campaign success is something that is required and will be picked up as part of the annual Communications Campaign Plan.	

<p>Move the team towards an enabling, influencing and advising role and implement processes that can help colleagues in the services to own more of their own communications (e.g., style guide, toolkits, facts and figures, key messages, platform for email communications with external audiences).</p>	<p>The formation of an alliance with East Lindsey District Council has enabled the small communications team at Boston Borough Council to merge with those at East Lindsey District Council to create a single shared communications service. The team now have more of a focus on advising and supporting services in developing specific communications strategies. We feel this achieves this recommendation.</p>	
<p>Review the Council's approach to internal communications. Consider re-instating the regular staff bulletin, ensuring that key corporate messages as well as the organisation's future ambitions are understood internally.</p>	<p>An initial review was undertaken in August 2020 with a further review currently underway. The regular staff bulletin has been reintroduced along with a closed staff Facebook group and employee reference group.</p>	
<p>Embed a more strategic approach to social media, ensuring that content is short and engaging, messages are in line with council priorities.</p>	<p>A real strength of the communications service is the ability to create good quality social media content that the community engage with; content is linked to strategic objectives.</p> <p>There is more we need to do to create our own video content and we need to understand the platforms our community are using better.</p>	
<p>Implement an 'appropriate use' policy for the Council's social media channels.</p>	<p>A Social Media Acceptable Use Policy has been developed for implementation across BBC and ELDC Social Media channels. This is currently progressing through the Council's scrutiny and decision-making processes and is expected to be implemented by the end of October 2021.</p>	
<p>Develop protocols and guidance which clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of Members in relation to social media and media relations. Support this through a programme of practical training.</p>	<p>This has been delivered through a training programme hosted by former BBC presenter, Rod Whiting.</p>	