



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	24 th June 2026
Subject:	South & East Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan
Purpose:	To seek Cabinet approval of the South & East Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan and the Destination Management Action Plan for 2026 - 2030
Key Decision:	Yes
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Sarah Sharpe, Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Tourism
Report Of:	Maria Cotton, Service Director – Culture & Regeneration
Report Author:	Jon Burgess, Group Manager Programme Management
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

The visitor economy is a significant contributor to the South & East Lincolnshire area, supporting jobs, businesses, town centres, cultural organisations and natural assets. The South & East Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan (DMP) provides the strategic direction for the visitor economy across the partnership area, while the Boston Destination Management Action Plan sets out the local delivery framework for Boston over the period 2026 - 2030.

The DMP sets out:

- a shared vision for a confident, year-round visitor economy
- four strategic priorities
- five thematic pillars
- district-level priorities for Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland

The Boston Action Plan translates this framework into a clear, place-specific programme to strengthen Boston's visitor offer, identity and year-round economy. It focuses on four delivery priorities: Great Places, Quality Experiences, Targeted Marketing and an Engaged & Vibrant Sector.

The Action Plan includes activity such as developing marketing and digital platforms, advancing heritage-led proposals linked to Boston 2030 and the Culture Compact, improving visitor experience and wayfinding, and supporting nature-based tourism, water-based activity and business engagement.

Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the DMP and the Action Plan to provide a clear strategic and operational basis for delivery, partnership working and future investment.

Recommendations

It is recommended that BBC Cabinet:

1. Approve the South & East Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan 2026 - 2030 attached at Appendix A;
2. Approve the Destination Management Action Plan 2026 - 2030 attached at Appendix B; and
3. Delegate authority to the Service Director for Culture & Regeneration, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to make minor amendments to the Action Plan and oversee delivery, monitoring and annual refreshes to ensure it remains aligned to local priorities, funding opportunities and partnership arrangements.

Reasons for Recommendations

- Approval of the DMP and Action Plan will provide a clear strategic and delivery framework for developing Boston's visitor economy between 2026 and 2030.
- The plans provide a structured, evidence-based approach to strengthening place identity, improving quality, growing year-round visitation and aligning local delivery with the wider SELCP framework.
- The delegated authority will support responsive delivery and allow minor updates to reflect changing opportunities, partnership arrangements and funding requirements without returning to Cabinet for operational amendments.

Other Options Considered

- Do nothing: Rejected. This would result in fragmented activity, reduced competitiveness and missed opportunities for investment.
- Generic SELCP-wide plan only: Rejected. Boston requires a place-specific programme reflecting its unique assets and opportunities.
- Alternative prioritisation: Rejected. The current priorities reflect evidence, stakeholder engagement and alignment with the DMP.

1. Background

- 1.1 The previous DMP expired in 2021 and a revised DMP was being prepared by the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).
- 1.2 Following the closure of the former LVEP, SELCP has used the engagement work and preparation already undertaken to produce a fully revised and relevant DMP for the partnership.
- 1.3 This Destination Management Plan (2026–2030) will provide the strategic framework for the visitor economy across Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland.
- 1.4 The associated Boston Action Plan has been developed using the DMP evidence base, stakeholder engagement and local priorities. It aligns with the DMP's four strategic priorities and five thematic pillars.

2. Report

- 2.1 South and East Lincolnshire has a well-established and valuable visitor economy, contributing significantly to local employment, business sustainability and place identity. The area attracts millions of visitors each year, supported by a strong coastline offer, nationally recognised landscapes such as the Lincolnshire Wolds, distinctive market towns and a rich cultural and heritage base.
- 2.2 However, despite these strengths, the current visitor economy is characterised by a number of structural challenges. These include low national profile and brand recognition, a fragmented digital presence, and a heavy reliance on seasonal coastal tourism. This results in uneven economic performance, with significant peaks in demand during summer months and underutilised assets at other times of the year.
- 2.3 At the same time, the external context for tourism is evolving. Visitor expectations are changing, with increasing demand for nature-based experiences, heritage, culture, wellbeing and high-quality, authentic destinations. Competition between places has intensified, and destinations that are able to present a clear identity, joined-up offer and strong digital presence are best positioned to succeed.
- 2.4 In this context, there is a clear need for a coordinated, strategic approach to destination management across Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland. The Destination Management Plan (DMP) responds to this need by establishing a shared vision, priorities and delivery framework for the visitor economy across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP).
- 2.5 The DMP provides a necessary and timely framework to transition South and East Lincolnshire from a collection of strong but largely unconnected tourism assets into a coherent, competitive and year-round destination.
- 2.6 By aligning partners, strengthening the visitor offer, improving place quality and raising the profile of the area, the DMP will support sustainable economic growth, enhance community pride and ensure the visitor economy plays a full role in the wider ambitions of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

- 2.7 The plan sets a clear ambition to grow a year-round visitor economy, reduce seasonality, increase dwell time and strengthen the overall quality and coherence of the offer across the region.
- 2.8 Delivery is organised around four interconnected priorities. Together, these priorities ensure that activity is balanced across place, product, promotion and sector development.
- Great Places – improving the physical environment, infrastructure, accessibility and quality of public realm to enhance the visitor experience.
 - Quality Experiences – developing and enhancing tourism products and experiences that encourage longer stays and repeat visits.
 - Targeted Marketing and Brand Identity – creating a clear and compelling narrative for the area, supported by strong digital performance and coordinated campaigns.
 - A Confident, Connected Sector – strengthening business support, skills, collaboration and governance across the visitor economy.
- 2.9 The DMP identifies five key areas of strength and opportunity which will shape investment and product development. These pillars provide a clear basis for developing a more distinctive, year-round visitor offer and targeting growth markets.
- Sport and active leisure
 - Heritage and culture
 - Nature and outdoor experiences
 - Seaside and family offer
 - Food, drink and local produce
- 2.10 While the plan provides an overarching framework, it also recognises the distinct roles of each of our council areas. This enables delivery to be tailored to local strengths, while supporting cross-district collaboration, shared marketing and joined-up visitor itineraries.
- 2.11 The DMP establishes a clear delivery model, led by SELCP through a structured governance approach, including a Visitor Economy Board and partnership working with businesses and stakeholders. Delivery will be supported through annual action plans, defined roles and responsibilities and coordinated investment and resource alignment.
- 2.12 Progress will be monitored through a robust performance framework, with key indicators including visitor numbers, economic impact, seasonality, digital performance and business engagement. The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains responsive to changing conditions and opportunities.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

Strengthens partnership identity, governance and joint delivery. Supports shared branding, investment and sector development.

Corporate Priorities

The report aligns strongly with Partnership priorities, including:

- Cultural placemaking and destination development
- Community engagement and participation
- Regeneration of town centres and high streets
- Pride in Place and civic identity
- Economic diversification, including the visitor economy

It complements existing initiatives including Boston 2030, Pride in Place programmes, town centre strategies and cultural development across the Partnership area.

Staffing

Delivery will be led by the Place Directorate, with strategic oversight from the Service Director for Culture & Regeneration.

Following a recent Service Review within Culture and Regeneration a new dedicated post for Boston has been established and is currently being recruited to, in order to support the delivery of the actions within the DMP Action Plan.

Workforce Capacity Implications

Delivery will be coordinated through existing officer capacity.

Short-life project teams will be formed as required.

No additional staffing is requested at this stage.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

No direct legal implications.

Governance arrangements ensure transparency, accountability and compliance with funding requirements.

The DMP and Action Plan supports consistent decision-making across districts.

Data Protection

None.

Financial

The DMP and Action Plan do not commit new expenditure.

Delivery will be supported through existing budgets, external funding and partner contributions.

A project pipeline will be used to secure future investment.

Major capital projects will be subject to separate business cases.

Risk Management

Over-reliance on Council

Lack of measurable impact

Environmental aims not embedded

Stakeholder confusion

Cross-sector leadership and shared ownership

Defined KPIs and annual reporting

Annual sustainability review

Clear communication

Overall risk level: Low and manageable.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Engagement undertaken with businesses, cultural organisations, nature bodies, transport providers and community partners.

Feedback has shaped priorities, actions and delivery structures.

Further consultation will occur at project level

Reputation

Positive impact expected through stronger identity, improved visitor experience and coordinated marketing.

Contracts

None at this stage

Crime and Disorder

Supports improved perceptions of safety, particularly in town centres and evening economy.

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

The Action Plan promotes inclusive access to visitor experiences.

Health and Wellbeing

Supports civic pride, community participation and wellbeing.

Strong positive impact through nature, outdoors, active travel and cultural participation.

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

Strong alignment with sustainable tourism principles.

Nature access, active travel and responsible tourism messaging support environmental objectives.

Environmental assessments will be completed for relevant projects.

Acronyms

DMP – Destination Management Plan

SELCP – South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

LCC – Lincolnshire County Council

EA – Environment Agency

NT – National Trust

RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Appendices

Appendix A - Destination Management Plan (2026–2030)

Appendix B - Boston Destination Management Action Plan (2026–2030)

Background Papers

None.

Chronological History of this Report

None.

Report Approval

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