

Boston Pride in Place

Appendix 2

Boston 10-Year Vision Document

Section 1: Local Context

Pride in Place

The Pride in Place programme will make £20 million available to Boston over the next 10 years as part of a transformative opportunity for the Town. It builds on a highly successful programme of regeneration which through Towns Fund and Levelling Up resources has seen approaching £40 million already deployed in the town. This vision document explains how we plan to use these new resources for the benefit of Boston. We begin with our vision statement which summarises the ambition underlying the text which follows setting out our plans further. A more detailed investment strategy for the first four years of the programme is also attached to this vision document.

Vision Statement

Boston—a place where history and progress walk hand in hand. From the Market Place to the riverbanks, there's energy in the air and kindness on the streets. The town is a hub of ideas and action, shaped by the people who live here and believe in its future.

The centre is vibrant, with cafés spilling into squares, shops run by locals, and art that tells our story. The Stump rises proudly above spaces that work—distinct zones where retail, community, and enterprise each have room to breathe. Empty buildings become beating hearts: enterprise hubs, community spaces, places that give people reasons to linger. Visitors come to meet founding fathers and write new stories.

Young people are staying. Not because they have to, but because they want to; they can grow their futures right here. Conversations sound different now: "here's what's waiting for you" rather than "good luck out there." Investment in skills, creativity, and genuine pathways has invigorated ambition. Our youth are confident in their worlds.

Green space surrounds us and runs through us. The River Witham flows clear, flanked by wildflowers and walking paths. Transport is joined-up and getting around is simple.

Homes are affordable, warm, safe, and tidy. People feel rooted, not stuck. Communities respect and shape their surroundings.

Boston welcomes the world. We've celebrated the birth of our American offspring and we're a source of pride for their children. Our strength lies in our diversity—long-settled families and new arrivals who've found hope here. We speak many languages but share the same dreams. We've learned that working together creates the foundation for laughing together.

People have power here. Decisions aren't handed down—they're built up together, from doorstep to town level. We solve problems side-by-side.

We are famous again—not just for our past, but for what we're becoming. A place of action and imagination. A town that believes in itself. A town that's moved forward without leaving anyone behind.

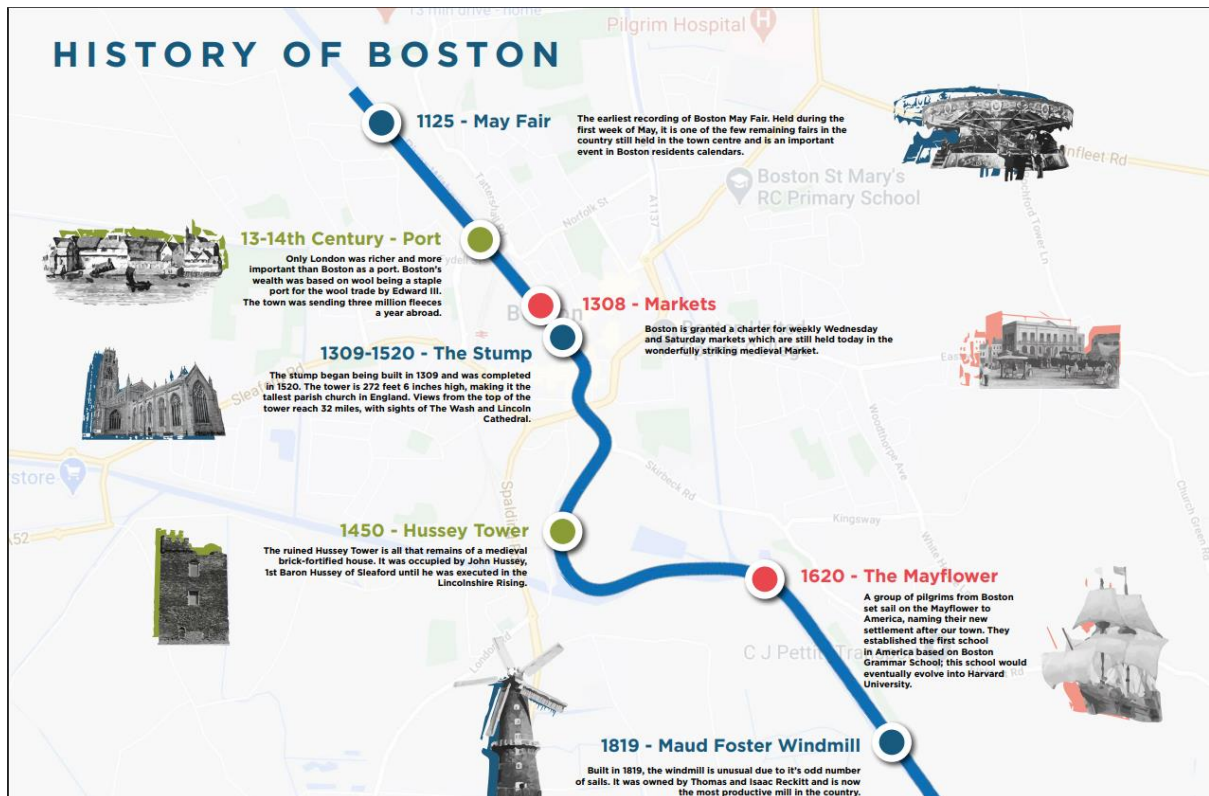
Boston, Lincolnshire: An Introduction

Nestled between the Wash and the Humber, Boston stands as a town of remarkable contrasts—where its medieval church tower pierces the Fenland sky and dozens of languages echo through market streets. Lincoln as the county's 'principal city' has developed exponentially over the last thirty years and many Bostonians admit to a resentment from feeling 'left behind'. This is a community shaped by a thousand years of global connections, from its medieval heyday as England's second busiest port to today's reality as home to people from over thirty nations. Despite those who recognise its beauty and potential, many people in Boston and the surrounding area appear to have "fallen out of love" with the town.

A Legacy of Global Reach

Boston's heritage is international. In the 13th century, Hanseatic merchants made this Fenland port their English headquarters, creating wealth that built the magnificent St Botolph's Church—"The Stump"—whose tower still dominates the landscape. The sea has long been integral to Boston's identity, producing explorers such as Mathew Flinders and George Bass, as well as Sir John Franklin of nearby Spilsby. The town's history also includes Sir Joseph Banks and his involvement in the draining of the Fens creating fertile land to feed a flourishing country. In 1842, local man Herbert Ingram founded The Illustrated London News, further enhancing Boston's cultural legacy. The opening of a new dock in 1882 once again expanded trade and the fishing industry from the port.

Although it was built on trade that funded its elegant architecture, the town's most famous export wasn't wool or grain, but ideals. Some of the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed on the Mayflower in 1620 had links with Boston and a decade later another influential group, including Isaac Johnson carried Boston's spirit across to the New World on the Arbella as part of the Winthrop Fleet. The Pilgrims' arrival and influence laid the groundwork for the society and freedoms that shaped America and in 1630 Isaac Johnson was instrumental in naming their settlement on the coast of Massachusetts after this town. As 2030 approaches—marking 400 years since that founding—both Bostons prepare to celebrate their enduring connection.



Today's Boston: A Community in Transition

With over 30% of residents born outside the UK, this is one of England's most internationally diverse smaller towns. Polish bakeries sit alongside traditional fish and chip shops, while Romanian families and long-established Lincolnshire families send their children to the same schools. This cultural richness brings both vibrancy and complexity to a community still finding its rhythm.

Boston's unique built environment is not just a reminder of the past: it can be an engine of renewal that, alongside wider change creates a stronger economy and increased civic pride. Heritage is critical to Boston's identity and future but the somewhat 'sprawling' town centre and its 'offer' has no clear theme or identity differentiating itself from others and easing a path to regeneration.

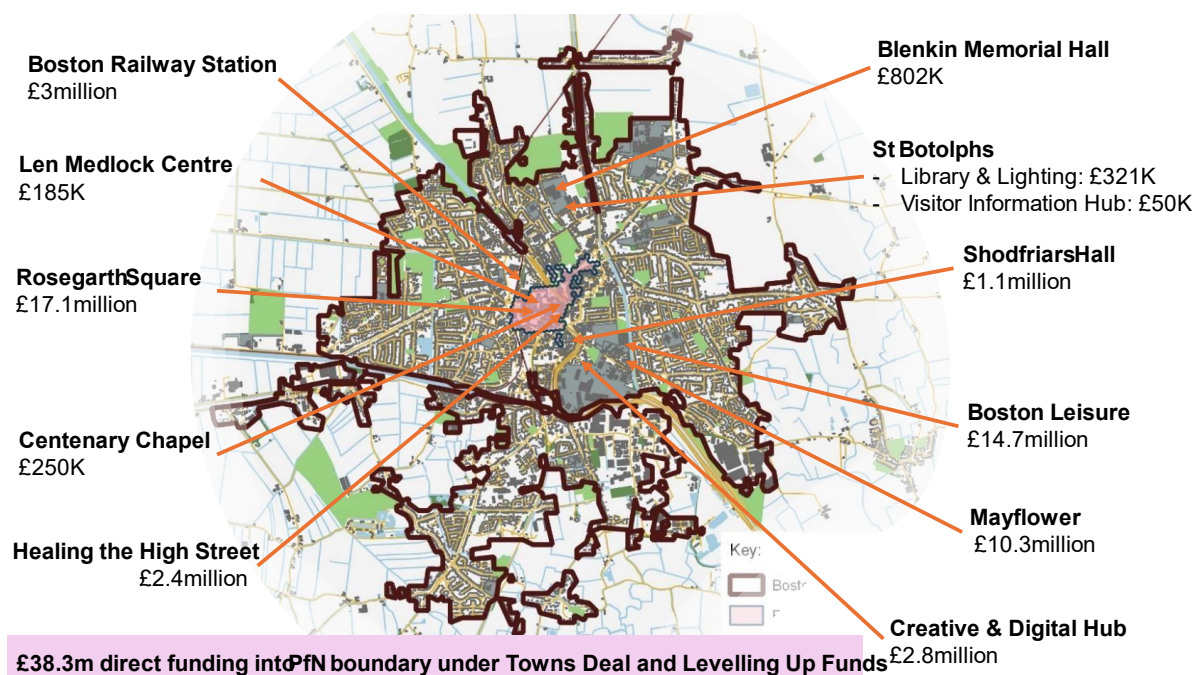
Economically, Boston faces the challenges common to many post-industrial towns. The local economy relies heavily on sectors that provide strong levels of employment but often at lower wages; while employment rates are relatively high, the Gross Value Added per capita is significantly below the national average. While the value of housing stock is low and housing should be affordable, low wages skew the average house price to earnings ratio in the opposite direction. The town centre, punctuated by vacant shops at numbers significantly above the national average, reflects the broader struggle of high streets across England.

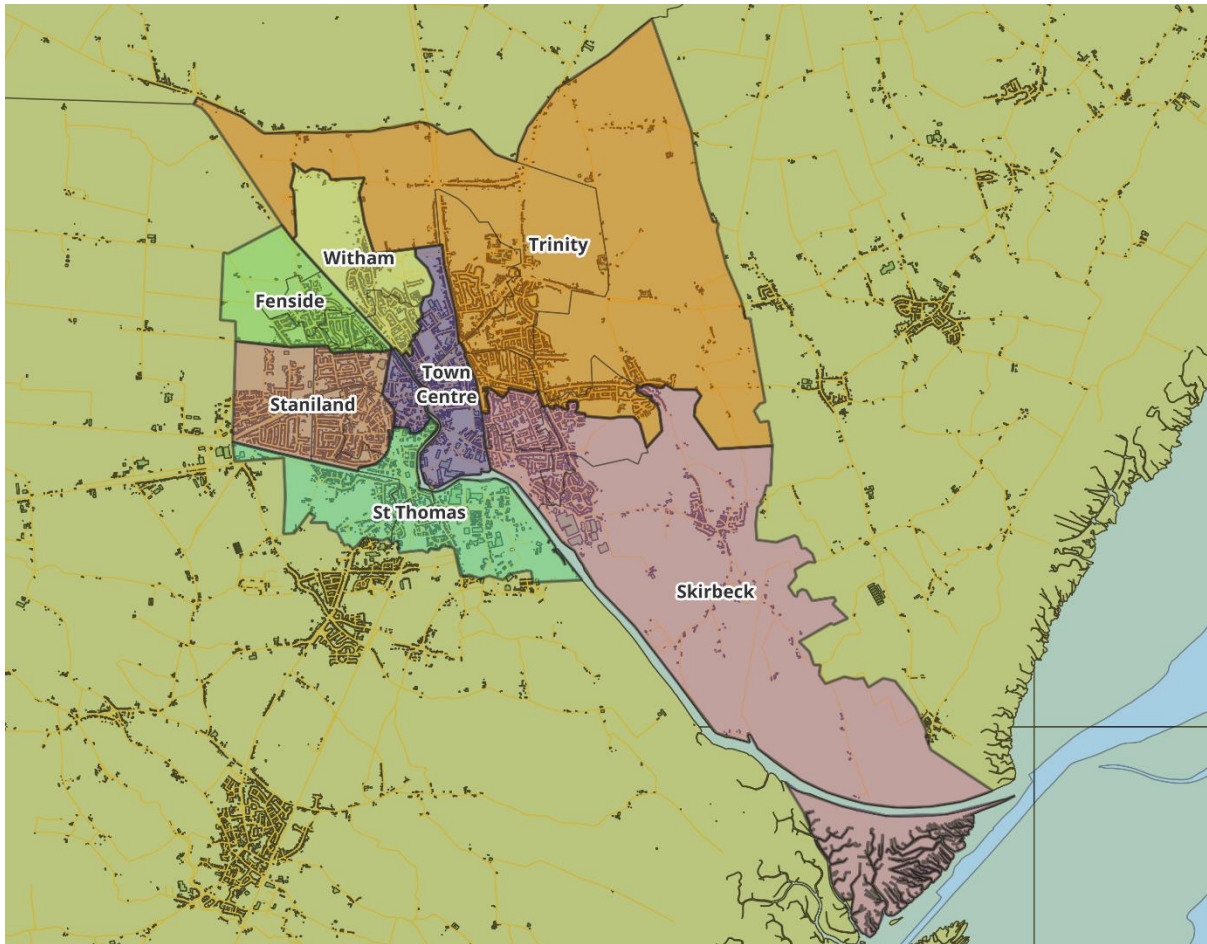
Boston today is a community at a crossroads, where medieval heritage meets modern migration, where agricultural tradition encounters technological change. The town's greatest asset may be its people—both those whose families have worked these Fens for generations and those who've recently made Boston their home, all contributing to a story that's far from finished.

Section 2: Spatial Targeting – How Boston Fits Together as a Place

The Boston Built-up Area (BUA), eligible for investment through the programme, is split into seven sub-areas: Fenside, Witham, Town Centre, Trinity, Skirbeck, Staniland, and St Thomas. The Boston Town Board has used the most suitable data from various sources to create a detailed and up-to-date profile of the town. Detailed analyses for each sub-area are available, revealing significant differences in some cases, which helps the Town Board and its partners target interventions for maximum impact.

The following maps show (1) the locations of existing government-funded projects and (2) the seven main neighbourhoods within the Boston BUA showing areas of focus for the Neighbourhood Plan programme.





Section 3: Vision for the Future

Boston's Vision - Introduction

This vision for the next 10 years will be part of a longer journey. We know that we can deliver significant change within the social, economic, and physical fabric of the town within ten years, but this work will not be completed. We will pre-empt and lay foundations for future change and by 2035 we will have a sustainable community-led model in place to continue, develop, and build on this programme.

The people of Boston understand that the clock cannot be turned back but overwhelmingly and understandably want to retain a focus on the town's history and heritage—celebrating it, bringing it to life, and positioning it alongside progress. A pioneering town, not a pastiche of its former self—attracting new business and enterprise, particularly within a theme of heritage and culture, crafts, art, and digital creativity, supporting a small but differentiated town centre that thrives and delights.

Detailed Vision Highlighting Key Areas of Change

Brilliant Boston

Boston is a town where the glow of its history lights the way to a bold future. Landmark buildings and historic streets are restored and reimagined, alive with performance, creativity, and colour. Festivals, markets, and celebrations spill into the squares and along the riverbanks, telling Boston's story in ways that captivate residents and visitors alike. The town is a stage, a place to share our talents, honour our heritage, and make new memories.

A Thriving Place

Together we are working to establish a clear “identity” for Boston that not only encapsulates our vision but helps drive sustainable change. An identity that differentiates Boston from neighbouring towns, sets expectations, and gives people a reason to join us here—to visit, work, play, and reside. An identity that helps us attract entrepreneurs, new business, and investment and create new employment, retail, and leisure opportunities. A place where young people are supported, talent is nurtured, and enterprise is embraced.

Rather than a reinvention, Boston needs to untangle the muddle. The town centre's confusion isn't terminal; it's a navigation problem waiting for thoughtful solutions. Instead of forcing everything to compete in the same struggling space, we can create distinct but connected zones where retail, business, leisure, and community have room to breathe and thrive.

We picture walking through a centre where a tourist knows where they are going—where clear pathways guide them from the revived medieval marketplace to independent shops tucked into previously forgotten corners, where local artists and makers offer experiences that no online store can replicate. Empty buildings that now stand as monuments to decline could become the beating heart of renewal: enterprise hubs where new businesses incubate, community spaces where different generations finally meet on common ground, leisure facilities that give people reasons to linger.

Boston's architectural heritage—from The Stump's ancient grandeur to Georgian merchants' houses—needs more than preservation; it needs activation and animation. Modern technology and creative interpretation can make these stones speak to visitors and residents alike, telling stories that connect past innovation to present possibility. This isn't about turning Boston into a museum but about making its remarkable history work for its future.

The town already knows how to party—recent innovative events have proven that people will come together when given something worth celebrating. As we build toward “Boston 400” in 2030, these are not just isolated festivals but stepping stones toward a new identity. Winter illuminations could transform the dark Fenland months from an endurance test to anticipation, while summer festivals remind everyone—locals and visitors—why this place matters to so many.

This is regeneration rooted in reality: not grand promises that fail to materialise. We are planning practical changes that translate into transformation. Boston has the bones of greatness; it simply needs the confidence and a body map to assemble them into a revitalised whole.

A Stronger Community: From Division to Unity

Boston faces the same fractures troubling communities across Britain—fewer than half of us see ourselves as truly part of a community. But division isn't destiny, and Boston has something many places lack: a track record of reinvention and the institutional backbone to make change happen.

The challenge isn't abstract. It's visible in the generational tensions around diversity, the economic divides between opportunity and struggle, the geographic separation between those thriving and those left behind. By 2035, these divisions won't have magically disappeared, but they will have transformed from barriers into bridges. The town's productivity challenges, skills gaps, and educational needs will still require attention—but by then, we'll be building on success rather than scrambling to address crisis.

Picture Boston's young people in 2035 having genuine choices: staying for careers that matter, leaving knowing they're always welcome home, or creating entirely new paths that didn't previously exist. Picture employers who don't just complain about skills shortages but actively collaborate to solve them through apprenticeships, upskilling programmes, and community partnerships. Picture learning spaces where a grandmother teaches traditional cooking while gaining digital literacy, where recent arrivals share professional expertise while improving their English.

This isn't about erasing differences or forcing artificial harmony. Boston's strength lies in being multiple identities learning to become one community—integrated but not homogenised, connected but not conformist. Cultural diversity becomes an asset when Polish construction expertise meets Lincolnshire agricultural knowledge, when Iranian business acumen combines with established local networks, when teenage tech skills help elders' wisdom reach new audiences.

The path forward mirrors successful examples where people are empowered. Research suggests that reaching Nordic levels of social trust could generate £100 billion annually across the UK—Boston's version of this transformation could be equally valuable at local scale.

Our vision is communities that care for each other not through obligation but through genuine connection—where respect is earned through shared experience, where working together creates the foundation for laughing together, where Boston's remarkable diversity becomes its greatest competitive advantage. This is what a stronger community looks like: not the absence of difference, but the presence of belonging.

Taking Back Control: From the Ground Up

The uncomfortable truth is that talent exists everywhere, but opportunity doesn't. A child born in Boston shouldn't face drastically different life chances than one born in London, yet that's exactly what happens when communities lack the power to shape their own futures. Taking back control means creating the infrastructure for local people to solve local problems while building something bigger.

Boston's challenge is familiar: too many people living payslip to payslip, too many brilliant ideas never getting the chance to flourish. But the solution isn't waiting for someone else to fix things. Look at what's working elsewhere, tackling employment challenges by investing in

training and reinvesting profits into local skills development by bringing together communities, businesses, and public services to tackle deprivation at its roots.

Boston needs its own version: community groups, business networks, and local institutions working together because they're genuinely invested in the town's future. This means bottom-up solutions created by the people who'll live with the consequence—residents organising improvements, businesses creating apprenticeships, community groups bridging barriers, entrepreneurs getting support to turn ideas into jobs for them and a new workforce.

The vision is a network operating at every scale: doorstep initiatives solving immediate problems, street-level organising building social capital, town-wide collaboration attracting investment. When people have ownership, they take responsibility. When they take responsibility, pride follows. When pride returns, everything else becomes possible.

Boston will be famous again—not just for what we were, but for what we're becoming. A place where action meets imagination, where communities believe in themselves because they've proven what they can achieve together. A town that moves forward without leaving anyone behind, because moving forward together is the only way that lasts. This is taking back control in its truest sense: communities empowering themselves to create the change they need to see.

What Success Looks Like

While the challenges and opportunities, derived from evidence-based data and community feedback, reflect the areas for change over the ten-year period, we recognise that we cannot address everything at once; we understand the need to prioritise and sequence change to optimise the benefit of the investment and that the process of change will continue after the programme ends.

We are delivering change within a constantly changing world—there is a need to remain agile, scanning the horizon, pre-empting or responding to external influences and reflecting the changing needs and priorities of our communities—this is their plan.

Each intervention or project will have clear objectives and milestones allowing us to monitor and drive benefit realisation and these will be set within the context of the overarching measures we will set for the programme. We are in the process of designing our “dashboard”, setting baselines, milestones, and targets. At high level, examples of measures include:

A Thriving Place

- Boston established and recognised as a regional centre for culture, arts, crafts, and creativity
- Acclaimed delivery of Boston (2030) 400 with a significant and successful legacy events programme
- Visitor numbers increased with related economic impact increased by 25% per annum
- GVA per capita increased by at least 30% in real terms
- Commercial vacancies reduced from well above national average to national average or below

A Stronger Community

- Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour from well above national average to national average or below—including in the town centre (significant hot spot)
- Greater equality of opportunity and access across the 7 neighbourhoods
- Significant reduction in deprivation for education and skills (reducing from 50% of LSOAs in the top 20% for deprivation—target to be established)
- Affordable homes—rebalance of median house price to earnings to national average
- Improvements to wellbeing (targets to be set) sustainable through prevention and personal responsibility rather than intervention programmes and agendas

Taking Back Control

- A collaborative empowered community network
- Moving from 72% feeling they are not listened to in the making of local decisions (ZenCity May 2025) to upper quartile response

This analysis of what success will look like has informed the vision set out at the start of the document.

Section 4: Strategic Case for Change

Evidence Base

Based on the layout of settlements shaped by main roads and rivers, as well as the roles of areas like the town centre and industrial estates, Boston has been divided into seven neighbourhoods: Fenside, Witham, Town Centre, Trinity, Skirbeck, Staniland, and St Thomas. Each neighbourhood's boundaries are defined by major transport routes, such as the A16 and A52, and natural features like the River Witham, which affect their layout and purpose. For example, the Town Centre is the commercial hub, while Fenside and Skirbeck are mainly residential.

We selected the most suitable data for each neighbourhood from various datasets, as they differ by area, to create an up-to-date profile of the town. Full details are in the Town Board's main report and summarised in this section. The neighbourhood analysis, showing some clear differences, helps target interventions more effectively.

A detailed socio-economic report for the Boston Built-up Area and its seven neighbourhoods has been shared with the Town Board. Key findings are summarised below.

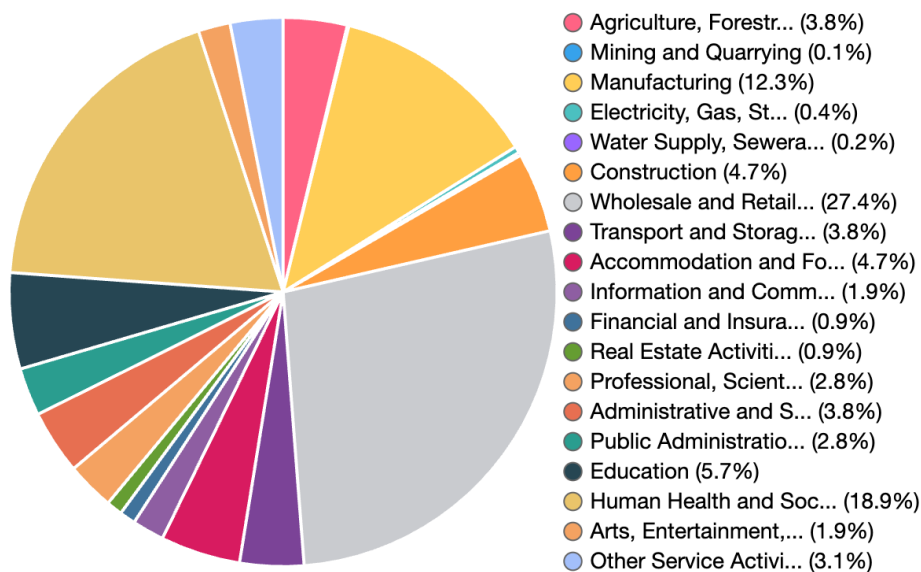
Objective – A Thriving Place

Commuting patterns (based on 2021 Census data from the ONS Origin-Destination Data Explorer) show estimates for Boston's neighbourhoods, each with about 5,000 people, as precise Built-up Area (BUA) data is unavailable. Using Boston's working-age population and transport links, estimates suggest 5,000 to 7,000 people commute into Boston, while 3,000 to 5,000 commute out.

Cars are the main way people travel to work, like in many towns. Travel times for work, education (except secondary schools), and hospital visits are generally good.

Boston's economy has mixed results. Unemployment is slightly lower than average (Boston 4.6%, East Midlands 4.8%, England 4.9%), and fewer people are economically inactive (Boston 35.6%, East Midlands 44.1%, England 39.1%). However, Boston has a low-wage, low-skill economy. The Gross Value Added per job in 2022 was £39,959, much lower than the East Midlands (£52,889) and England (£62,751), with Boston's GVA at just 64% of England's. This is a challenge, especially with the risk of automation affecting low-skilled jobs.

The 2023 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) data for Boston's Built-up Area and its neighbourhoods, as of July 2025, gives a clear picture of employment, key sectors, and areas for growth.



Boston's economy relies heavily on certain sectors. Wholesale and Retail Trade is the largest, employing 5,800 people (29.0% of the workforce, compared to 15% nationally), showing Boston's role as a regional shopping hub, supported by 5,000–7,000 commuters from places like Spalding and Skegness. Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing employs 800 people (4.0%, much higher than the national 1%), reflecting Boston's rural roots. Human Health and Social Work, with 4,000 employees (20.0%, above the national average), is growing, especially in Trinity, which added 595 jobs.

However, sectors like Finance and Insurance are underdeveloped, limiting growth in high-value industries. This reliance on traditional and public-sector jobs makes Boston less resilient to changes like automation or climate impacts on farming.

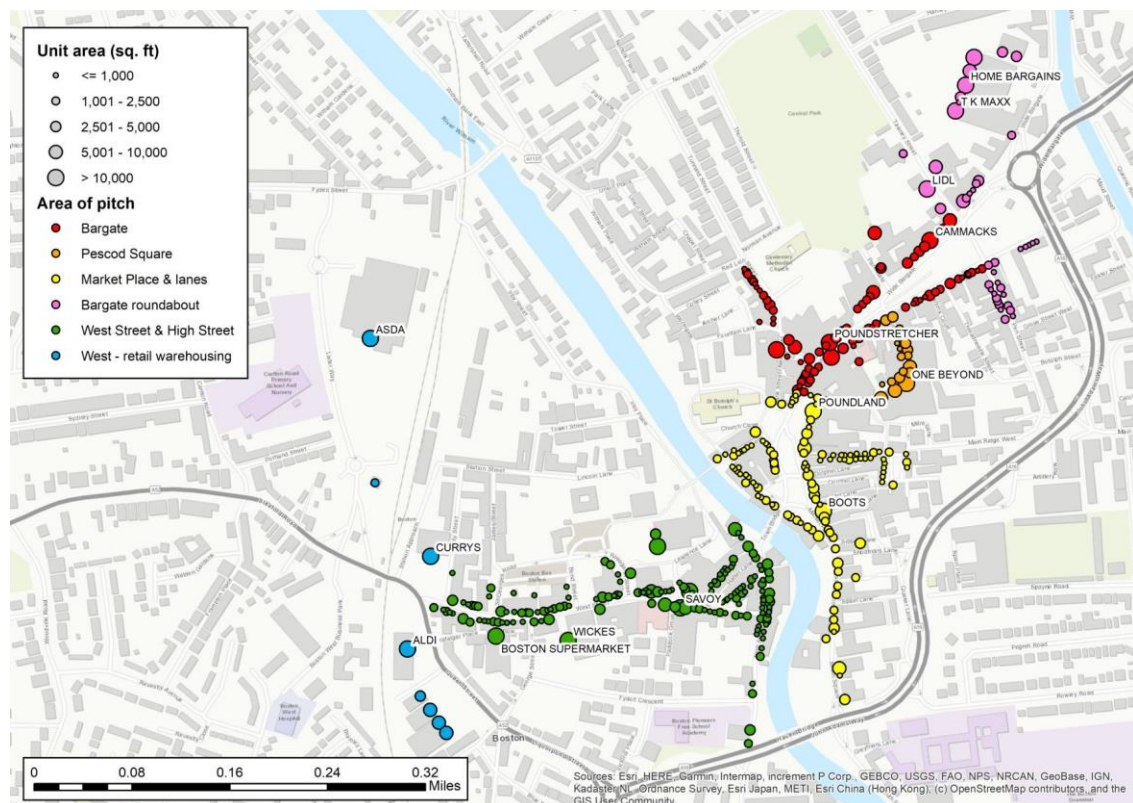
Boston's economy, characterised by low-wage sectors, faces significant disruption from artificial intelligence (AI). Automation risks exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, with studies indicating that up to 30% of jobs in routine-based industries like farming and logistics could be displaced by AI-driven technologies by 2030. In a town where Gross Value Added per job is only 64% of the national average, this could widen skills gaps and increase economic inactivity, particularly in neighbourhoods like Fenside, where over 50% of LSOAs rank in the top 20% for education deprivation.

However, AI presents opportunities for renewal. Precision agriculture could enhance productivity in the Fens, while AI-enabled digital creativity—such as virtual heritage tours of St Botolph's Church—aligns with Boston's vision as a hub for arts, crafts, and innovation. Preparing for Boston (2030) 400in 2030, AI could animate cultural assets, boosting visitor numbers and GVA by fostering new enterprises.

This underscores the strategic imperative for change: targeted investments in skills programmes and community capacity must equip residents to harness AI, mitigating risks and unlocking growth. Without action, divisions deepen; with it, Boston transforms into a resilient, forward-looking community.

Each neighbourhood has a distinct economic role. The Town Centre, with 40.0% of its 2,300 jobs in retail, is the commercial heart but lost 400 jobs from 2015 to 2023, likely due to retail struggles. Trinity, with 25.0% of its 3,700 jobs in healthcare, is a sub-regional hub, supported by commuting patterns. Fenside and Skirbeck have more food-related jobs (5.0% and 6.0%), reflecting rural strengths, but Fenside faces high deprivation, limiting economic progress. Staniland (15.0% in Manufacturing) and St Thomas (29.0% in Retail) show some diversity but face issues—Staniland has low social trust (-7.0%), and St Thomas lost 465 jobs. Witham, with 30.0% in retail, lost 155 jobs, suggesting vulnerability. These differences highlight the need for targeted actions, like skills training in areas like Fenside.

Boston's town centre has been hit by national trends, with out-of-town retail and online shopping reducing its market share. Despite having 22% more retail and leisure outlets per person than similar towns, commercial vacancies are above average, and high street footfall is about 50% below average. The town's retail stretches 1km between two retail parks, where 7 of the top 10 retailers by sales are based in warehouse-style properties. Between 2019 and 2025, Boston lost nearly 150,000 square feet of retail space, leading to high vacancy rates on the high street.



Alongside a few great independents, the retail offer is mainly geared to value retail and convenience—this adequately meets the needs of the demographic profile of the town centre residents but does little to attract affluent or aspirational shoppers in the catchment area or increase visitor retail spend. A recent independent survey, commissioned by the Town Board and BBC, highlights the opportunity to work with local entrepreneurs, landlords, and stakeholders to develop the independent shopping offer in the market place and shopping lanes of Boston and the opportunity for pleasant environments of the market place to attract more food and beverage outlets to help develop the leisure offer with a particular opportunity for outdoor dining/seating.

This plan provides a great opportunity to consider how best to respond to the changing nature of the High Street. To adapt, the town must embrace non-standard retail approaches that leverage its rich heritage and community aspirations. Revitalising the historic Market Place with enhanced paving, seating, and lighting can create a lively hub for pop-up markets featuring local artisans and micro-businesses, building on the success of the Boston Brilliance festival to draw entrepreneurs and boost footfall.

Encouraging 'living over the shop' schemes can transform vacant upper floors of Boston's 266 listed buildings into residential spaces, fostering a 24/7 economy that enhances evening activity and community vibrancy. Creative retail models, such as street art markets, artisanal food stalls, and community-led repair cafes, can set Boston apart, offering unique experiences that online platforms cannot replicate. Supporting local makers with affordable spaces in underused alleys like Emery Lane further strengthens this distinct offer.

Digital innovations, like AI-powered interactive heritage trails linking sites such as St Botolph's Church, can elevate visitor engagement, while digital signage improves wayfinding and event promotion. By creating distinct zones for retail, leisure, and community activities, Boston's high street can evolve into a thriving cultural and social destination, resilient against modern retail challenges.

Boston town centre has a remarkable streetscape with many heritage assets, including nearly 500 Listed Buildings; with 266 of these within the town centre Conservation Area; a medieval street pattern still present and recognisable within Boston town centre, including the historic Market Place; one park listed on Historic England's register of Historic Parks and Gardens and other parks of value; and 16 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, protected by law due to their national significance.

Boston is one of only a few historic towns identified by Historic England as meriting particular attention, to encourage people to appreciate and cherish their extraordinary heritage.

Despite its remarkable heritage, history, and cultural assets (including a theatre and historic library in the town centre, and 33 museums and galleries within the borough), cultural participation lags behind regional and national benchmarks. From April 2022 to March 2024, 86.8% of adults in Boston's local authority engaged physically with arts, compared to 89.5% in the East Midlands and 90.4% in England (MHCLG, Boston local data).

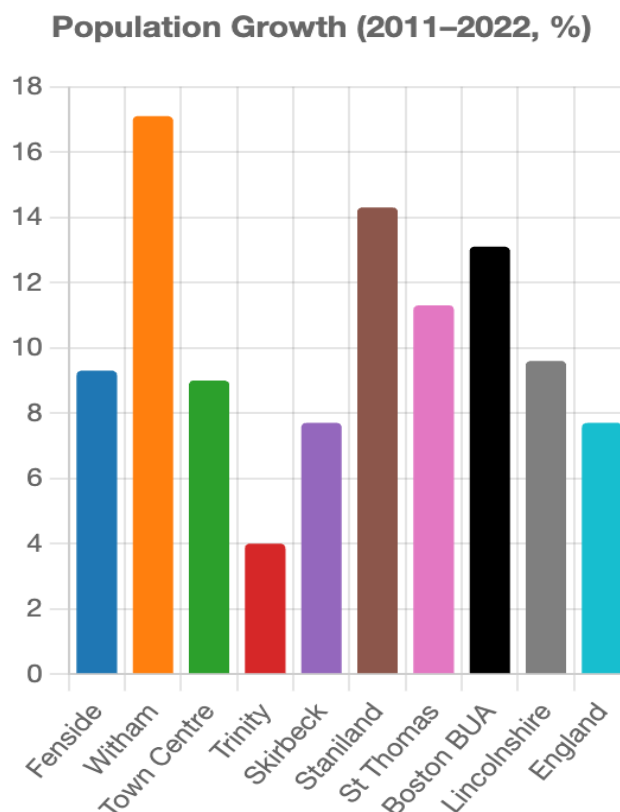
Engagement with theatre, drama, musicals, was low at 23.2%, against 36.0% regionally and 39.5% nationally. Museum or gallery visits were reported by 28.4% of adults, compared to 37.4% and 43.1%. Heritage site visits stood at 53.4%, compared to 65.0% and 66.2%.

Of note, two of the borough art groups and a guitar maker have recently established a town centre presence including retail, indicating an appetite for participatory arts and craft and for local art and craft retail within the town.

As well as the heritage assets, Boston holds various popular family and cultural events during the year. In February 2025, “Boston Brilliance” was a collaboration between Boston College, South-East Lincolnshire Council Partnership (of which Boston Borough Council is part), and the internationally acclaimed architectural projection mapping experts, The Projection Studio, to take forward the UK’s first two-day architectural mapping festival. At the centre of the festival, eight iconic landmarks were lit up in a dazzling display of colour, celebrating Boston’s rich heritage and artistic talent. This was a pilot not only for future festivals of this nature but also to demonstrate how heritage can be brought to life in a very relevant and creative way—and its success highlights future social, cultural, and economic opportunity.

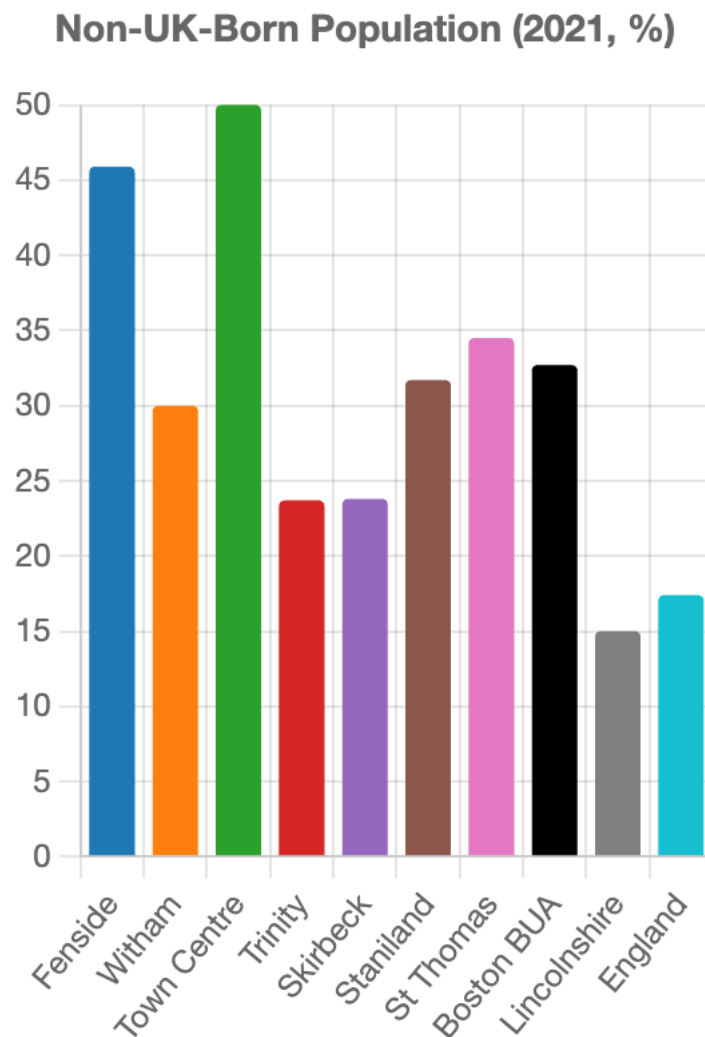
Objective – A Stronger Community

Boston, had a population of 45,238 in 2022, reflecting a 13.1% increase from 40,010 in 2011. This growth is higher than the whole of the council area including its rural areas (9.6%), East Midlands (8.3%), and England (7.7%) averages (ONS, Population estimates for England and Wales, mid-2022).



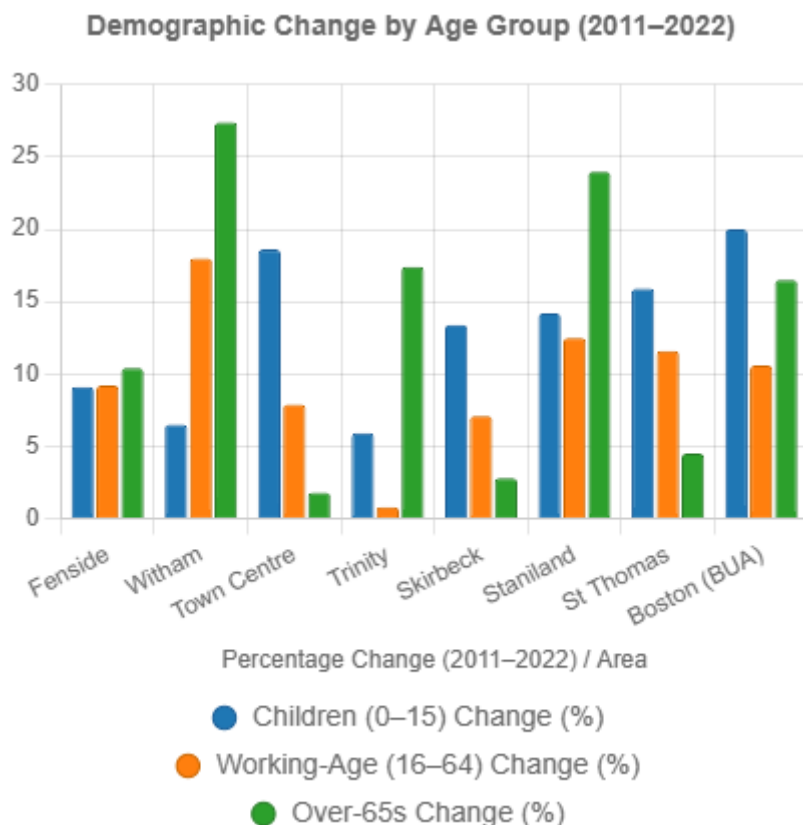
Ethnically, 93.02% of the population identify as White, 2.98% as Asian, 0.8% as Black, 1.6% as Mixed, and 1.61% as other ethnic groups, indicating a predominantly White population with modest diversity (ONS, Census 2021, TS021 dataset).

A high proportion of residents were born outside of the UK, well above regional and national averages, and most notable within the areas of Town Centre and Fenside. The high level of migration presents a number of challenges (real and perceived), but also opportunity.



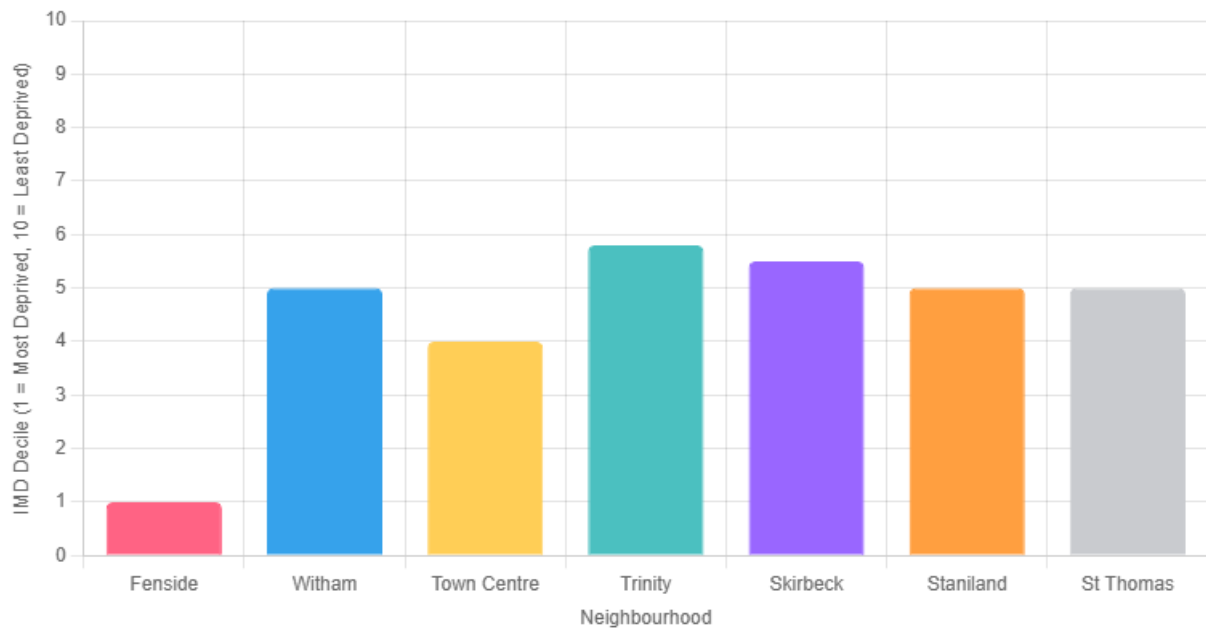
Boston has slightly more women than men (50.4% in 2022), and their population is growing faster (14.9%). The child population has grown significantly by 20.0%, compared to England's 18.5% child population share and 7.7% overall population growth from 2011 to 2021. This creates both challenges and opportunities for Boston.

The working-age population has decreased slightly (down 1.4% to 67.8%), but it's still higher than Lincolnshire (59.7%) and England (62.9%), indicating a strong workforce. However, there are notable differences across Boston's seven neighbourhoods.



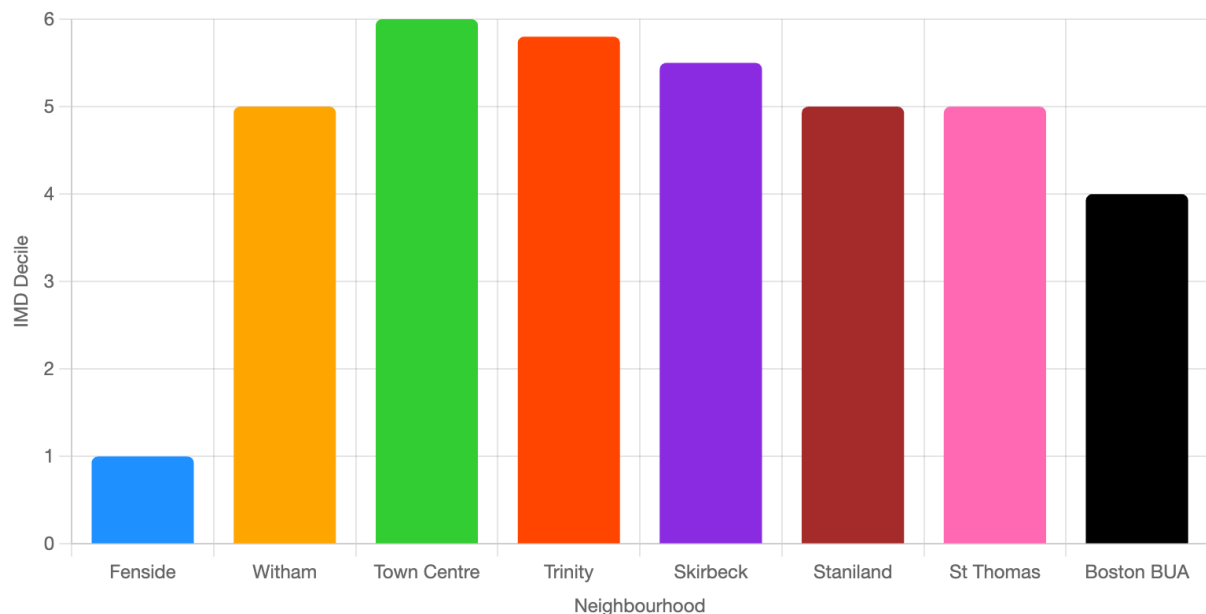
Deprivation is a major issue in Boston. Over half of the town's smaller areas (LSOAs) are among England's 20% most deprived for education, skills, and training, with 40% in the top 10% (MHCLG, English Indices of Deprivation 2019). Access to housing and services is also a problem, with 4% of these areas in the top 10% most deprived (MHCLG, English Indices of Deprivation 2019). Additionally, 34.6% of children under 16 live in low-income households, which is 13.3 percentage points higher than England's average (DWP, Stat-Xplore, Children in low-income households). There are strong correlations between those areas with a high proportion of migrant workers and high levels of poverty/deprivation, particularly in the Town Centre and Fenside areas.

Deprivation by Neighbourhood in Boston (IMD Decile, 2019)



Boston has strong education facilities and has seen recent investments in this sector. However, the overall data highlights problems with qualifications and skills. The share of people aged 16 to 64 with Level 3 qualifications or higher is low, especially considering the high deprivation in education, skills, and training (MHCLG, English Indices of Deprivation 2019). At the local level, educational achievement is particularly poor in the Fenside area. Low skills hold back economic opportunities.

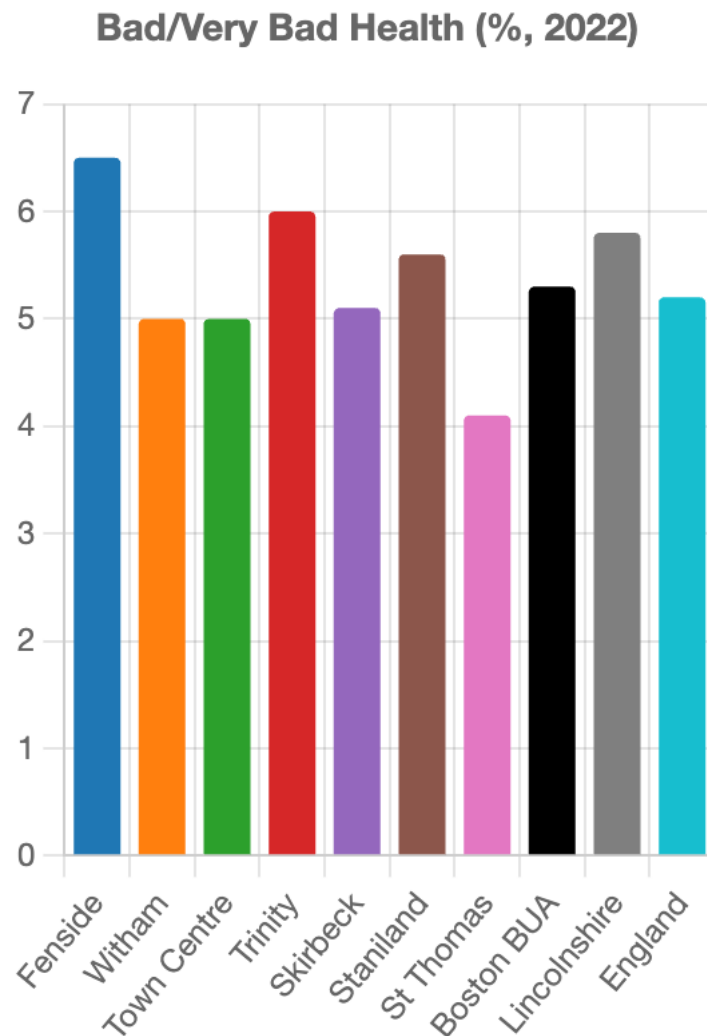
IMD Decile (2019) by Boston Neighbourhood



The overall value of the housing stock is low with over 50% of properties in council tax bands A and B, but low wages mean that housing affordability is a pressing issue, with a high ratio

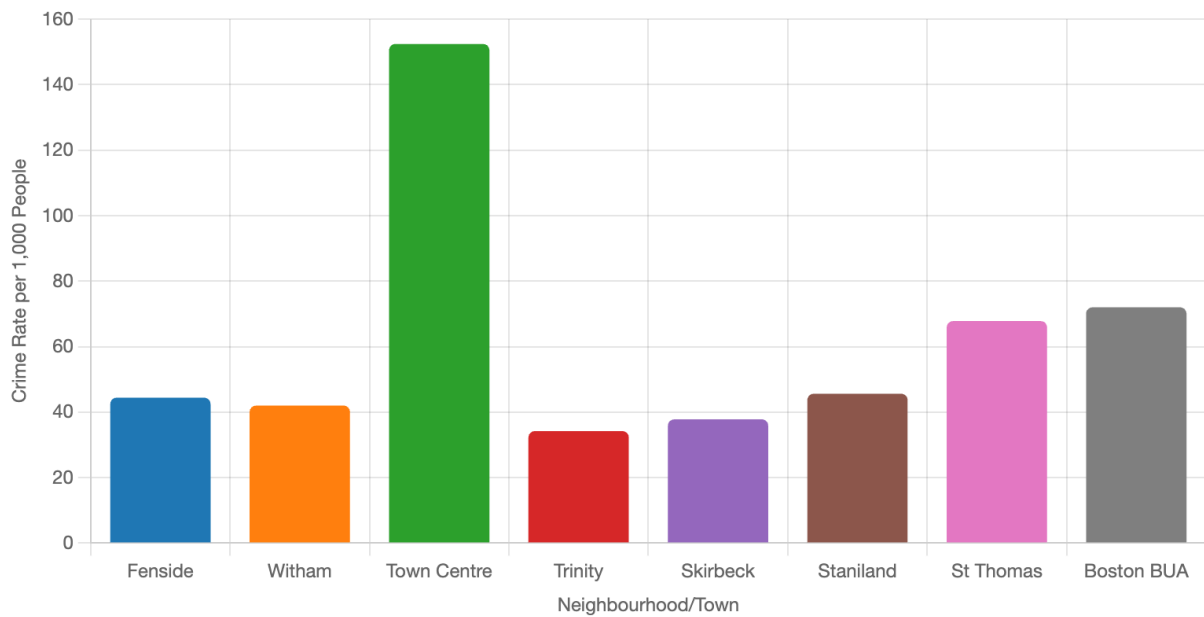
of median house prices to earnings (ONS, 2024). Non-decent dwellings indicate quality concerns (MHCLG, Boston local data).

Health indicators include healthy life expectancy (2021–2023) and GP appointment access (MHCLG, data pack). High deprivation and low-income households correlate with poorer health across the town (DWP, Stat-Xplore, Children in low-income households).

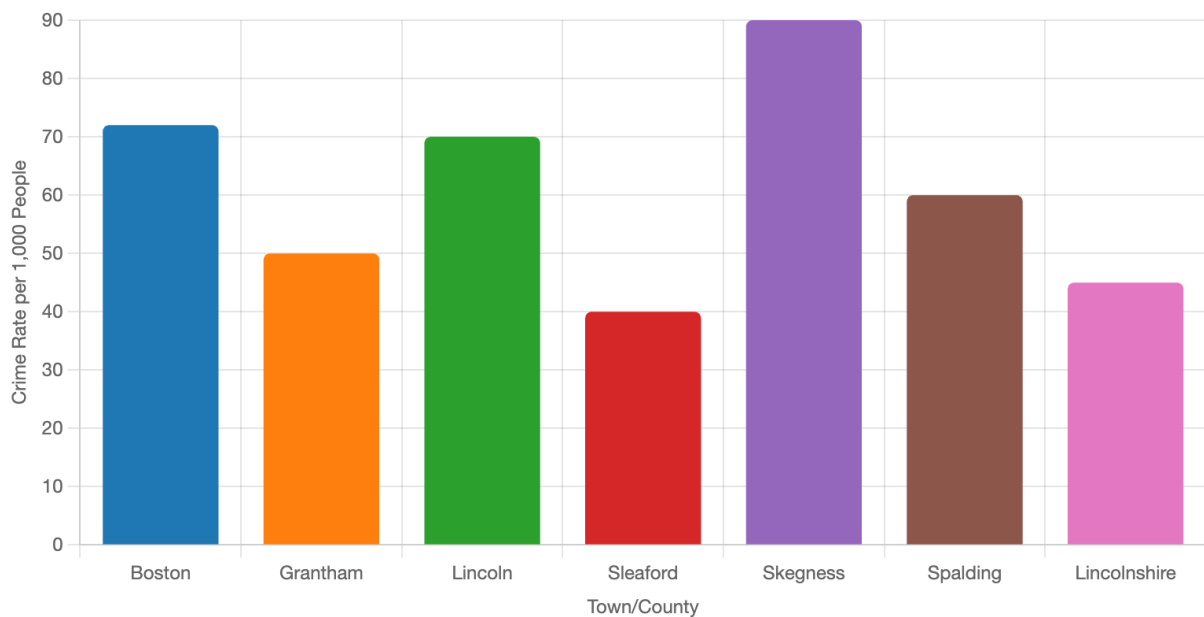


Crime data shows high levels of anti-social behaviour, violence, and sexual offences as prevalent factors. Boston's crime rate varies, with some neighbourhoods exceeding Lincolnshire's 0.0073 per head (Police UK compare your area).

Crime Rates per 1,000 People in Boston Neighbourhoods (2024 Estimate)



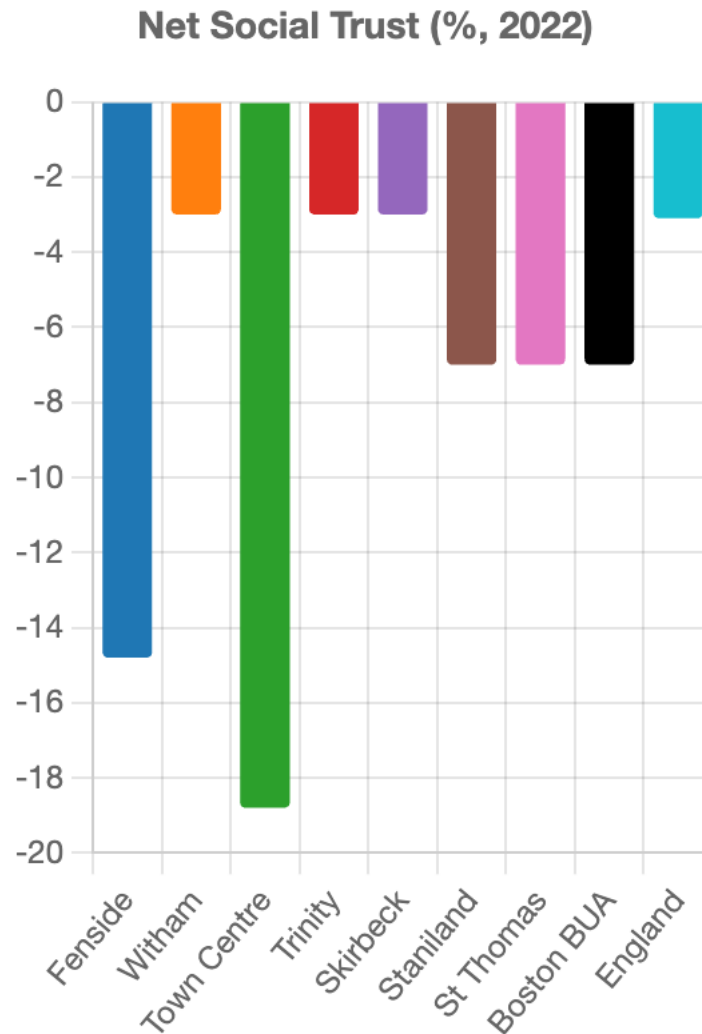
Crime Rates per 1,000 People in Boston and Comparator Towns (2024 Estimate)



Objective – Taking Back Control

The Boston-wide average for social trust is low at -7% compared to the national average of -3%. There is significant variation across the seven neighbourhoods with Witham, Trinity, and Skirbeck close to the national average, while Fenside falls to -14.8% and Town Centre - 18.8%.

Factors such as high deprivation, significant migrant populations, and economic challenges, including a declining working-age share, contribute to lower trust, particularly in Fenside and the Town Centre, where negative perceptions are more pronounced.



The impact of low social trust cannot be underestimated, including for engagement and capacity building within communities. In this area, it is some of our young people who seem most willing to step forward.

Like many towns, Boston has a large number of community and interest groups. A significant project runs in parallel with our planning and the first year of the programme, creating a “community masterplan” for Boston. This is seen as one of the building blocks to help enable future engagement and empowerment within and across our communities. We start from a low base of social trust.

Community Priorities

In June to August 2025, Boston Town Board ran a multi-layered programme of consultation and engagement which aimed to gain robust, meaningful, and deep insight and understanding of local people’s views, hopes, and ideas for their town. This programme built on the foundation of previous consultative activity, including the 2024 consultation for the (then) Long Term Plan for Towns.

The Boston Town Board wanted to build on past consultations, focusing on the three main goals of Pride in Place and the idea of “taking back control”. They collected over 1,100 responses, including a detailed online survey that provided in-depth feedback.

A full engagement report was shared with the Town Board, summarising all responses to identify key themes and detailed insights, including suggested solutions. This feedback is vital for the theme-based workshops, where partners and the community work together to plan and prioritise actions for the town’s development.

The Board compared the data with community feedback and found strong alignment—the challenges and opportunities for Boston are clearly reflected in both. This helps pinpoint where actions are needed to address issues or perceptions. By matching postcode data from feedback with neighbourhood-level evidence, the Board can target actions to have the greatest impact.

The engagement report highlighted nine key priorities:

1. Enhancing safety and security (Stronger Communities)
2. Revitalising the town centre (Thriving Place)
3. Celebrating heritage, arts, and culture (Thriving Place)
4. Improving education and skills (Stronger Communities)
5. Supporting health and wellbeing (Stronger Communities)
6. Enhancing green spaces and connectivity (Thriving Place)
7. Addressing housing affordability (Stronger Communities)
8. Building community capacity and empowerment (Taking Back Control)
9. Youth Engagement (Taking Back Control)

A copy of the full engagement report is attached as an annex to this Vision.

Interventions to be Pursued

The following intervention themes are proposed for Boston. Each aligns with community priorities, leverages existing investments, and targets specific neighbourhoods to maximise impact. The scheduling of resources against these interventions for the first four years of their duration is set out in more detail in the 4 Year Investment Strategy which accompanies this Vision Document.

Thriving Place

1. Town Centre Revitalisation

- **Project:** Along with Safety and Security the primary theme for the first four years of the programme. A comprehensive programme of significant public realm, shop front and other physical enhancements to ensure the town realises its full potential as a 21st Century retail and amenity hub. This could include Market Place and Public Realm Enhancement. improved paving, outdoor seating, and lighting to support food and beverage outlets and independent retail. Pilot pop-up markets to attract local entrepreneurs, building on the success of Boston Brilliance festival re-design and development to support the circulation of people and traffic and the establishment of a major new town centre agenda. ***There is also scope to develop the town centre as a remote working hub, enabling residents to***

have the facilities either in the town or in their own homes to access employment in wider settings outside of Boston.

- **Rationale:** Addresses high commercial vacancies (above national average) and low footfall (50% below average). Enhances the town centre's appeal as a commercial and leisure hub, aligning with community feedback for a vibrant centre.
 - **Neighbourhood Focus:** Town Centre
 - **Outcome:** Increase footfall and reduce commercial vacancies
 - **Delivery:** Partner with Boston Borough Council and local business forum to implement improvements and manage pop-up markets
2. **Heritage and Culture Activation**
- **Project:** ***Pull together a series of key early actions to position Boston as a really strong competitor in the Town of Culture Agenda for 2028, leveraging its major relationship and connections with Boston Massachusetts all in connection with the Boston (2030) 400 Preparatory Programme.*** Develop a heritage trail highlighting listed buildings. Fund a Boston (2030) 400 Lead to coordinate events, secure sponsorship, and develop a legacy events programme.
 - **Rationale:** Leverages Boston's 266 listed buildings and low cultural participation (e.g., 28.4% museum visits vs. 43.1% nationally). Prepares for Boston (2030) 400 as a regional and international milestone and ***opens up real potential for Boston to become the first UK Town of Culture in 2028.***
 - **Neighbourhood Focus:** ***Town Centre, Trinity, Skirbeck***
 - **Outcome:** Increase heritage site visits and establish Boston (2030) 400 as a regional event with a sustainable legacy
 - **Delivery:** Collaborate with Historic England, local arts groups, and the Boston (2030) 400 stakeholders
3. **Green Spaces and Connectivity**
- **Project:** Enhance cycling and walking paths, wildflower planting, and signage along the River Witham, connecting neighbourhoods and improving access to green spaces across the town more widely.
 - **Rationale:** Addresses community demand for accessible green spaces and better connectivity. Supports tourism and wellbeing, particularly in Witham and Skirbeck.
 - **Neighbourhood Focus:** Witham, Skirbeck, St Thomas
 - **Outcome:** Increase green space usage and improve connectivity across neighbourhoods
 - **Delivery:** Partner with Environment Agency and community groups to implement and maintain improvements

Stronger Communities

4. **Safety and Security**
- **Project:** Along with Town Centre Revitalisation the primary theme for the first four years of the programme Community Safety Hubs. Establish hubs in Town Centre and Fenside, offering community policing including wardens/rangers, youth engagement programmes, and anti-social behaviour workshops.
 - **Rationale:** Addresses high crime rates and low social trust (-18.8% in Town Centre, -14.8% in Fenside). Responds to community priority for safer streets.
 - **Neighbourhood Focus:** Town Centre, Fenside
 - **Outcome:** Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour to the national average by 2030

- **Delivery:** Work with Lincolnshire Police and community organisations to establish and operate hubs
- 5. **Education and Skills**
 - **Project:** Very modest interventions in first 4 years to take account of significant levels of partner funding to address these agenda. In year 3 and 4 scope for spot interventions to support bespoke one-off interventions to address very specific funding gaps/opportunities.
 - **Rationale:** Over 50% of LSOAs rank in the top 20% for education deprivation. Low Level 3 qualifications limit economic mobility, particularly in Fenside.
 - **Neighbourhood Focus:** Fenside, Skirbeck, Trinity
 - **Outcome:** Increase qualifications
 - **Delivery:** Collaborate with learning organisations and local employers to design and deliver training programmes diagnosing and acting on a lack of appetite for higher level skills
- 6. **Health and Wellbeing**
 - **Project:** Focus just on capital investment in Community Wellbeing Centres and associated activities. There is significant programmed spend, particularly in relation to revenue activities in the area and therefore scarce revenue funding will be allocated to other themes where public sentiment and detailed statistical evidence suggest stronger early priorities – particularly safety and security, town centre and heritage and culture themes. Develop multi-generational learning spaces in Trinity and Staniland, offering health workshops, digital literacy, and cultural exchange programmes. There is also scope to build substantive links with the work of Active Lincolnshire in Boston building synergies with their programme of public participation in exercise.
 - **Rationale:** High deprivation correlates with poorer health outcomes. 34.6% of under-16s live in low-income households, necessitating community-based wellbeing initiatives.
 - **Neighbourhood Focus:** Trinity, Staniland
 - **Outcome:** Improve wellbeing metrics
 - **Delivery:** Partner with NHS, community groups, and faith groups to deliver inclusive programmes
- 7. **Housing**
 - **Project:** There are strong links and interdependencies between this theme and the revitalisation of the Town Centre. Partner with housing associations to improve non-decent dwellings in St Thomas and Fenside, explore incentives and arrangements with premises owners to incentivise the transition from **retail to residential** and other evolution of town centre buildings into residential. In view of limited revenue resources proposed to be a capital only programme.
 - **Rationale:** High house price-to-earnings ratio despite low housing stock value. Non-decent dwellings exacerbate deprivation.
 - **Neighbourhood Focus:** St Thomas, Fenside
 - **Outcome:** Reduce non-decent dwellings in target areas and bring more residential into the town centre
 - **Delivery:** Work with housing associations and local authority to implement

Taking Back Control

- 8. **Community Capacity Building**
 - **Project:** Community Masterplan Implementation. Fund community-led projects through a grant scheme, supporting initiatives like neighbourhood clean-ups, cultural events, and business forums.

- **Rationale:** 72% of residents feel unheard in decision-making. Low social trust (-7% vs. national -3%) requires capacity-building to empower communities.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** All seven neighbourhoods
- **Outcome:** Move from 72% feeling unheard to upper quartile response by 2030
- **Delivery:** Administer grants, with community groups leading projects

9. Youth Engagement

- **Project:** Boston Youth Council. Establish a formal youth council to engage young people in decision-making, supported by Boston College and community leaders. By integrating this theme with Community Capacity building these if real potential to create synergies and in view of the limited revenue funding available to the programme overall significant attention will be given to building synergies with other initiatives outside of pride in place linked to education, prevention and skills in the area. There are strong opportunities to link to revenue funding streams in relation to this project which connect with safety and security, town centre revitalisation and heritage and culture.
- **Rationale:** High child population growth (20%) and strong youth engagement in 2025 consultations indicate potential for youth-led change. Significant anecdotal reporting of mental health challenges facing young people
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** All seven neighbourhoods
- **Outcome:** Increase youth participation in local decisions
- **Delivery:** Partner with Boston College, Boston Youth Hub, and community leaders to establish and support the council

Pre-approved Intervention Links

The table below shows how each idea links to the pre-approved list of interventions within the Pride in Place Guidance:

Project Title	Linked Pre-Approved Intervention(s)	Rationale for Link
Town Centre Revitalisation	1. Funding for improvements to town centres, neighbourhoods, and high streets, including capital spend and running costs	Supports public realm improvements like paving, seating, and lighting in the town centre to enhance commercial appeal and footfall.
Heritage and Culture Activation	5. Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer 6. Funding for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative initiatives	Funds development of heritage trails, event coordination, and legacy programmes for cultural and heritage assets, leveraging listed buildings for events like Boston 400.
Green Spaces and Connectivity	2. Creating and improving green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments in the local	Enhances walking paths, wildflower planting, and signage along the river for better connectivity and

	area, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces 25. Support for active travel enhancements in the local area	green space access, including improvements to footways.
Safety and Security	4. Funding for new community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects, or for improvements to existing ones, including facilities that house public services or enhance community resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding. This could cover both capital spend and operational costs 19. Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society, youth and community groups	Establishes hubs for community policing and youth engagement as new public service facilities with operational costs to address crime and anti-social behaviour.
Education and Skills	16. Skills provision tailored to local opportunities and skills gaps, such as those identified in an area's Local Skills Improvement Plan (England only) 13. Support to improve awareness of, and access to, local provision that moves people closer to and into sustained employment, in line with an area's Get Britain Working Plan (England and Wales only)	Partners with learning organisations for training programmes targeting deprived areas to enhance access to and increase qualifications and support employment in line with local skills needs.
Health and Wellbeing	20. Supporting community-level health provision 21. Integration and co-location of health and wellbeing services	Develops multi-generational spaces for health workshops, digital literacy, and cultural exchanges as community health hubs integrating wellbeing services.
Housing	8. Modernisation of social housing 10. Provide healthy and climate-resilient homes support locally	Improves non-decent dwellings through energy efficiency retrofits, including insulation and low-carbon heating, to enhance housing quality and resilience.

Community Capacity Building	19. Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society, youth and community groups 9. Support wider neighbourhood renewal by improving the attractiveness and liveability of homes and their surroundings	Funds community-led projects via grants for clean-ups, events, and forums to build capacity, develop structures, and support neighbourhood renewal engagement.
Youth Engagement	17. Measures to improve community cohesion 18. Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local place	Establishes a youth council for decision-making engagement, fostering cohesion through youth participation, dialogue, and social action projects.

Theme Dependencies

The nine themes in Boston's Pride in Place programme are interdependent, forming a cohesive strategy for regeneration, wellbeing, and empowerment.

Town Centre Revitalisation and Safety and Security are foundational, driving early momentum. Revitalising public spaces and shop fronts boosts footfall and business viability, while safety hubs foster trust and reduce crime—both essential for attracting visitors and investment. These improvements directly support Housing, where incentives for living above shops and retrofitting non-decent dwellings rely on a vibrant, secure town centre.

Heritage and Culture Activation builds on this revitalisation, using Boston's rich history and links to Boston, Massachusetts to position the town for national recognition. It connects with Youth Engagement and Community Capacity Building by involving residents in cultural programming and legacy events, fostering pride and participation.

Green Spaces and Connectivity enhance wellbeing and mobility, linking neighbourhoods and supporting tourism. These improvements complement Health and Wellbeing initiatives, which focus on capital investment. Together, they address deprivation and promote healthier lifestyles.

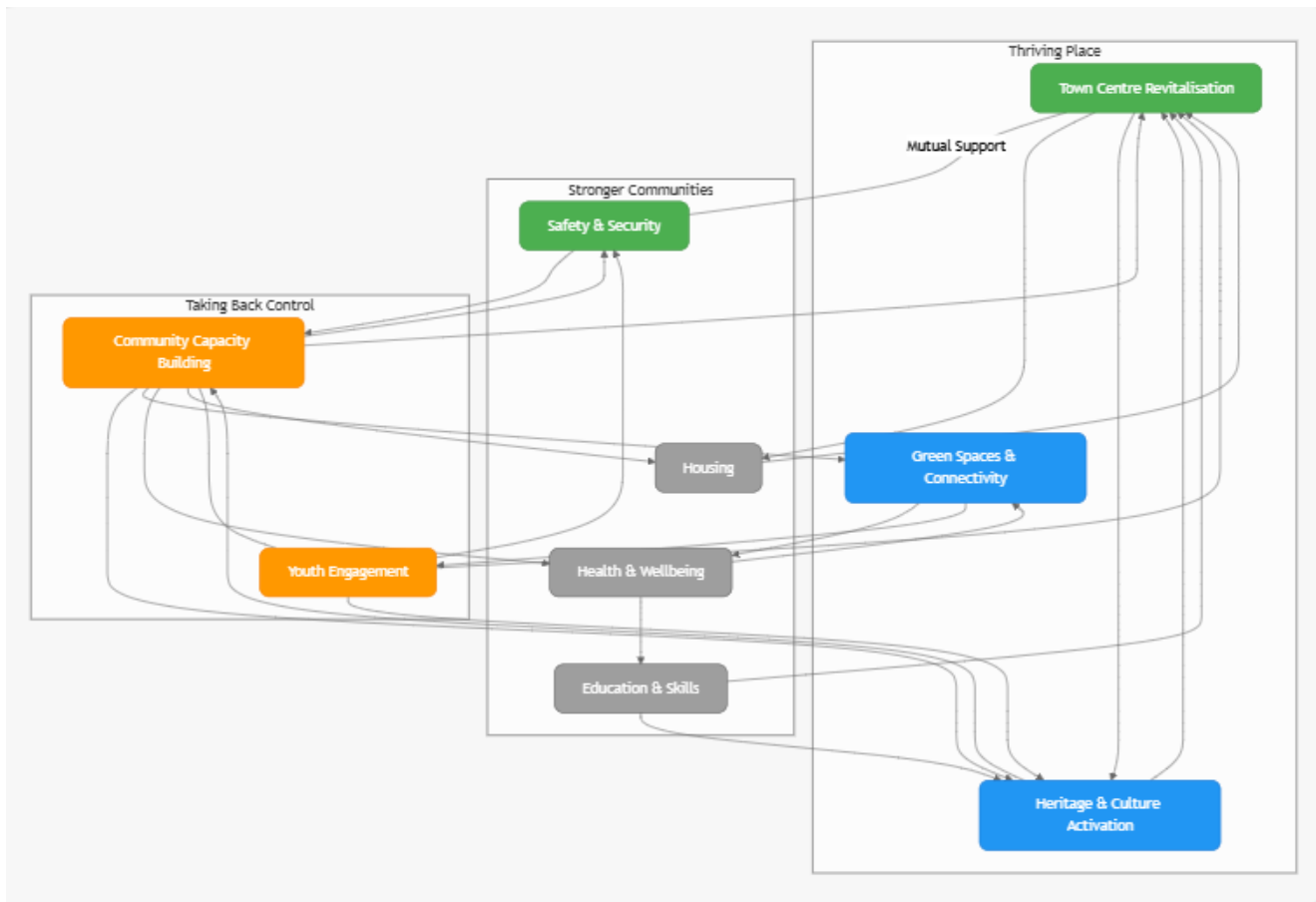
Education and Skills, though modestly funded early on, are critical for long-term economic mobility. They align with Youth Engagement, which empowers young people through the Boston Youth Council and connects to safety, heritage, and town centre themes via shared outreach and funding streams.

Community Capacity Building underpins all themes, enabling residents to lead local projects and shape their environment. It is mutually reinforcing with Youth Engagement, amplifying voices and building trust across all seven neighbourhoods.

The diagram sets out the dependencies between the themes in more detail based on:

- Green = Primary early themes – Town Centre and Safety and Security work as mutual foundations.
- Blue = Additional Thriving Place themes.
- Orange = Taking Back Control (foundational to all).

- Grey = Sub-themes (integrated into main budgets).



Long-Term Outcomes

The long-term outcomes we hope to achieve include:

- A thriving town centre with reduced commercial vacancies and increased footfall, recognised as a regional hub for culture, arts, and creativity.
- Stronger communities with reduced crime and anti-social behaviour, improved educational attainment, better health and wellbeing, and more affordable, high-quality housing.
- Empowered communities with increased social trust and participation, particularly among youth, ensuring residents feel heard and have genuine control over local decision-making.
- A successful Boston (2030) 400 celebration in 2030, establishing a lasting legacy of heritage and cultural engagement.

Summary

This programme outlines nine priorities to transform the town by fostering personal initiative, empowering residents as agents of change, amplifying community voices, and building a culture of mutuality for a more integrated, resilient future.

Revitalising the town centre through Market Place enhancements and pop-up markets encourages entrepreneurial initiative, reducing vacancies and boosting footfall. Promoting heritage and culture via the Boston (2030) 400 Programme leverages 266 listed buildings, engaging diverse communities in shared storytelling, fostering unity.

Enhancing green spaces along the River Witham improves connectivity, encouraging resident-led environmental stewardship. Safety hubs in Town Centre and Fenside, addressing high crime, empower locals through community policing and youth programmes, building trust.

Skills and wellbeing initiatives in Fenside, Skirbeck, and Trinity tackle deprivation, equipping individuals with tools for change. Housing retrofits in St Thomas and Fenside promote stability, while community grants and a Youth Council across all neighbourhoods ensure 72% of residents feeling unheard shift to active participation. These interventions, rooted in community feedback, cultivate mutual support, integrating Boston's diverse population into a resilient, empowered community by 2030.

Section 5: Alignment with Other Programmes and Investments

Boston's Plan for Neighbourhoods sits within a wider landscape of investment and commitment from our partners. The role of the Neighbourhood Board is not to replace these initiatives, but to maximise their impact—using Pride in Place funding to complement them, to help partners draw in additional support, and to enable communities to make their own applications to funders. In this way, Pride in Place acts as a catalyst, ensuring that existing and future investment is rooted in local needs and delivers long-term benefit.

Over 85 strategies were identified that had the potential to relate to the priorities. These were filtered to ensure that there was not a duplication of effort (and expenditure) but equally that reliance was not placed on a strategy that was not delivering the required outcome. Partners with “ownership” of the most relevant strategies were invited to attend our co-design workshops to ensure these were taken into account and supported/enhanced by Pride in Place where appropriate. Awareness of funding streams relating to these strategies will help us tap into and help shape or focus external investment where possible.

Boston's 10-Year Vision presents a golden opportunity to deepen ties with Boston, Massachusetts, leveraging the shared heritage of the 1630 naming by Pilgrim settlers and the impending 400th anniversary in 2030. The document's “Boston (2030) 400 Preparatory Programme” (Thriving Place intervention) is pivotal, funding a heritage trail, event coordination, and a dedicated lead to secure sponsorships. This can evolve into a transatlantic celebration, inviting US delegates, joint festivals, and virtual exchanges via AI-enhanced tours of St Botolph's Church and the Massachusetts settlement site, boosting visitor numbers and cultural participation.

Community capacity building (Taking Back Control) through grants and the Youth Council enables resident-led initiatives, such as bilateral youth exchanges or business forums to build links with Boston Massachusetts innovation hubs.

Aligning with existing investments like the Towns Fund's cultural framework, these approaches could form the basis of a “partnership agreement” setting out a bold agenda for bi-lateral cooperation.

A summary of the alignment of strategies with key themes is set out in the table below:

PiP Project Theme	Most Relevant Partner Partner Strategies and Investments
Town Centre Revitalisation	Boston Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan 2023–27, SELCP Local Plan, SELCP Partnership Alignment and Delivery Plan 2025/26, Boston Borough Plan 2040, Boston Town Deal (Towns Fund) 2021–2026, Levelling Up Fund Round 2: Boston Rosegarth Square Masterplan (PE21) 2022–2025, Boston Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2027, Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce SEL to the World International Trade Strategy 2023–2025, Grants4Growth Programme 2023–2025
Heritage and Culture Activation	Destination Management Plan for SELCP Associated action plan for Boston 2024/25, Boston Cultural Framework for Renewal 2023–2027, Transported Arts Strategic Plan (2020–2025), Blackfriars Arts Centre Programming Strategy (2020–2025), St. Botolph’s Church Library Refurbishment Plan 2021–2025, St. Botolph’s Heritage and Visitor Strategy 2021–2025, Historic England Future Strategy (2021–2025), Heritage at Risk Register (2020–2025), Heritage Lincolnshire Strategic Plan 2020–2025, Lincolnshire Heritage Explorer Programme (2021–2025), Discover Boston Tourism Strategy (2020–2025), Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland Tourism Action Plan 2021–2025, Centre of Culture and Creativity Action Plan (2020–2025)
Green Spaces and Connectivity	Greater Lincolnshire Food Strategy 2021–2025 (wildflower planting), SELCP Climate Change Strategy 2022, National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2020), River Basin Management Plan for the Anglian River Basin District (2022 Update), Natural England’s National Nature Recovery Strategy (2023), Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (2023–2025), Lincolnshire Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy 2020–2025 (cycling/walking paths), Boston Transport Strategy 2020–2025
Safety and Security	South & East Lincolnshire Community Safety Strategy April 2025 to March 2028, Safer Lincolnshire Partnership strategy 2025 to 2028, Operation Subpole, Boston Schools Partnership Initiative 2020–2025, Police and Crime Plan 2021–2025, Serious Violence Prevention Strategy for Lincolnshire 2022–2025, Victims’ Strategy 2021–2025, Victims and Survivor Services Impact Report 2022–23, SELCP Community Safety Plan 2023–2025
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boston College Strategic Plan 2025-28 - Boston Brilliance Event and Schools Engagement Plan 2024–2025 - Boston High School Behaviour and Inclusion Policy 2020–2025 - Haven High Academy Behaviour for Learning Policy 2020–2025 - Boston United Community Foundation Programmes 2020–2025 - Healthy Minds Lincolnshire Emotional Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2025

Health and Wellbeing	SELCP Health and Wellbeing Plan (Boston) 2023, Lincolnshire Integrated Care Partnership Strategy 2023, Lincolnshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Lincolnshire ICB Joint Forward Plan 2023–2028, Lincolnshire Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Collaborative Framework, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Strategy 2024–2029, Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust Community Health Strategy 2021–2026, United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust Strategic Plan 2021–2026, Pilgrim Hospital Quality Improvement Plan 2021–2025, Pilgrim Hospital Sustainability and Net-Zero Strategy 2023–2025, Active Lincolnshire Strategic Plan 2020–2025, Let's Move Lincolnshire Campaign (2020–2025)
Housing	SELCP Private Sector Housing Strategy Lincolnshire Housing Partnership Strategic Plan 2021–2025, Boston Borough Council Housing Strategy 2022–2025, Household Support Fund Round 6 and 7 Strategy 2021–2026
Community Capacity Building	St. Botolph's Church Community and Outreach Plan 2020–2025, Centenary Methodist Church Community Engagement Plan 2020–2025, Lincolnshire Community Foundation GRASSroots Scheme 2021–2025, Lincolnshire Community Foundation Levelling Up Community Grants Programme 2022–2025, Lincolnshire Migrant Worker Integration Strategy 2020–2025, Boston College ESOL and Community Learning Programme 2020–2025, Boston & Sutterton Foodbank Operational Plan 2020–2025, Lincolnshire Food Partnership Food Access Strategy 2022–2025, Long-Term Plan for Towns: Boston Town Board Guidance 2023–2033
Youth Engagement	Boston College Strategic Plan 2025–28, Boston Brilliance Event and Schools Engagement Plan 2024–2025, Boston High School Behaviour and Inclusion Policy 2020–2025, Haven High Academy Behaviour for Learning Policy 2020–2025, Boston United Community Foundation Programmes 2020–2025, Healthy Minds Lincolnshire Emotional Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2025

Government Investment

Boston has benefitted from significant capital investment programmes over recent years. Boston Town Board recognises that a number of the projects will deliver benefits that support delivery of the priorities and importance of optimising this investment insofar as possible. Where appropriate, we will invest further in these projects to maximise benefit. The opportunities include:

- **Towns Fund:** Supports projects like Mayflower, St Botolphs Blenkin Memorial Hall, Healing the High Street public space enhancements. Pride in Place adds community-led elements, such as pop-up markets and cultural events, to maximise benefits.

- **Levelling Up Round 2:** Rosegarth Square and Crown House refurbishment, investment in public space and cycle and walking opportunities will maximise the impact of this investment
- **Levelling Up Partnership Funding:** Funds a digital campus at Boston College (Gliderdrome), aligning with the Skills for the Future Programme to enhance training in digital and creative industries.
- **UKSPF:** Supports town centre regeneration, supplemented by Pride in Place funding for independent retail and leisure enhancements.
- **Community Masterplan:** Runs in parallel, sharing data and workshops to build trust and capacity. Pride in Place interventions, like community grants, support masterplan goals.

Section 6: Match Funding and Leveraged Investment

With our priorities and key interventions agreed, we are considering options to ensure and enable a clear focus on current and future investment, ensuring that the Neighbourhood 10-Year programme is the start of a longer journey. Boston Town Board has a track record for attracting matched funding for previous investment programmes.

We will take a similar approach, where appropriate, within the Neighbourhood Plan but also consider:

- Enabling progression (seed funding) to self-sustaining, self-funding projects and initiatives
- Leveraging grant/sponsor mix funding for community projects
- Attracting partner investment
- Bidding for other funding streams (including initial focus on Boston (2030) 400)
- Attracting sponsor funding for events (including initial focus on lead up to Boston (2030) 400)
- Grants to enable new local business and inward investment
- Investment in town centre property and related long-term return
- Matched resources—leveraging the community
- Cost avoidance (interventions that result in lower public spending elsewhere)
- Building social capital

We are keen to prioritise the work for Boston 2030 and will fund (initially using capacity funding) a additional capacity to work with our community, business, and partners to scope a programme of activity and events to lead into, celebrate Boston 2030, marking the 400th anniversary of the founding of Boston Massachusetts, and create a lasting heritage and cultural legacy aligned with our vision for Boston. A key element of this role will be fundraising and sponsorship, leveraging Arts Council, Visit England and Heritage England interest.

It is important to note that, with the specific issues Boston faces, not all projects will attract or leverage additional matched funding or provide a direct financial return—many interventions will improve lives and livelihoods of the people of Boston and through that an indirect return to the community and economy (or cost reduction/avoidance for public services).

Section 7: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The Boston Town Board has worked hard to involve the community, building on feedback from previous consultations by the Town Board, Council, and partners over recent years. Community messages, along with the vision and plans based on them, have been shared back with the community for validation as much as possible at this stage. This will continue to be part of the co-design process and our commitment to the community.

Engagement has used various methods suited to different groups, with help from partners where possible. The networks created will support ongoing communication, encourage new leaders, and strengthen community ties. This platform will not only support the Pride in Place programme but also foster broader, long-term community engagement. 169 of the people who responded to the consultation would like to be kept informed. We intend to develop this group as a consultation panel to ensure we engage very deeply on an ongoing basis with local people. There are also significant opportunities to draw on the town's wider assets and connections for example in relation to the reintegration activities of HMP North Sea Camp.

The Board's Role in Engagement

Boston had an existing Town Board with ongoing responsibility for the completion of the Town Deal funded projects. We undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise, and some changes to membership were implemented in June 2025 to form an "Interim" Town Board to bridge responsibilities and provide continuity while welcoming some new members. We also reduced the size of the Board, recognising that we could be more focused (with greater continuity of participation in meetings) while retaining a strong network and connectivity to key stakeholders.

Most Board members are connected to a key stakeholder or community group and have been active in the process of engagement within their community group and wider. We have been delighted by the passion of our young people and their willingness to engage (feedback has been disproportionate in their favour); alongside the Board, we hope to establish a Youth Council as a key touch point and channel to help shape and deliver change.

The Board's Ways of Working and Distinction from the Local Authority

The relationship between the Board and Local Authority reflects the roles and responsibilities set out within the guidance. As well as being the Accountable Body for the funding, Boston Borough Council (BBC) is a Partner.

The Town Board provides a long-term non-political vehicle to shape change, but we know that we must work together, irrespective of politics, for the benefit of Boston. BBC is a source of significant data and information and a key delivery partner for a range of projects and interventions that must complement and enhance any of their own plans.

Pride in Place is the latest funding strand in a continuum of Government support routed through the local authority. Strong programme management and wider civic engagement has been built with the community over this period, constituting a good functioning three-way partnership between the local authority, the Board, and the local community.

At a higher level, administrative and project management support is provided by the SELCP (a partnership of three councils) on a shared basis. SELCP programme development support for the three Pride in Place programmes has mainly been through a shared contractor resource paid for through Capacity Funding. The dedicated (external to the Local Authority) supporting resource model will continue.

Buy-In from Local Business, Civil Society, and Communities

Through our process of engagement, we have used small amounts of Pride in Place capacity funding to enable community groups to undertake and lead engagement. This model has been well received and has established the principle of community-led delivery and generated, at a formative level, buy-in from a range of community groups. Continued engagement, co-design, and feedback—not as an event but as the norm—will help cement buy-in and form the basis for funded community-led interventions.

Young people have been actively engaged within the programme—an enthusiasm and a resource we need to harness. Town Board members (Principal of Boston College, Managing Director of the Boston Youth Hub, and the Imam from Boston Mosque) are investigating the set-up of a Youth Council, supported in the first instance through Pride in Place capacity funding, to mirror and link into the Town Board and Community Masterplan process. This seemed a better and more equitable and accountable model than a single youth representative on the Board given the wide demographic.

Boston does not have a Business Investment District, but efforts have been made to re-establish a Business Forum over recent years. Significant effort has been made over the last 12 months to generate more active participation and formalise the arrangements. Boston Town Board sees a formalised and active business forum as a key partner going forward, helping to shape, invest in, and deliver critical change within the town centre as well as retaining and growing/diversifying the current offer. On this basis, Pride in Place capacity funding has been allocated to help shape and formalise a trading forum for Boston.

Boston's plans have and will continue to have a strong relationship with the Community Masterplan, which is being developed in parallel with the early stages of Boston's Pride in Place. The Community Masterplan will:

- Enable us to work with local people to better understand the relationship between people and places.
- Identify future development needs with the potential to create local plans at neighbourhood level and boost levels of trust.
- Create a blueprint for delivering the vision for Boston and informing future policy and resources decisions and partnership working, including across sectors.
- Provide a mechanism for accountability and 'checking the compass'.

Those leading on the, separately funded, Community Masterplan have been engaged throughout the process so far, including the sharing of data and information between the programmes and their involvement in workshops. Building trust and capacity within the Boston community to support ongoing engagement to the level we aspire to will not be achieved overnight, but by working alongside the development of the Community Masterplan for Boston, we will ensure that the benefit of this work is optimised.

How We Will Deliver Interventions

The delivery partner, delivery vehicle, and route to market are highly dependent on the intervention. Our presumption will be towards:

- Agility within the requirements of appropriate governance and controls
- Utilising community groups to deliver (pass-ported funding) or support delivery where possible
- Working with partners—community, business, or others—where possible
- Utilising and supporting local traders and businesses where possible
- Minimising the use of consultants

Section 8: Governance

Governance, roles, and responsibilities for the Board and Local Authority are set out clearly within the MHCLG Guidance and embedded within our Terms of Reference. This includes the requirement to operate in line with the Nolan Principles and the requirement for the Accountable Body to ensure that all expenditure meets the standards of Managing Public Money.

The Board and Local Authority have experience (from other funding programmes) of putting appropriate mechanisms, agreements, and processes in place to specify, manage, and oversee delivery through third parties—including partners. Grant funding agreements have had and will continue to have appropriate terms and conditions to protect investment and ensure the delivery of benefit.

The route to market will be determined by the type of intervention but will be compliant with the requirements of public expenditure and procurement where appropriate.

In terms of appraisal and approval of investment, an Evaluation Model is being designed to optimise benefit while recognising that “one size does not fit all” across the broad spectrum of social and economic change. The Board will approve all investment OR the delegated mechanism through which smaller investments and grants are approved. The Accountable Body will ensure compliance as set out in the section below.

There will be a Board Review post submission of the plan to enable an assessment of the skills and experience required to deliver the plan alongside the current skills and background of Board members.

Section 9: Assurance

This plan establishes a robust framework to ensure the effective delivery of the programme. Our approach emphasises accountability, risk management, and performance oversight, tailored to the programme's focus on creating a thriving place, stronger communities, and empowered residents. By integrating compliance with the accountable body's procedures, including those governing performance monitoring, procurement, and adherence to key themes such as subsidy control, the plan safeguards public funds and promotes transparent decision-making

Principles

The plan adheres to core standards:

- **Regularity:** Compliance with relevant legislation, procurement law, and subsidy control requirements, ensuring all expenditures support the vision's objectives, such as town centre revitalisation and heritage activation. This involves rigorous verification that grants and contracts adhere to statutory guidelines, with the accountable body overseeing approvals to prevent non-compliant spending.
- **Propriety:** High standards of public conduct, including transparent governance and community engagement, reflecting the Nolan Principles adopted by the Boston Town Board. This extends to ethical procurement practices and inclusive stakeholder involvement, ensuring decisions are free from conflicts of interest.
- **Value for Money:** Efficient, effective, and prudent use of resources to achieve outcomes like reduced commercial vacancies, improved social trust, and increased GVA per capita, with a focus on leveraging match funding and community-led initiatives. Assessments will incorporate cost-benefit analyses, aligned with the accountable body's financial procedures, to optimise returns on investments in areas like skills programmes and green space enhancements.

These principles are embedded throughout the programme's lifecycle, with the accountable body responsible for enforcing compliance through documented protocols, including annual reviews of subsidy control adherence in enterprise support activities.

Accountability and Assurance Structure

A three-lines-of-defence model underpins the plan, with Boston Borough Council as the accountable body overseeing grant agreements and financial arrangements. This structure ensures layered scrutiny, with clear escalation paths for issues related to performance or compliance.

- **First Line of Defence:** The Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) provides primary assurance through internal controls. This includes signing off on project adjustments, compliance checks for interventions like the Skills for the Future Programme, and quarterly reporting on spend profiles, milestones, and risks. For community grants and youth council initiatives, the officer will verify alignment with the vision's performance metrics and milestones, such as reducing deprivation in education and skills across the seven neighbourhoods (Fenside, Witham, etc.). Additionally, the officer will be aware of subsidy control assessments for all funding allocations, ensuring they meet the accountable body's procedures for transparency and legal compliance. This line also involves day-to-day monitoring of project delivery, with reporting templates that capture progress against key performance indicators, flagging any deviations early for corrective action.
- **Second Line of Defence:** Oversight by the funding authority involves a risk-based approach to monitor delivery. Triggers for intervention include delays in key projects and budget variances exceeding 10%. Annual deep dives will sample 20% of projects, selected by risk scoring based on factors including and complexity. These reviews will test procurement for fairness, governance for inclusivity, counter-fraud measures via transaction sampling, and subsidy control compliance for enterprise support. To enhance robustness, deep dives will incorporate thematic audits on adherence to the accountable body's performance procedures, such as verifying that interventions align with the three core themes of thriving places, stronger

communities, and taking back control. Outcomes may lead to remedial actions, with escalation to a decision group comprising board members and external experts. Local meetings with partners will inform findings, fostering collaborative improvements and ensuring compliance with subsidy control through detailed subsidy assessments.

- **Third Line of Defence:** Independent audits by an external agency will provide objective assurance, reviewing a sample of projects, to confirm strategic alignment and benefit realisation. These audits will evaluate overall programme effectiveness, including how well the accountable body's procedures on performance and subsidy control have been applied, recommending enhancements where gaps are identified.

Performance Management

Engagement with the funding authority will focus on a comprehensive monitoring framework with baselines for metrics like crime reduction and visitor numbers. This framework will track progress against predefined milestones. Payments will be milestone-based. Grant determinations will tie to the four-year investment plan (2026–2030).

The performance management system will incorporate a multi-tiered approach aligned with the accountable body's procedures. This includes establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) at the outset, derived from the vision's high-level measures. Quarterly reviews will assess delivery against these KPIs, using standardised reporting forms submitted by project leads. These reports will detail outputs (e.g., number of community events held), outcomes (e.g., improved social trust scores), and risks, with variance analysis to identify underperformance early.

In cases of deviation, a structured escalation process will apply: initial remedial plans developed by the Town Board, reviewed by the accountable body for compliance with financial and subsidy control procedures, and approved by the funding authority if necessary. Annual performance summaries will be published for transparency, incorporating community feedback to refine metrics and ensure alignment with resident priorities.

The system will also integrate compliance audits specifically on key themes, such as verifying subsidy control in business grants through pre-approval assessments and post-expenditure reviews. This ensures all activities adhere to the accountable body's governance protocols, promoting accountability and value for money. Benchmarking against similar programmes will inform continuous improvement, with training for board members on performance monitoring to build capacity.

This approach will be reviewed annually, incorporating lessons from community feedback and board evaluations, to sustain Boston's transformation into a vibrant, inclusive town.

Boston 4-Year Investment Plan 2026–2030

Pride in Place Programme: Building a Thriving, Stronger, and Empowered Boston

Prepared by Boston Town Board for the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme
October 2025

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Introduction

This 4-Year Investment Plan (2026–2030) outlines Boston, Lincolnshire’s strategy to deliver transformative change as part of the Pride in Place programme. Building on the Boston 10-Year Vision Document, this plan prioritises interventions that align with the programme’s three objectives: creating a Thriving Place, fostering Stronger Communities, and enabling communities to Take Back Control. It responds to Boston’s unique socio-economic challenges and opportunities, as identified through extensive community engagement and data analysis, with a focus on preparing for the Boston (2030) 400 celebrations in 2030, marking 400 years since the founding of Boston, Massachusetts.

Boston is a town of contrasts: a medieval heritage juxtaposed with modern diversity, a history of global trade meeting present-day economic challenges. With over 30% of residents born outside the UK, a low-wage economy, and high deprivation in education and skills, Boston faces significant hurdles. Yet, its rich heritage, vibrant community, and strategic location offer immense potential. This plan sets out a practical, community-led approach to regeneration, leveraging Pride in Place funding alongside existing investments to deliver measurable outcomes by 2030.

The plan is structured to deliver quick wins in the early years, build momentum, and establish a sustainable framework for long-term change. It prioritises interventions in the town centre, heritage activation, safety, education, and community empowerment, ensuring alignment with community priorities and the Boston (2030) 400milestone. By 2030, Boston aims to be a place where history and progress walk hand in hand, where communities are stronger, and where residents have genuine control over their future.

Strategic Context

Boston's socio-economic profile, as detailed in the 10-Year Vision Document, highlights key challenges and opportunities that shape this plan:

- **Economic Challenges:** Boston's Gross Value Added (GVA) per job filled is £39,959, significantly below the national average of £62,751 (64% of England's GVA). More widely however the economic multiplier effects of particularly the freight and logistics elements of the economy are very important at a regional level. They support a very important wider nationally significant supply chain at a Greater Lincolnshire level. The economy is nonetheless still heavily reliant on low-wage sectors, with Wholesale and Retail Trade employing 29% of the workforce (vs. 15% nationally) and Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing at 4% (vs. 1% nationally). High commercial vacancies and low high street footfall (50% below average) reflect town centre decline.
- **Social Challenges:** Over 50% of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) rank in the top 20% for deprivation in Education, Skills, and Training, with 40% in the top 10%. Social trust is low at -7% (vs. national -3%), with 72% of residents feeling unheard in local decision-making (ZenCity, May 2025). Crime rates, particularly in the Town Centre, exceed Lincolnshire's average (0.0073 per head).
- **Diversity and Demographics:** Boston's population grew 13.1% from 2011 to 2022 (45,238), with 30% born outside the UK, making it one of England's most diverse smaller towns. Child population growth (20%) outpaces national trends, presenting both challenges and opportunities.
- **Heritage Potential:** With 266 listed buildings in the town centre, 16 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and a historic Market Place, Boston's heritage is a key asset. However, cultural participation lags, with only 23.2% engaging in theatre (vs. 39.5% nationally) and 28.4% visiting museums (vs. 43.1% nationally).
- **Housing and Health:** High house price-to-earnings ratios and non-decent dwellings indicate housing affordability issues. Health outcomes are poorer due to deprivation, with 34.6% of under-16s in low-income households.

Community engagement conducted from June to August 2025, building on 2024 consultations, gathered over 1,100 responses through surveys, workshops, and stakeholder events. This process identified nine key priorities aligned with Pride in Place objectives:

1. Enhancing safety and security (Stronger Communities)
2. Revitalising the town centre (Thriving Place)
3. Celebrating heritage, arts, and culture (Thriving Place)
4. Improving education and skills (Stronger Communities)
5. Supporting enterprise and business growth (Thriving Place)
6. Supporting health and wellbeing (Stronger Communities)
7. Enhancing green spaces and connectivity (Thriving Place)
8. Addressing housing affordability (Stronger Communities)

9. Building community capacity and empowerment (Taking Back Control)

These priorities, cross-referenced with neighbourhood-level data (Fenside, Witham, Town Centre, Trinity, Skirbeck, Staniland, St Thomas), ensure targeted interventions that address spatial variations in deprivation and opportunity.

Investment Plan Overview

This plan covers the first four years (2026–2030) of the Pride in Place programme, with an indicative funding allocation of £6.6 million from Pride in Place. This is expected to leverage a further £3.3 million in match funding (local authority, businesses, grants, private and public sector investment and sponsorships). It focuses on delivering tangible outcomes in the lead-up to Boston 2030, prioritising interventions that address immediate community needs, build social trust, and lay foundations for long-term regeneration.

The plan is structured around the three Pride in Place objectives, with projects targeting the seven neighbourhoods to address specific challenges (e.g., high deprivation in Fenside, retail decline in Town Centre). Interventions are designed to be agile, community-led, and aligned with existing investments (e.g., Towns Fund, Levelling Up, UKSPF). The plan includes quick wins to build confidence, such as town centre enhancements and community safety hubs, while investing in longer-term goals like skills development and heritage activation.

Interventions and Funding Allocation

The following interventions are proposed for 2026–2030, with indicative costs (see budget table which follows), timelines, and outcomes. Each aligns with community priorities, leverages existing investments, and targets specific neighbourhoods to maximise impact.

Thriving Place

Town Centre Revitalisation

- **Project:** Along with Safety and Security the primary theme for the first four years of the programme. A comprehensive programme of significant public realm, shop front and other physical enhancements to ensure the town realises its full potential as a 21st Century retail and amenity hub. This could include Market Place and Public Realm Enhancement. improved paving, outdoor seating, and lighting to support food and beverage outlets and independent retail. Pilot pop-up markets to attract local entrepreneurs, building on the success of Boston Brilliance festival re-design and development to support the circulation of people and traffic and the establishment of a major new town centre agenda. ***There is also scope to develop the town centre as a remote working hub, enabling residents to have the facilities either in the town or in their own homes to access employment in wider settings outside of Boston.***

- **Rationale:** Addresses high commercial vacancies (above national average) and low footfall (50% below average). Enhances the town centre's appeal as a commercial and leisure hub, aligning with community feedback for a vibrant centre.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** Town Centre
- **Timeline:** 2026–2028
- **Outcome:** Increase footfall and reduce commercial vacancies
- **Delivery:** Partner with Boston Borough Council and local business forum to implement improvements and manage pop-up markets

Heritage and Culture Activation (Scope in addition to set budget to absorb up to £100,000 of capacity funding to support the development of a programme of activity linked to the newly published Town of Culture opportunity).

- **Project:** ***Pull together a series of key early actions to position Boston as a really strong competitor in the Town of Culture Agenda for 2028, leveraging its major relationship and connections with Boston Massachusetts all in connection with the Boston (2030) 400 Preparatory Programme.*** Develop a heritage trail highlighting listed buildings. Fund a Boston (2030) 400 Lead to coordinate events, secure sponsorship, and develop a legacy events programme.
- **Rationale:** Leverages Boston's 266 listed buildings and low cultural participation (e.g., 28.4% museum visits vs. 43.1% nationally). Prepares for Boston (2030) 400 as a regional and international milestone and ***opens up real potential for Boston to become the first UK Town of Culture in 2028.***
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** ***Town Centre, Trinity, Skirbeck***
- **Timeline:** 2027–2030
- **Outcome:** Increase heritage site visits and establish Boston (2030) 400 as an international event with a sustainable legacy
- **Delivery:** Collaborate with Historic England, local arts groups, and the Boston (2030) 400 stakeholders

Green Spaces and Connectivity

- **Project:** Enhance cycling and walking paths, wildflower planting, and signage along the River Witham, connecting neighbourhoods and improving access to green spaces more widely across the town.
- **Rationale:** Addresses community demand for accessible green spaces and better connectivity. Supports tourism and wellbeing, particularly in Witham and Skirbeck.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** Witham, Skirbeck, St Thomas
- **Timeline:** 2026–2029
- **Outcome:** Increase green space usage and improve connectivity across neighbourhoods
- **Delivery:** Partner with Environment Agency and community groups to implement and maintain improvements

Stronger Communities

Safety and Security

- **Project:** Along with Town Centre Revitalisation the primary theme for the first four years of the programme Community Safety Hubs. Establish hubs in Town Centre and Fenside, offering community policing including

wardens/rangers, youth engagement programmes, and anti-social behaviour workshops.

- **Rationale:** Addresses high crime rates and low social trust (-18.8% in Town Centre, -14.8% in Fenside). Responds to community priority for safer streets.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** Town Centre, Fenside
- **Timeline:** 2026–2029
- **Outcome:** Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour to the national average
- **Delivery:** Work with Lincolnshire Police and community organisations to establish and operate hubs

Education and Skills

- **Project:** Very modest interventions in first 4 years to take account of significant levels of partner funding to address these agenda. In year 3 and 4 scope for spot interventions to support bespoke one off interventions to address very specific funding gaps/opportunities.
- **Rationale:** Over 50% of LSOAs rank in the top 20% for education deprivation. Low Level 3 qualifications limit economic mobility, particularly in Fenside.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** Fenside, Skirbeck, Trinity
- **Timeline:** 2027–2030
- **Outcome:** Increase qualifications
- **Delivery:** Collaborate with learning organisations and local employers to design and deliver training programmes diagnosing and acting on a lack of appetite for higher level skills

Health and Wellbeing

- **Project:** Focus just on capital investment in Community Wellbeing Centres and associated activities. There is significant programmed spend, particularly in relation to revenue activities in the area and therefore scarce revenue funding will be allocated to other themes where public sentiment and detailed statistical evidence suggest stronger early priorities – particularly safety and security, town centre and heritage and culture themes. Develop multi-generational learning spaces in Trinity and Staniland, offering health workshops, digital literacy, and cultural exchange programmes. There is also scope to build substantive links with the work of Active Lincolnshire in Boston building synergies with their programme of public participation in exercise.
- **Rationale:** High deprivation correlates with poorer health outcomes. 34.6% of under-16s live in low-income households, necessitating community-based wellbeing initiatives.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** Trinity, Staniland
- **Timeline:** 2026–2028
- **Outcome:** Improve wellbeing metrics by 2030
- **Delivery:** Partner with NHS, community groups, and faith groups to deliver inclusive programmes

Housing

- **Project:** There are strong links and interdependencies between this theme and the revitalisation of the Town Centre. Partner with housing associations to improve non-decent dwellings in St Thomas and Fenside, explore incentives and arrangements with premises owners to incentivise the transition from **retail to residential** and other evolution of town centre

buildings into residential. In view of limited revenue resources proposed to be a capital only programme.

- **Rationale:** High house price-to-earnings ratio despite low housing stock value. Non-decent dwellings exacerbate deprivation.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** St Thomas, Fenside
- **Timeline:** 2027–2030
- **Outcome:** Reduce non-decent dwellings in target areas, bring forward new town centre residential schemes
- **Delivery:** Work with housing associations and local authority to implement retrofits and the introduction of more residential to the town centre

Taking Back Control

Community Capacity Building (Scope to also absorb some of the outstanding capacity building funding £228,000 which remains to be allocated having accrued from 2023/4 to 2025/6)

- **Project:** Community Masterplan Implementation. Fund community-led projects through a grant scheme, supporting initiatives like neighbourhood clean-ups, cultural events, and business forums. There is also scope to develop community cohesion programme profiled at the end of the Investment Plan.
- **Rationale:** 72% of residents feel unheard in decision-making. Low social trust (-7% vs. national -3%) requires capacity-building to empower communities.
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** All seven neighbourhoods
- **Timeline:** 2026–2030
- **Outcome:** Move from 72% feeling unheard to upper quartile response by 2030
- **Delivery:** Administer grants, with community groups leading projects

Youth Engagement (Scope to also absorb some of the outstanding capacity building funding £228,000 which remains to be allocated having accrued from 2023/4 to 2025/6)

- **Project:** Boston Youth Council. Establish a formal youth council to engage young people in decision-making, supported by Boston College and community leaders. By integrating this theme with Community Capacity building these if real potential to create synergies and in view of the limited revenue funding available to the programme overall significant attention will be given to building synergies with other initiatives outside of pride in place linked to education, prevention and skills in the area. There are strong opportunities to link to revenue funding streams in relation to this project which connect with safety and security, town centre revitalisation and heritage and culture.
- **Rationale:** High child population growth (20%) and strong youth engagement in 2025 consultations indicate potential for youth-led change. Significant anecdotal reporting of mental health challenges facing young people
- **Neighbourhood Focus:** All seven neighbourhoods
- **Timeline:** 2026–2028
- **Outcome:** Increase youth participation in local decisions by 20%
- **Delivery:** Partner with Boston College, Boston Youth Hub, and community leaders to establish and support the council

Pre-approved Intervention Links

The table below shows how each idea link to the pre-approved list of interventions within the Pride in Place Guidance:

Project Title	Linked Pre-Approved Intervention(s)	Rationale for Link
Town Centre Revitalisation	1. Funding for improvements to town centres, neighbourhoods, and high streets, including capital spend and running costs	Supports public realm improvements like paving, seating, and lighting in the town centre to enhance commercial appeal and footfall.
Heritage and Culture Activation	Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer	Funds development of heritage trails, event coordination, and legacy programmes for cultural and heritage assets, leveraging listed buildings for events like Boston 400.
Green Spaces and Connectivity	Green Spaces and Connectivity	Enhances walking paths, wildflower planting, and signage along the river for better connectivity and green space access, including improvements to footways.
Safety and Security	4. Funding for new community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects, or for improvements to existing ones, including facilities that house public services or enhance community resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding. This could cover both capital spend and operational costs 19. Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society, youth and community groups	Establishes hubs for community policing and youth engagement as new public service facilities with operational costs to address crime and anti-social behaviour.
Education and Skills	16. Skills provision tailored to local opportunities and skills gaps, such as those identified in an area's Local Skills Improvement Plan (England only) 13. Support to improve awareness of, and access to, local provision that moves people closer to and into sustained employment, in line with an area's Get Britain Working Plan (England and Wales only)	Partners with learning organisations for training programmes targeting deprived areas to increase qualifications and support employment in line with local skills needs.

Health and Wellbeing	20. Supporting community-level health provision 21. Integration and co-location of health and wellbeing services	Develops multi-generational spaces for health workshops, digital literacy, and cultural exchanges as community health hubs integrating wellbeing services.
Housing	8. Modernisation of social housing 10. Provide healthy and climate-resilient homes support locally	Improves non-decent dwellings through energy efficiency retrofits, including insulation and low-carbon heating, to enhance housing quality and resilience.
Community Capacity Building	19. Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society, youth and community groups 9. Support wider neighbourhood renewal by improving the attractiveness and liveability of homes and their surroundings	Funds community-led projects via grants for clean-ups, events, and forums to build capacity, develop structures, and support neighbourhood renewal engagement.
Youth Engagement	17. Measures to improve community cohesion 18. Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local place	Establishes a youth council for decision-making engagement, fostering cohesion through youth participation, dialogue, and social action projects.

Funding Profile

The indicative funding allocation for 2026–2030 is outlined below. The profile prioritises early investment in safety, town centre revitalisation, and heritage to build momentum for Boston 400.

Phased Spend Table with Revenue, Capital, and Matched Funding Split (2026/27 to 2029/30)

The table below outlines the phased expenditure for the listed projects from 2026/27 to 2029/30

Each project's annual allocation is split into revenue and capital, with an additional 50% matched funding added to each project's annual core allocation – ***this is a key design principle to inform the future identification of projects not a formal commitment from any party at this stage.***

Each project heading reflects the sum of revenue, capital, and matched funding for that year (there is some very modest rounding in the table). Housing interventions have been combined with wider town centre revitalisation and education and skills and health and well-being have been combined with community capacity building and youth engagement to ensure that there is enough budget scale to address key issues which span these themes.

To date £450,000 has been provided for programme management and a further £150,000 is scheduled for 2026/27. The remaining funding will be used to support

- 'Town of culture' bid
- Boston 2030 preparation
- Project and programme management costs
- Project development/ feasibility/ business case work

It is proposed to allocate up to £100,000 of this funding to the development of the Boston 2030 programme – particularly in relation to the development of a programme of activities which would position Boston very strongly to achieve Town of Culture Status in 2028.

Project	Total Cost PiP	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Town Centre Revitalisation (incorporating housing interventions)	£2,307,675	£180,125	£723,550	£702,000	£702,000
Revenue	£389,856	£55,380	£72,816	£130,830	£130,830
Capital	£1,917,819	£124,745	£650,734	£571,170	£571,170
Anticipated Leverage Target (50%)	£1,153,838	£90,063	£361,775	£351,000	£351,000
Heritage and Culture Activation	£868,925	£64,625	£262,300	£271,000	£271,000
Revenue	£224,175	£34,125	£43,050	£73,500	£73,500
Capital	£644,750	£30,500	£219,250	£197,500	£197,500
Anticipated Leverage Target (50%)	£434,463	£32,313	£131,150	£135,500	£135,500
Safety and Security	£1,989,450	£243,000	£518,450	£614,000	£614,000
Revenue	£420,705	£82,875	£79,950	£128,940	£128,940
Capital	£1,568,745	£160,125	£438,500	£485,060	£485,060
Anticipated Leverage Target (50%)	£994,725	£121,500	£259,225	£307,000	£307,000
Community Capacity Building (incorporating Education and Skills and Health and Well-Being)	£577,425	£52,125	£162,300	£181,500	£181,500
Revenue	£186,000	£29,250	£30,750	£63,000	£63,000
Capital	£391,425	£22,875	£131,550	£118,500	£118,500
Anticipated Leverage Target (50%)	£288,713	£26,063	£81,150	£90,750	£90,750

Youth Engagement (incorporating Education and Skills and Health and Well-Being for young people)	£379,275	£52,125	£106,150	£110,500	£110,500
Revenue	£110,700	£29,250	£18,450	£31,500	£31,500
Capital	£268,575	£22,875	£87,700	£79,000	£79,000
Anticipated Leverage Target (50%)	£189,638	£26,063	£53,075	£55,250	£55,250
Green Spaces and Connectivity	£535,250	£0	£219,250	£158,000	£158,000
Revenue	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Capital	£535,250	£0	£219,250	£158,000	£158,000
Anticipated Leverage Target (50%)	£267,625	£0	£109,625	£79,000	£79,000
Project	Total Cost	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Total Core Funding	£6,658,000	£592,000	£1,992,000	£2,037,000	£2,037,000
Total Revenue	£1,664,500	£230,880	£245,016	£427,770	£427,770
Total Capital	£4,993,500	£361,120	£1,746,984	£1,609,230	£1,609,230
Total Anticipated Leverage Funding Target	£3,329,000	£296,000	£996,000	£1,018,500	£1,018,500
Total Core + Leverage	£9,987,000	£888,000	£2,988,000	£3,055,500	£3,055,500
Year 1 also includes £150,000 revenue funding for capacity building					

Alignment with Existing Investments

The plan complements and enhances existing investments to optimise impact:

- **Towns Fund:** Supports projects like Crown House and Rosegarth Square public space enhancements. Pride in Place adds community-led elements, such as pop-up markets and cultural events, to maximise benefits.
- **Levelling Up Round 2:** Funds a digital campus at Boston College, aligning with the Skills for the Future Programme to enhance training in digital and creative industries.
- **UKSPF:** Supports town centre regeneration, supplemented by Pride in Place funding for independent retail and leisure enhancements.
- **Community Masterplan:** Runs in parallel, sharing data and workshops to build trust and capacity. Pride in Place interventions, like community grants, support masterplan goals.

The plan also aligns with 85 national, regional, and local strategies (e.g., Historic England's heritage priorities, local authority economic development plans), ensuring no duplication and leveraging partner investments.

Governance and Assurance

The Boston Town Board, with Boston Borough Council as the Accountable Body, oversees the programme. The Board operates under the Nolan Principles and adheres to Managing Public Money standards, ensuring regularity, propriety, value for money, and feasibility. Key governance features include:

- **Structure:** The Board, supported by the South-East Lincolnshire Council Partnership (SELCP), manages programme delivery. SELCP provides shared contractor resources, funded by capacity allocations.
- **Investment Appraisal:** An Evaluation Model will assess interventions, with delegated mechanisms for smaller grants. The Accountable Body ensures compliance with public expenditure rules.
- **Transparency:** Regular reporting to stakeholders and community feedback sessions ensure accountability.

Grant funding agreements with delivery partners (e.g., community groups, Boston College) will include terms to protect investments and ensure benefit realisation.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement is central to the plan's success, building on the 2025 consultation (1,100+ responses) and addressing low social trust (-7%) and perceptions of being unheard (72%). Strategies include:

- **Themed Workshops:** Ongoing workshops with community groups, businesses, and partners to co-design and review interventions. These will continue post-submission to refine plans.
- **Youth Council:** Supported by Boston College and community leaders, to harness youth enthusiasm and ensure young people shape decisions.
- **Business Forum:** Formalised with Pride in Place capacity funding to drive town centre investment and delivery.
- **Community Grants:** Small-scale funding to empower local groups, building on 2025 engagement success and fostering community-led delivery.
- **Feedback Loops:** Regular community updates via online platforms, town hall meetings, and partner networks to validate plans and maintain trust.

The plan integrates with the Community Masterplan, sharing data and workshops to build long-term engagement capacity.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A Pride in Place Dashboard will track progress against baselines, with specific targets for 2030:

- **Thriving Place:**
 - Increase visitor numbers annually, with related economic impact.
 - Reduce commercial vacancies to the national average.
 - Increase GVA per capita
- **Stronger Communities:**
 - Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour to the national average.
 - Increase Level 3+ qualifications in target neighbourhoods.
 - Improve wellbeing metrics
 - Reduce non-decent dwellings
- **Taking Back Control:**
 - Move from 72% feeling unheard to upper quartile response.
 - Increase youth participation in local decisions.

Milestones and outcomes will be reviewed annually, with adjustments based on community feedback and external factors (e.g., economic shifts, new funding opportunities).

Conclusion

This 4-Year Investment Plan sets Boston on a path to transformation by 2030, leveraging its rich heritage, diverse community, and strategic location. By prioritising quick wins like Market Place enhancements and community safety hubs, building capacity through youth councils and community grants, and preparing for Boston 400, the plan delivers tangible change while laying foundations for long-term success. Through co-design, strategic alignment with existing investments, and robust governance, Boston will become a thriving, stronger, and empowered community—a town that believes in itself and moves forward together.

Proposal for Community Cohesion and Development in Boston

Introduction

Community cohesion is essential for the progress and development of towns. The diverse communities of Boston play a vital role in shaping its future. This proposal outlines strategies to foster mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration among all segments of society.

Background

Boston is home to a wide range of ethnicities, faiths, and cultures, including British, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Egyptian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Algerian, Somali, Yemeni, Latvian, Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Turkish, Iraqi, Kurdish, Tajik, Turkmen, and Christian communities.

Residents work in various sectors, from healthcare and engineering to farming and business. Faith groups include Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and atheists.

Despite this diversity, there is currently no direct forum for inter- community engagement. Establishing such a forum is paramount to creating a positive impact across all segments of society.

Objectives

1. Establish a Community (INTERFAITH) Forum: Create an inclusive infrastructure where all communities are represented.
2. Develop and Execute Programmes: Launch initiatives that promote understanding, respect, and collaboration.
3. Engage All Segments: Ensure participation from faith groups, deprived and affluent communities, youth, elderly, and businesses.

Proposed Actions

1. Formation of an Interfaith Forum
 - Bring together representatives from all faiths and denominations.
 - Develop a constitution for the forum.
 - Rotate meetings between churches, mosques, and community spaces.
 - Organize events such as food festivals, cultural occasions, and campaigns on societal issues.
2. Community Engagement Programmes
 - Mentorship Initiatives: Recruit mentors (primarily volunteers) to support deprived communities and youth.
 - Educational Support: Involve schools and colleges to help raise educational standards of those who are from the weak backgrounds.
 - Resource Sharing: Encourage affluent community members and businesses to involve and support those in need through voluntary work and resource allocation.
3. Inclusive Participation
 - Ensure programmes address the needs of all segments: poor, elderly, youth, and various ethnicities.
 - Foster opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and mutual support.
 - Promote understanding of different theological, philosophical, and political perspectives.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced trust and respect among communities.
- Improved well-being and opportunities for deprived groups.
- Stronger collaboration between faith groups, businesses, and educational institutions.
- A cohesive, caring, and resilient community.

Conclusion

Community cohesion and development are vital strategies for Boston's future. By fostering understanding, respect, and collaboration, all segments of society can work together to achieve shared objectives and build a thriving town. This approach provides a foundation for discussion and the developments of impactful initiatives.