

Summary

The core objectives underpinning the consultation were to:

- Present details about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund together with the Partnership's thoughts about the sort of projects it is particularly interested in
- Gather ideas from stakeholders and residents about what they would like the money to be spent on and what they think will work best locally

The consultation took place between 13 and 30 June 2022. Feedback was still accepted during the week commencing 4 July to allow for responses being sent in via Freepost and additional meetings held.

The **consultation was widely promoted** with letters to stakeholders, social media posts and adverts in the local press. There was also a project website which hosted information about the proposal and a newsletter was produced which was emailed to stakeholders and also made available at community events.

People were invited to provide feedback via an **online survey** on the website, email, social media, Freepost or Freephone. Hard copy versions of the survey were available upon request. In addition, the website, adverts and newsletter included a sentence in Latvian, Polish, Russian and Portuguese stating that translated versions were available. Copies of the newsletter and survey were also sent to council offices and selected libraries to display.

The engagement included a series of online and face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders and a range of community events held at market stalls across the area.

Engagement and consultation with stakeholders

Key stakeholder letters

Letters about the forthcoming consultation were sent via email to the following groups of stakeholders:

- Matt Warman MP letter included details about the consultation together with an invitation for the MP to join the UKSPF Partnership Board relating to their constituency.
- Boston Borough councillors
- Key delivery partners
- Boston Towns Fund Board
- Parish councils in Boston
- Lincolnshire county councillors

A letter was also sent to a range of business organisations and businesses and included an invitation to an online meeting and a copy of the newsletter.

Following feedback from some councillors about it being difficult for them to attend day-time sessions due to work commitments, an email was sent to Boston Borough councillors on 22 June inviting them to an online evening meeting at 7.00 pm on 4 July.

Promoting the consultation

- A website was developed with information about UKSPF and the consultation: www.selcp-haveyoursay.co.uk. Between 8 June and 7 July 2022, the site received 1,656 unique visitors.

- A four-page consultation newsletter was sent to stakeholders and was available at the community events. Copies were also sent to council offices and Boston library to display.
- Half-page adverts about the consultation appeared in the Boston Standard and Boston Target during week commencing 20 June 2022.
- Consultation was promoted on Social media with Facebook posts in Boston reaching 12,221 and Twitter posts reaching 4,358.
- A media release and image about the consultation was issued on 13 June 2022.

Meetings

A series of meetings with stakeholders were held about UKSPF and the consultation:

- 14 June Boston Borough Council Corporate Meeting with officer core
- 15 June Boston Strategic Partners Meeting – VCS, Business and Public Sector Partners
- 21 & 23 June detailed briefing Boston Borough Councillors
- 25 and 29 June Boston Market Public Consultation
- 27 June Parish Councils Briefing
- 28 June inaugural meeting of Boston Governance Group
- 30 June Business Organisation Briefing
- 4 July Opportunity to meet East Lindsey and South Holland Councillors for a 3 way strategic discussion about joint priorities
- 6 July Boston Town Fund Board adopts long term governance group role.
- 8 July briefing with Matt Warman MP

Results / findings of the public consultation

The key facts from the public consultation include:

- 756 people responded to the survey: this includes those who completed it online as well as those who completed a printed version or emailed a scanned copy of their response.

Community events

Hard copies of the survey were made available at the community events and the findings from these have been included in the survey results below, highlight comments were:

- “Hard to get around - lots of places outside of the town that people who don't have cars cannot get to”
- “Community club for both young and elderly people”
- “Free parking would bring more people shopping”
- “An indoor market for when it's raining / bad weather”
- “Less busy in the market as lack of shops”
- “Make all shop fronts have the same signage that are less modern/have more character - like Nationwide's signage”
- 'Better bus service needed”

Key findings from the consultation survey

224 responses identified Boston as the Council area and the main challenges identified were:

- Improving the quality of the public realm
- Financial assistance for small businesses
- Support local business and the local economy
- Utilise the empty shops to provide show case for local artists/crafts

- Use some of the empty retail spaces in town and offer local businesses the opportunity to have a pop-up shop for a specific amount of time at a reduced rate
- More specialist shops – exploiting local history
- Provision of activities in the area for all age groups including an ice rink /community hubs/mini golf/art/trampoline/climbing walls/escape rooms/gym that includes children’s facilities.
- Free pitches for communities to use/community focus/gathering to include enhanced support, social space and encouraged cross-community interaction

Projects or initiatives that were identified

This was a free text question and an analysis of the responses was undertaken and a summary of the key themes and suggestions are shown in [Appendix A](#).

Feedback via social media

Over 170 posts on social media in response to the consultation were captured. A selection of quotes for Boston are included below:

- “Do regular small stalls events for small businesses. This will be profitable and helping means of income for locals.”
- “Don't just paint empty buildings. How about making all market stalls free to encourage more small companies/businesses to come to Boston which creates foot fall which is what big high street stores look for.”
- “Start by filling the potholes up it's really bad in places.”
- “The river view photos are always used to show Boston in its best light, yet is completely unutilised. Other towns and cities that have rivers running through them use riverside space so well. Boston, well it doesn't.
- There is nothing quaint or appealing about Boston, it's basically a huge car park, charging extortionate prices, with fast food and charity shops as dotted around the edge. All the attractive and historic parts fall behind cheap, garish shop signs and bad restoration.
- Some of the old architecture in the market place, the river, the stump and the little road that runs behind the KFC are lost in the huge car park that dominates the town centre and the awful decoration that shop fronts have been allowed.”
- “Encourage people to rent town shops by subsidising the rent for a year but make it about little unusual shops that add to our tourist destination. So not charity shops or pound shops. We want quirky little shops.”
- “Bringing a carnival back maybe even a light pride in the river Witham and maybe make car park free on Wed and Saturday for the market.”

Conclusion

A total of 756 individuals completed either the online survey, a hard copy of the survey or returned a scanned version of the survey to us via email.

Frequent suggestions via the survey were as follows:

- Invest in tidying up Boston town
- Help for small businesses and market stalls to help boost the town
- Provision of activities in the area for all age groups

Appendix A

Boston Borough Council	Number of Responses		
	Local Community & Places	Supporting Local Businesses	People & Skills
Invest in tidying up Boston town/less litter/power washing cobbles/tidy up and clean and paint shop fronts/no on-street drinking – making it more attractive with planting, outdoor tables, and activities Create a sense of pride. Fulltime/Additional street cleaners required Replacement of existing benches Regular grass cutting Support Wyberton Wombles	40	20	15
Reduce the rent for market stalls and business rates to encourage more stall holders and shops in the town Financial assistance to attract small businesses Require more local economy into the town Utilise the empty shops to provide show case for local artists/crafts Introduce a youth market enterprise twice a year for schools to be involved in Use some of the empty retail spaces in town and offer local businesses the opportunity to have a pop-up shop for a specific amount of time at a reduced rate More specialist shops – exploiting local history	31	27	17
Provision of activities in the area for all age groups including an ice rink /community hubs/mini golf/art/trampoline/climbing walls/escape rooms/gym that includes children’s facilities. Provide activities in woods https://www.willenlake.org.uk/ Free pitches for communities to use/community focus/gathering to include enhanced support, social space and encouraged cross-community interaction	22	14	11
Provide Town Rangers/policing across Boston town centre – Visitors and shoppers would feel safe again, the streets would be clean, and the Town Centre would return to a welcoming safe place to visit, encouraging shoppers and visitors	20	7	7
Invest in better road infrastructure Bypass for Boston Improvements to A16. Traffic calming measures for Kirton Better access into Boston town centre	19	10	8

A suggestion of providing a road crossing the river from London Road to Skirbeck Road			
Provide good quality shoes and clothes shops that cater for all needs/age groups and sizes Attract more family-owned businesses Suggestion for more retail outlets near Oldrids Downtown, M&S Food and Primark (No more gambling shops nor charity shops)	17	12	7
Reduce parking fees Suggestion of a trial free car parking for 10 min - 1hr a day for Boston town centre or on set days Increase parking facilities – a lot of unoccupied space that can be used	17	8	7
Regenerate the market / Introduce a farmers' market – keep the market area pedestrianised. Increase the number of days the market is on	12	7	5
Provide waste centre nearer to Boston town centre. Extend opening hours/open every day More investment is required to stop fly tipping Advertise where recycling and refuse disposal places are using social media A suggestion of providing communal bin areas within the town for those that do not have access to transport	12	6	5
Increase CCTV around the town, especially West Street and other typically unsafe area. Also assist addressing the drinking in the street issues and fly tipping	11	1	2
Provide more entertainment/live performance/presentation to freely showcase community music, dance, theatre and voluntary organisations. Cultural square. Public art and trails. 1940's weekend/beach weekend that is free of charge Suggestion of a permanent fixture to host such events Provisions of a large tv screen and seating/eateries screening large events Purchase of Cheers building to drive Cultural Quarter/Blackfriars offering helping to turn the cultural quarter into a destination for locals and visitors	8	3	5
Improved public transport Provision for buses to run between other local towns	8	5	4
Reintroduce centrally located public toilets which are easily accessed. Increase the amount available. If chargeable include a change machine and/or card payment facilities Provide/update toilets at the Assembly Rooms Better signage for public toilets	8	4	1
Provision of more opportunities for the younger generation /schools/colleges to be involved in such as voluntary work	7	5	4

Provision of a cycle 'highway' linking around the town of Boston, including to Pilgrim hospital	7	2	1
Provide more cycle paths – Dutch style. Example of Kroller Muller park in Netherlands was given. Encourage sustainable transport			
Offering of cycle proficiency courses for all age groups			
Provision of green open space – suggestion provided to be located next to the rowing club	6	3	2
Provide more advertising, posters and signage in and around the town, especially advertising events	4	3	2
Suggestion of an Information Point in Boston centre that is accessible seven days a week, face to face and online, including availability in other languages			
Update the children's play area in the centre of the park	4	2	
Provide support to churches & existing organisations to diversify and build community hubs in existing buildings that can be refurbished and made attractive to be used by the community for activities, training, wellbeing and assisting entrepreneurs	4	1	1
Provision of youth clubs	4		
Provide employment support	4	2	4
Funding for businesses to train staff			
Adult evening classes			
Repair potholes	4	2	2
Highlight the local history - for example Wormgate, Red Lion Street and Widebargate. Revamp the streets leading to the stump make it a nicer area to visit like "the shambles in York"	4	2	1
Provide funding to both encourage use of the waterways for pleasure	3	3	3
Restore empty shops and replace with housing	3	1	1
Involve local groups covering all members of the public to determine exactly what is needed	2	2	2
Provisions for Yoga & Pilates classes/wellbeing centre	2	1	2
Investment required to obtain 'chain' eateries in Boston town/independent restaurants/cafes	2	2	1
Improve rail provisions	2	1	1
Provide rail transport and connections to as many towns as possible to the network, providing sustainable passenger transport. In turn to move the maximum amount of Lincolnshire's farm produce by rail, to reduce pressure on and damage to the road network			
Provide a water feature to the town centre – with seating	2		

Provision for people with disabilities and mental health issues available in Wide Bargate	2		1
Provide an annual funding of £10k to Boston Lithuanian Community Group for their community centre and the venue which provides variety of activities including educational, language school, arts, music, dance activities & ESOL classes Funding for the help for the consultations of the vulnerable, lonely and the elderly of the group and community events Communications/liason person/agency led by BLC £25.000 as a communication bridge should be considered	2	1	1
Funding for a community Cafe and bookshop, staffed by professionally qualified Christians, for counselling, advice, debt management and ministry. The objective is to provide a safe environment for people to come to discuss their problems and share their concerns in privacy, confidence and comfort	1		
Mother and toddler facilities	1	1	1
Provide funding to the local police force	1		1
Provide funding to allow waste bins to be stored and kept off the streets	1		
Revision of speed limits and crossings – especially near schools	1		
Monthly car boots throughout the summer months	1		
Open up council buildings to allow photocopying/printing for community groups	1		1
Provide funding to restore West Street to become an attractive place, vibrant with the businesses it supports- 'little Krakow' type innovation like a 'China town' or 'Turkish quarter' - included would be a style guide and consultation with local Europe shops helping them remodel shops, branding and appearance to be more familiar, inviting to and in keeping with the local area and local people - this is an easy win- restoring shop fronts, introduce more traditional signage and display. A fund to support this would turn the 'foreign looking' shops into attractive shops, delis and bakeries akin to 'The Lanes' in Brighton	1	1	1
Installation of some careful lighting of Boston's lanes and looking at how to restore places you want to visit and shop. Example of Emery Lane and Dolphin Lane	1	1	1
Use empty units in the town for college catering students to open a shop	1		
Provide funding to be ring-fenced for flood risk management that RMA's can bid for as and when required as they develop their own plans and implement works programmes	1		

Give each taxpayer £100 voucher to spend in town on independent businesses only	1	1	1
Organise events to encourage women and girls to exercise and socialise in public spaces and employ park keepers and wardens to provide a safe presence in these areas	1		
Create a local UKSPF funding mechanism that matched or complemented public and other grant funds to incentivise collaboration, enable longer-term aligned vision and workforce/financial planning Provide resources to fully realise the long-term 'layering' benefits that the VCSE local infrastructure organisation (LIO) can deliver This would be co-designed and co-produced with local government and VCSE partners and evidence driven Inclusive growth governance and delivery could be adopted quickly as a model for involving the third sector, nurturing collaboration and delivering a range of long-term benefits It would require some investment into establishing effective programme management, but this is realistic and achievable and is an appropriate role for the LIO	1	1	1
Boston United in the community is helping and a great organisation that makes a difference	1		
Support Pilgrim Hospital	1		1
Support Boston dance school	1	1	1
Provisions for a 'poet-in-residence' appointed on a yearly basis for a small retainer (say £1000+ expenses) who would describe the events, people, and atmosphere of the town via words	1	1	1
Support the Transported arts programme	1	1	1
Provide an urban regeneration of the docks and riverside	1		
Provisions of a new swimming pool – with spectator facilities	1		
More funding for care homes	1	1	1
Funding to support The Ball House Pub (Wainfleet Road) – already provide support for the community including meetings to help mental health and loneliness	1	1	
Funding for the Blackfriars Theatre for refurbished and to assist funding of shows, plays, music etc. providing education of young people in theatre arts	1	1	
Support for farming business in the local area to support retention of business who employ a lot of people		1	1