



B O S T O N

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

REPORT TO:	Planning Committee
DATE:	18 September 2018
SUBJECT:	Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan 2017 TO 2020 (Update)
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Claire Rylott
REPORT AUTHOR:	Luke Skerritt
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

Boston Town Centre was first designated as a Conservation Area in 1969, one of the earlier designations as the first Conservation Area designated in the country was Stamford in 1967.

Boston Town Centre Conservation Area covers the medieval core of the town and fifteen defined Character Areas, all demonstrating historic character of special significance.

In particular, Boston's importance as an internationally commercially successful trading town in the medieval period can be demonstrated by the survival not only of many of the original street layouts and several Listed Buildings dating from this period, but also of the two large market places which still hold weekly markets. Its prominence as a wealthy Georgian and Victorian town is also evident from a large number of surviving buildings from this period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the updated Town Centre Conservation Area Plan is considered, agreed and endorsed by members prior to its going before Cabinet for consideration regarding its formal adoption and publication.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The long term aim of the Conservation Area Management Plan is the removal of all of Boston Town Centre's Listed Buildings at risk from Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. The adoption of this document will strategically enable the planning and prioritised delivery of projects to realise the ambitions to safeguard the core historic offer of the town centre conservation area which is currently at risk. This will also be a driver for improving the town as a destination and place to live, work and culturally engage with.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Do not endorse the updates to the Management Plan.

REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 This report is an update of a Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan first developed, consulted on and drafted in 2017.

2. MANAGEMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

2.1 The Management Plan provides a succinct summary of some of the challenges facing Boston Town Centre's Conservation Area and looks to highlight the opportunities available to capitalise on programmes of restoration and enhancement. It also sets out Boston Borough Council's commitment to the management and enhancement of the area, in partnership with all key stakeholders.

2.2 In 2009 Boston Town Centre Conservation Area was added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. During assessment it was deemed that Boston's town centre was at risk due:

- From the loss of elements of its special character due to inappropriate development and specifically loss of historic detail on historic buildings within the area.
- To evidence of a lack of investment evident through the deterioration of some of the historic properties as well as a number of vacant buildings.
- To concerns relating to the condition of the public realm specifically relating to visual street signage and shop frontage 'clutter' and modern visual intrusion.

2.3 The Management Plan recognises successful, proactive projects undertaken to date that have been developed to mitigate risk and to improve both the conservation area and public realm, specifically referencing:

- Historic England's PSiCA Programme The 'Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas' is an initiative funded by Historic England working in partnership with Boston Borough Council which has been operating from 2012.
- Market Place Improvements in 2013, funding secured from Boston Borough Council, Lincolnshire County Council and the European Regional Development Fund enabled a number of significant public realm improvements to Boston Town Centre market place.
- Boston: Explore & Discover Funding was secured from Boston Borough Council, Lincolnshire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project to develop a new, cohesive pedestrian wayfinding, mapping and interpretative scheme that would help develop the place-brand of Boston.

3. VISION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

3.1 The plan, in recognition of the crucial role in both developing partnership projects and seeking external investment, states in its vision:

'By adopting a partnership approach and with external investment, Boston Borough Council will ensure that the historic environment of Boston Town Centre is conserved and enhanced to further reveal its special character and to create a vibrant and attractive place for people to live, work and visit.'

3.2 Five priority objectives are identified to enable realisation of the plan:

- Priority one. Continue to support the implementation of the PSiCA scheme.
- Priority two. Support the aims and objectives of Boston's Townscape Heritage Project to enhance the eastern side of the market place.
- Priority three. Boston Borough Council to continue monitoring all current enforcement action affecting Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area to remedy their contribution to the erosion of the special character of the area.
- Priority four. Using the recently produced Boston Heritage Strategy, identify areas of support for the Conservation Area Management Plan and work with key stakeholders to agree actions and ownership.
- Priority five. Actively support the aim of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan in relation to conservation to achieve enhancement of the Boston Town Centre Conservation Area, facilitating development where appropriate.

3.3 Six longer term, complimentary, objectives for developing the Conservation Area are developed within the plan:

- Identify properties at risk within the Conservation Area and take appropriate action.
- Ensure provision of access to advice and guidance on historic property management.
- Reverse the negative impact of unsuitable alterations and poor design on the special character of the conservation area.
- Continue to support public realm improvements.
- Continue to address traffic management concerns.
- Encourage sensitive and appropriate development/redevelopment.

3.4 The plan also reviews the development management and enforcement powers which can be used to prevent the loss of the special distinctiveness of the historic environment and to remedy breaches, unauthorised works or neglect which can be deemed detrimental to the building in question or the surrounding area.

4. AIM & OBJECTIVE

4.1 The long term aim of the Conservation Area Management Plan is the removal of all of Boston Town Centre’s Listed Buildings at risk from Historic England’s Heritage at Risk register. This in turn will considerably contribute towards removal of the Boston Town Centre Conservation Area from the Heritage at Risk register. With the synergies and associated action plan of the Boston Heritage Strategy aiding delivery of projects to realise the priority and longer term objectives of the Conservation Area Management Plan, there is a strong framework to structure and achieve these ambitions.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The adoption of this document will strategically enable the planning and prioritised delivery of projects to realise the ambitions to safeguard the core historic offer of the Town Centre Conservation Area which is currently at risk. This will also be a driver for improving the town as a destination and place to live, work and culturally engage with.

<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS None.</p>
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<p>LEGAL & EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990</p>
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<p>ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS None</p>

CONSULTATION

The draft Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan was made available on Boston Borough Council’s website and through social media from 17 March 2017 for comment. Members of the View Point Panel, Youth Council, Elected Members, all Senior Staff at Boston Borough Council, Boston Disability Forum and Boston Chamber of Commerce were all notified that the document was available for comment. Paper copies were also made available if anyone requested them. The consultation closed on 18 April 2017. Comments were received which have been incorporated into the final strategy.

APPENDICES

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

<i>APPENDIX A</i>	<i>BOSTON TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN</i>
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

NONE

FINANCE PROFORMA

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PROFORMA FOR EXECUTIVE APPROVAL OF THE RELEASE OF RESOURCES
(CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS)**

FROM:

THIS PROFORMA PROVIDES THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE ATTACHED

REPORT:

REPORT DATE:

OPTION 1	£ Year 1 2017/18	£ Year 2 2018/19	£ Year 3 2019/20	£ Year 4 2020/21	£ Year 5 2021/22
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Revenue

Total Revenue
Cost

Funding required:

Total capital cost £

Revenue cost £

Considered by:

Enter committee here

Enter Council or
Cabinet here

Date:

Financial Services Comments

Risk

Procurement

Value for Money Efficiency

This FP is valid for 3 months from FP date	If this FP is no longer required please advise Finance	If there are changes to the original report it may invalidate this document, it must be reviewed by Finance.