



Heritage Strategy for the Borough of Boston



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Executive Summary	4
3. Aim and objectives of a strategy for Boston's Heritage	5
4. Introduction Boston's Heritage; its significance and value	6
● Boston's historic environment	6
● Boston's natural environment	8
● The value of Boston's heritage	9
5. Recent investment in Boston's heritage	12
6. Current Situation	14
7. Strategic Direction	17
8. Next Steps	21
Appendix One - Case Studies	24
Appendix Two - Policy Context and References	26
Appendix Three - Consultation	27
Appendix Four - Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan objectives	28



**“[Heritage] is a social dynamic reference point and positive instrument for growth and change. The particular heritage and collective memory of each locality or community is irreplaceable and an important foundation for development, both now and into the future.”
(ICOMOS 2002, International Cultural Tourism Charter)**



Boston is blessed with a rich, diverse and unique heritage¹ and, in particular, recognised at a national level for its significant medieval and Georgian historic environment. Over the last five years this recognition, appreciation and understanding has grown as the value of both the built and natural environment is realised. Recent external investment in this irreplaceable asset has demonstrated the benefits which can be derived from this rich resource. As a result, there is now an increased need to put in place a strategy which sets out clear aims and objectives to understand, restore, protect and share this heritage.

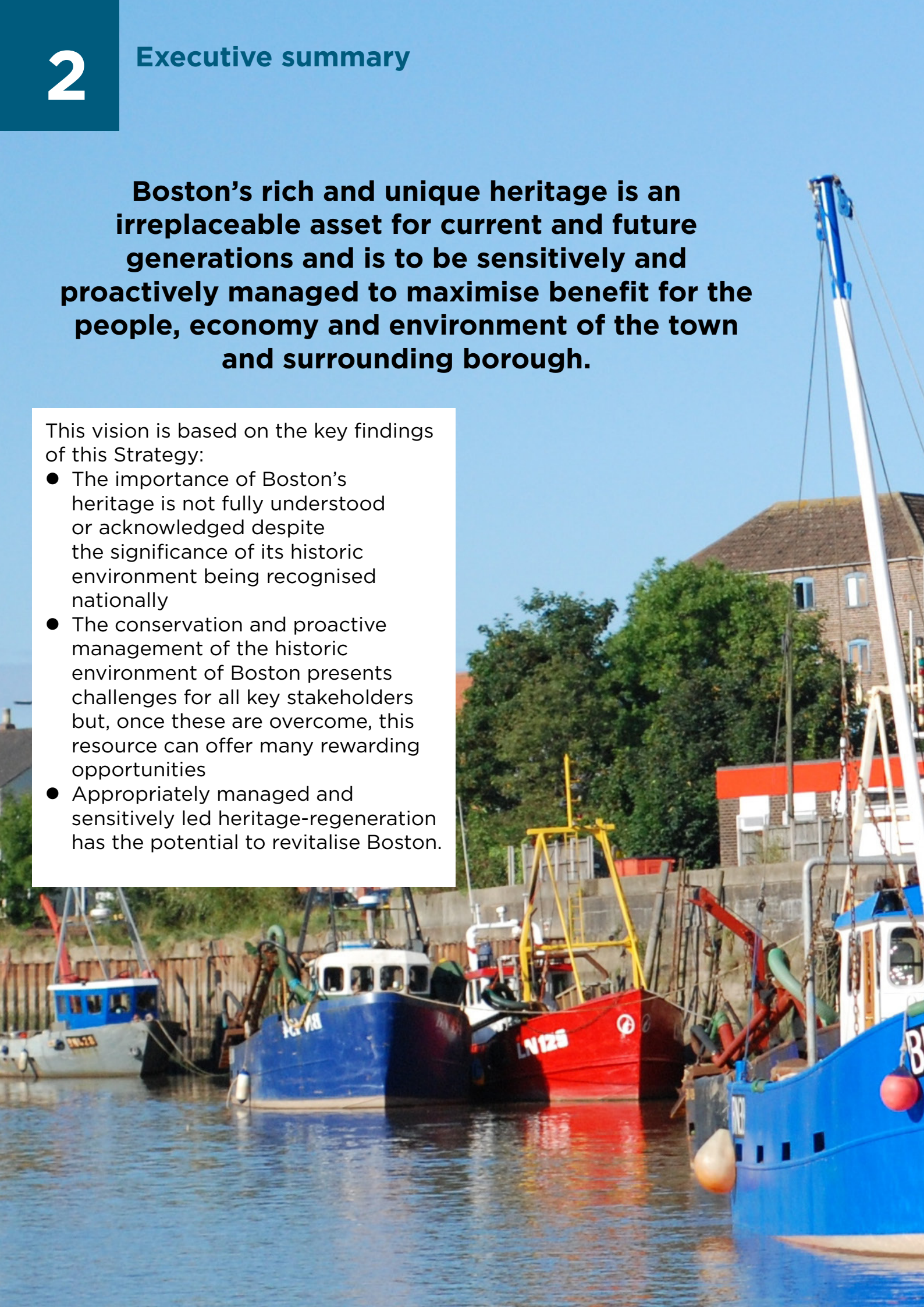
For the purposes of this Strategy, Boston is defined as both the town of Boston and its municipal borough consisting of 18 rural parishes. Particular attention is paid to the historic centre of Boston as the heart of the modern town and the economic focal point of the borough.

¹ For the purpose of this strategy, heritage is defined from the 2002 ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter; “Heritage is a broad concept and includes the natural as well as the cultural environment. It encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long processes of historic development, forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities and is an integral part of modern life.”

Boston's rich and unique heritage is an irreplaceable asset for current and future generations and is to be sensitively and proactively managed to maximise benefit for the people, economy and environment of the town and surrounding borough.

This vision is based on the key findings of this Strategy:

- The importance of Boston's heritage is not fully understood or acknowledged despite the significance of its historic environment being recognised nationally
- The conservation and proactive management of the historic environment of Boston presents challenges for all key stakeholders but, once these are overcome, this resource can offer many rewarding opportunities
- Appropriately managed and sensitively led heritage-regeneration has the potential to revitalise Boston.



The purpose of any strategy is to provide a clear plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim. In the case of Boston's heritage the aim of the strategy is:

To realise the full potential of Boston's heritage by developing understanding and appreciation of its significance, utilising its strengths and safeguarding its future.

This aim is underpinned by the findings of this Strategy, specifically through the key objectives identified:

1. To provide tangible evidence of the value of Boston's heritage
2. To demonstrate value through recent project initiatives and seek ways to build on excellent foundations
3. To understand the existing and potential future challenges faced by Boston's heritage
4. To continue to develop and build a broad base for support and appreciation of Boston's heritage
5. To develop a series of achievable short term and longer term priority projects based on the findings of this Strategy

Boston Borough Council has taken a proactive approach, working with key stakeholders involved with Boston's heritage. This strategy has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in recognition of the need for an action plan that identifies priorities, defines the resources required for delivery and promotes collaboration between the public, private and voluntary sectors.

4

Introduction Boston's Heritage; its significance and value

The borough of Boston is located on the eastern side of England within the county of Lincolnshire. It is variously described as being part of the East Midlands or Eastern England. Geographically, the district is known for its flat fenland environment and lies only a few metres above sea level. Its strategic location on the edge of the 'Wash' of the North Sea and its connection to the city of Lincoln by the river Witham enabled it to develop as a significant port for European trade during the Medieval period.

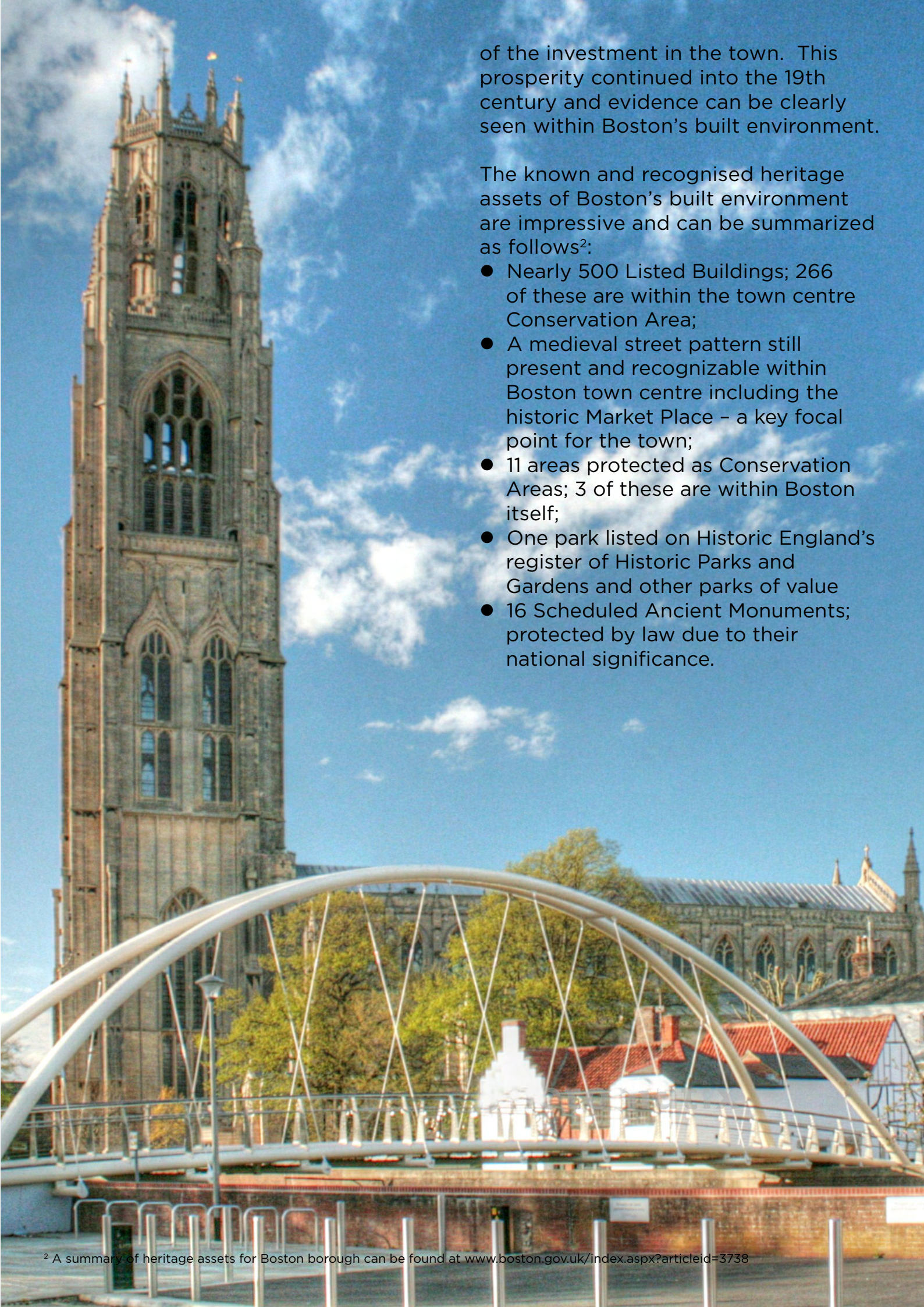
Boston's Historic Environment

Fragmentary archaeological evidence provides support for the theory that the area of Boston was not significantly settled before the medieval period. With Boston being sited in a low lying area with a high water table, there is potential for rich archaeological discoveries concealed within water-logged deposits.

It is likely that the settlement of Boston was founded during the Anglo-Saxon period; the first documentary references about Boston appear in the 11th century. The town developed during the 12th century due to its position in an accessible coastal area and opportunities offered by a combination of inland waterways, rights and privileges granted by the Crown to establish regular markets and fairs and the growth of the woollen export trade. As the market drew in trade and grew in size, the town began to grow in wealth and prosperity. This period has left a rich legacy in Boston of medieval street patterns, two market places (similar in size and style to many European medieval towns and intrinsically linked to the special bond forged with North Europe), St Botolph's Church and the Guildhall of St Mary. Medieval fabric is also still evident within historic buildings in the Boston Town Centre

Conservation Area. This was the first of two extremely prosperous periods for Boston; in the medieval period, trade with the European Low Countries (and in particular the Hanseatic League) led to Boston's economic value being the second most important in England after London. This wealth extended to many of the settlements of the borough; as wool producers, many local landowners also prospered, evidenced by the sheer number of fine medieval churches built from trading surplus.

As the value of wool declined, so did Boston's trading powers and with this came a decline in fortune at the end of the medieval period. However, landscape improvements on an industrial scale in the 18th century ushered in another period of economic wealth for Boston. Ambitious schemes to straighten and widen navigable waterways proved successful and with this came the opportunity to drain significant parcels of land which had previously been rendered unsuitable for agrarian use. Changes in agricultural practices followed and Boston once again became a major exporter; this time of grain. Properties such as Fydell House and 116 High Street and areas such as Pump Square provide significant evidence



of the investment in the town. This prosperity continued into the 19th century and evidence can be clearly seen within Boston's built environment.

The known and recognised heritage assets of Boston's built environment are impressive and can be summarized as follows²:

- Nearly 500 Listed Buildings; 266 of these are within the town centre Conservation Area;
- A medieval street pattern still present and recognizable within Boston town centre including the historic Market Place – a key focal point for the town;
- 11 areas protected as Conservation Areas; 3 of these are within Boston itself;
- One park listed on Historic England's register of Historic Parks and Gardens and other parks of value
- 16 Scheduled Ancient Monuments; protected by law due to their national significance.

² A summary of heritage assets for Boston borough can be found at www.boston.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3738

Boston's Natural Environment

The development of Boston as a town and the parishes of the borough have always been greatly influenced by the natural environment. Situated on an accessible waterway close to the coast, Boston has exploited its relationship with the water for navigation, trade and food (fish, shellfish and wildfowl) for centuries. However, it has also been challenged by this environment; the risk of coastal flooding and the ever changing landscape morphology of low lying land being subject to inundation from fresh as well as salt water. The town's changing fortunes over the years have always been inextricably linked with water - The Wash, The Witham,

The Haven and the complex system of both natural creeks and man-made sluices, drains and ditches across the landscape.

Perhaps most importantly, the area known as The Wash is an extremely important asset and offers a wealth of potential in terms of its nature and wildlife. The Wash is the biggest bay in England and is one of the most outstanding coastal wetlands in Europe with its beautiful exposed landscapes of saltmarshes, mudflats and open water. The area was recognised in 1988 as internationally significant and designated as a RAMSAR site.



The value of Boston's heritage

i) Placemaking

The concept of placemaking is to create places where people want to work, live and visit. This involves managing the identity of a place, enhancing its character and successfully communicating its strengths. The aesthetic value and access to both the historic and natural environment cannot and should not be under-estimated.

- Boston's built heritage is a rich and exceptional asset made up of a diverse combination of historic buildings, 'designed' spaces (street patterns and market places), waterways which shape and define both town and countryside and under explored archaeological potential. The town's early trade links with Europe have influenced the urban form and architecture; Boston's industry and port have all contributed to a unique sense of place.
- Placebranding involves developing, communicating and managing the perception of a place using its distinctiveness to realise potential and attract investment. Boston has a wealth of untapped potential and there is huge scope to build on projects already underway in Boston to refurbish and adapt historic buildings and areas.
- The ability to protect and restore natural habitats enriches Boston's diversity and encourages greater investment and continues to generate interest from visitors, local businesses and the wider economy.
- With a distinct relationship between the quality of an environment and the ability to attract investment, Boston presents a superb opportunity to continue to develop a placemaking ability which in turn will reap long term rewards.
- Opportunities offered by the visitor economy are key to Boston's development. Development of the historic environment to enable the creation of a distinct and unique visitor experience is essential to support this.
- Boston has a wonderful historic environment and has a significant number of opportunities to continue to develop positive visitor experiences, including building on the successful, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funded, Explore and Discover wayfinding and interpretation project, St Botolph's 'A Passion for People' HLF funded project, Boston's American associations of the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrim 2020 story and the 400th anniversary of the foundation of Boston, Massachusetts by members of Boston's John Cotton congregation in 1630, these allied to Boston's maritime histories and its historic European trade connections through the Hanseatic league, offer very strong and influential narratives to share.
- Recognition of the crucial importance placemaking and placebranding offers Boston to develop the visitor economy is demonstrated by the council's recent creation of a destination management platform in the shape of the visitbostonuk website, the design of which was enabled through the toolkit developed through the HLF funded Explore and Discover project, underpinning the town's placebranding.
- Boston Borough Council recognise the importance of protecting the rich historic environment through the creation of the Boston Town Centre

Conservation Area Management Plan which seeks to identify areas of concern and offer proactive solutions.

ii) Economy

On a regional basis, it is known that heritage directly contributes over £580 million in Gross Value Added (GVA); there are over 11,000 people directly employed in heritage and heritage tourism generates £726m in annual spending by domestic and international visitors³.

- The economic value of heritage offers many opportunities and unexplored potential for Boston. No research exists yet to show how this relates on a local scale but it is clear that the economic potential of Boston is under-utilised and should be developed further.
- The town centre of Boston offers both a local retail catchment centre, but also the option to cater for a wider audience through developing a truly unique and enjoyable experience immersed in the historic environment of the town. The importance of continuing to develop the town centre has been recognised by the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce and the establishment of the Boston Town Team looks to build a strong public/private sector partnership to develop the economy.
- Currently, the historic building stock in Boston (and indeed in other areas of the borough) is under-utilised. Many properties require refurbishment, but even before this stage is reached their potential needs to be realised. Historic buildings when sensitively restored offer enormous potential to a wide range of businesses e.g. creative or knowledge-based industries, IT and social enterprises.
- In considering any historic building

restoration it is vital to be entirely clear on legislative and building restrictions, what that building is most suited to in terms of a viable future and paying an appropriate price which takes into consideration all the requirements of refurbishment. Clear guidance on such issues are laid out in the 2017 Historic England publication, 'Heritage Works.'

- Small, locally owned businesses are an ideal 'fit' for many historic buildings, offering distinctiveness within the town centre and something Boston must retain and build in order to remain commercially and economically successful.
- The regeneration of the historic core and other key areas in Boston can act as a catalyst to create opportunities for enterprise, jobs and building prosperity. This becomes an attractive proposition, attracting further investment and building on success. Boston's mix of historic buildings, streets and public squares, parks and green spaces offer huge potential which should be sensitively considered for regeneration through restoration, re-use and small areas of selective re-development.
- Looking after historic buildings requires skilled labour, but is more sustainable than wholesale new-build. Therefore refurbishment and ongoing management of the historic environment offers opportunity to develop a range of specialist traditional building roles. These roles command higher wages and as such directly contribute to the continued growth of the economy.

iii) Society

Heritage has an important role to play within society; recent research conducted by Historic England found 80% of people think local heritage makes a better place to live.

⁴ Heritage Counts - Heritage and Society 2016

Furthermore, the vast majority of people felt heritage added to their community, attracting visitors and therefore contributing to the local economy⁴.

- Boston, with its strong and distinct historic environment has much to offer the local community; Historic England research also found that people who live in a place with a greater number of heritage assets are likely to have a strong sense of place. Boston has a wealth of historic assets to offer to help build this identity.
- A valued and nurtured historic and natural environment can offer many associated health and wellbeing benefits. Being outside in an attractive environment can contribute to improved mental and physical health, and in the case of the natural environment, can reduce stress and lower blood pressure. Boston benefits further by the presence of Central Park, an early 20th century designed public amenity space, adjacent to the town centre Conservation Area and intrinsically connecting both historic and natural environment.
- The historic and natural environment of Boston and the surrounding area already demonstrate their value in contributing to enjoyment through a wide variety of cultural activities including annual festivals and events such as Boston's historic May Fair.
- The historic environment has been used to great effect in contributing to educational schemes and in particular offers an extremely effective mechanism in engaging with young people. This can be seen by the enormous success a number of heritage inspired arts events coordinated by Transported (an Arts Council England 'Creative People and Places' programme) have had in recent years in increasing engagement with culture and the arts.

- Heritage can also offer a wonderful mechanism to promote social cohesion and integration. Boston has seen the highest level of immigration in Lincolnshire from member states of the EU, largely due to the amount of agricultural labour required in the area. Heritage driven projects offer the opportunity to be open and equitable in the ability to participate and thus promote community cohesion and integration.
- Heritage activities are proven through research carried out by key heritage bodies to be relevant to everyone, offering opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity. Boston's long history as a European centre of trade and agriculture combined with its recent re-admission into 'Die Hanse' (a modern association of places connected with the Medieval Haseatic League) offers real value in helping to promote a cohesive and integrated society.



The historic environment of Boston and its borough is a major asset to all who live and work in the area and over the past 5 years, a significant level of investment has been made by Boston Borough Council and other key stakeholders. This investment has enhanced understanding and appreciation of this resource and has illustrated the benefits that can be derived from proactive initiatives. The capacity for delivery and the level of local expertise has also increased and there is a sense of pride in the area, giving confidence in what can be achieved in the future. Some examples of successful outcomes achieved in the last five years are illustrated below.

- **Boston Big Dig:**

In June 2011, Lincolnshire County Council, in partnership with Heritage Lincolnshire and Boston Borough Council, undertook archaeological excavations in the Market Place. The dig involved volunteers from the local community as well offering a variety of other medieval themed events and activities. The following year, once all the artefacts had been analysed, the volunteers worked with the organisers and Boston Guildhall Museum to create a display about their findings, adding to local knowledge of Boston's rich heritage and its links to Europe within the medieval period, building a sense of identity.

- **The Restoration of 116 High Street:**

In 2012 Heritage Lincolnshire completed a project to fully restore this Grade II* listed building that had been on the 'at risk' register due to its derelict state. The property was fully developed into a commercial centre, supporting start-up businesses in the town centre. The project, funded by Historic England, Lincolnshire County Council, Boston Borough Council and the European Regional Development Fund, helped to regenerate the area and has made a positive impact on the local economy and the built environment.

- **PSiCA scheme:**

The 'Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas' is an Historic England initiative working in

partnership with Boston Borough Council. Operating from 2012, the scheme offers funding to historic property owners within Boston's market place, to sensitively refurbish their external frontage. Since the scheme started twelve properties have been completed with another four underway and has provided a significant improvement to the townscape. An extension of this scheme has recently been announced by Historic England and demonstrates the value external heritage agencies see in the preservation and presentation of Boston's historic environment.

- **Renewal of Boston market place:**

In 2013, a number of significant public realm improvements were made to Boston's market place. Work included partially pedestrianising and resurfacing using appropriate materials and reinstatement of historic features such as the five lamps. This encouraged higher priority for pedestrians over vehicles, allowed businesses to use the space differently and set a high standard for finishes and fittings, improving the historic environment and 'sense of place'.

- **New town footbridge:**

In 2014 a new, contemporary footbridge over the The Haven opened, providing a pedestrian crossing at the main 'Gateway' between the train and coach stations and the Market Place. The bridge was

funded through a partnership project with Lincolnshire County Council and the European Regional Development Fund. This large public realm project contributed significantly to improving access to and engagement with the local historic environment.

- **Explore & Discover:**

The HLF funded Explore and Discover project was initiated in response to a recognised absence of consistent, cohesive pedestrian wayfinding and interpretative schemes to orientate both visitors and residents to the richness of its historic environment, its historical associations, its attractions and its wider offer as a destination. The project has developed Boston's placemaking and placebranding identity along with providing public realm enhancements. It strategically reprioritised existing finger post furniture throughout the town, developed new mapping of the town centre and installed a series of 'Interpretation Monoliths' within the town and at key arrival points which share significant historical associations and orientation to Boston's Historic and wider offer as a destination. It also

developed a design toolkit that is already informing future phases of interpretation and orientation within the town and borough such as the new visitbostonuk website. Engagement with local communities through consultation and events informed the development of the project.

- **Transported:**

Transported is a strategic arts-led, community-focused programme which aims to get more people in Boston Borough and South Holland enjoying and participating in arts activities. Funded through the Arts Council England using National Lottery money, the organisation has managed a number of highly successful public realm art projects within Boston. Through community consultation this identified a number of public spaces which required enhancement and, working with a variety of artists, produced instalments lining the route from the bus station to St Botolph's. A second stage of this project is planned in the near future.

These projects have made a substantial and positive impact on Boston and have further developed and advanced partnership working in the local area. Partnership working is seen as crucial in the continued success of heritage development; Boston is already achieving significant success in collaborative working and through continued project success, has contributed enormous improvements to the historic environment. Boston Borough Council has demonstrated its commitment to the historic environment through the investment of both financial, in-kind and officer support for many of these projects. This level of support is ongoing, most recently demonstrated by over £100,000 financial contribution from the Council towards the Townscape Heritage Project.

Boston Heritage Forum

The importance of Boston's historic environment has been highlighted by the creation of Boston Heritage Forum. The Forum brings together a wealth of groups and individuals focussed on promoting the various aspects of heritage and arts within the Borough.

Members, who are mainly volunteers, come together for mutual support with some professional input from Heritage Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire County Council and Transported. The Forum is a Cluster Group within the Lincolnshire Heritage Forum to help facilitate development of new and existing initiatives.

Whilst there is much support for Boston's heritage and many opportunities to develop, there are nine key areas of activity which are highlighted below which can be addressed as part of a wider strategy action plan. In order to establish a clear direction within the strategy it is important to assess the current situation and identify key objectives so that this can inform the action plan.

Knowledge and awareness (KA)

Knowledge and understanding of Boston's historic environment has advanced significantly within the past 20 years but recent research reports have highlighted that there are many opportunities to develop and enhance this further. Raising awareness of its significance and the value it can offer in contributing to the regeneration of Boston should also be developed. More can be done to raise awareness of all Boston has to offer to a number of different audiences including the local population, the private sector, key decision makers and prospective visitors. Additional marketing and promotion needs to take place highlighting opportunities for local businesses to capitalise on the unique selling points of local distinctiveness to encourage greater entrepreneurship and investment from existing and new businesses.

Condition (CO)

Boston has a large number of heritage assets in a variety of ownership. Whilst a significant number of these are under responsible ownership and are looked after appropriately, there are a number which require restoration and refurbishment; it is likely a number of these will be in conservation deficit. In some cases where a historic asset is of national importance and recognised by Historic England they are also classed as 'at risk'. Boston borough currently has 9 properties individually classed

as 'at risk' including five churches within the borough and St Botolph's in the town centre. In addition to historic properties, Conservation Areas can also be classed at risk; both Boston Town Centre and Kirton parish Conservation Areas are both currently listed on the 'at risk' register, due to the threat of loss of character due to development, loss of historic detail, signs of lack of investment and the condition of the public realm. Heritage Lincolnshire's Heritage at Risk project provided information on the condition of Grade II listed buildings and other unlisted buildings of interest within the borough. This survey found that 7% of Grade II buildings are currently at risk.

Economic viability (EV)

Whilst historic buildings contribute to an attractive environment, they can often be expensive to repair, especially if they are allowed to deteriorate. The cost of good quality restoration and refurbishment can lead to a conservation deficit. For a privately owned commercially focused business, this can prove challenging, which can lead to unsympathetic repair or, in some cases, complete vacation from the property. Empty, neglected properties do not promote a healthy and viable desirable location to invest. In Boston's case, this is an ongoing issue with a number of long term vacant commercial properties visible in key locations across the town. Action can be taken to promote proactive

maintenance programmes, sympathetic repair and encourage businesses to occupy prominent central locations. Growth within the town should consider and advocate the re-use and regeneration of viable historic building stock over the construction of new building.

Residential viability (RV)

The cost of private ownership of a variety of housing stock within the borough is relatively affordable by comparison to other regions of the East Midlands and beyond, however, it remains challenging to provide good quality, affordable rented accommodation. It is also nationally acknowledged that there is currently a social housing sector crisis which means providing affordable accommodation for families wishing to settle locally remains difficult. Solutions can be found which provide good quality affordable housing stock for the local population without compromising the historic environment. Growth of the town should explore and advocate the innovative re-use and regeneration of the historic building stock allied to assessing the need for new building.

Unsympathetic development & re-development (UD)

Owners of historic properties within the Borough should have access to advice and information about the care and management of these assets so that inappropriate repairs or poor quality developments are avoided. These can have a negative impact on the individual asset and create an erosion of the special character of the area over time. Even for properties which are not a Listed Building, but in a Conservation Area, owners are often not aware of the criteria which determines what they are legally allowed to do. This includes changes such as replacement doors and windows, advertising, satellite

dishes and small scale extensions such as porches or conservatories.

On a larger scale, any new build or re-development must be appropriate and in keeping with the historic environment.

Capacity (CA)

With the current challenges of resourcing facing local government the council's capacity to deliver projects is restricted. Being a small district authority this situation is somewhat exacerbated with the borough of Boston. This is also true of the local voluntary and community sector, which does not have the same level of resources (i.e. capacity and funding) as in larger, more urban areas.

Community Cohesion (CC)

Boston has seen a very high level of immigration from member states of the EU, largely due to the amount of agricultural labour required in the area. There is a need to ensure that there are initiatives which promote community cohesion and integration.

Location (LO)

Whilst Boston's location has contributed significantly to its heritage (allowing it to develop into an internationally successful commercial port in the medieval period), its rural location to the east of the country presents an opportunity to increase engagement with this area. With limited public transport and no major road network through Boston, the challenge is to increase visibility of the town as a place to visit, shop and engage with the historic environment. Development and presentation of the town's significant and important historic offer, a product of its unique location, is key to this ambition.

Attracting Investment (AI)

In order to thrive, Boston needs a vibrant local economy which is capable of drawing in investment from a variety of sources including the public and private sectors, philanthropic donations and project specific schemes. Investors need confidence to invest based on success and continued trust in delivery. Boston is at a critical stage in terms of heritage investment, with funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund investing heavily in a number of key projects which will come to fruition in the next 3 – 5 years. These projects should be delivered confidently to continue to build an environment where success is ensured and confidence maintained. This in turn will act as a catalyst to other investors.

The sense of place is very much front and centre of Boston Borough Council's thinking and is evidenced through the Council Plan, Economic Development Plan and the Local Plan. They all recognise the importance of Boston as an economic centre for retail, commercial and historic environments and the significant wider benefits that these bring to hinterland towns and villages.

There is an ambition to improve the fabric of the town centre and increase the vibrancy and vitality through engagement with commercial

partners to identify, raise awareness and encourage void space above the retail offer to become residential accommodation. This joined up approach with commercial agents, landlords and Boston Borough Council demonstrates a collective responsibility to create a sustainable environment.

The economic vision for the borough is: To create a strong, successful and resilient economy that works for all by positioning the borough as a destination of choice for investing, working, living and visiting.

Boston has a number of strengths to nurture and opportunities to enhance the built environment of the town centre which can act as a catalyst for further regeneration, supporting the development of economic, environmental and social interventions. Whilst nine different challenges have been identified many of these are inter-related and present a series of complex multi-layered relationships. Several of the issues highlighted are also common across all sectors within the Borough and therefore a co-ordinated approach is required. Instead of considering each challenge in isolation, a number of emerging themes can be identified which directly build an opportunity to identify a series of objectives which will tackle a combination of these challenges together.



The strategic direction of the Heritage Strategy is in line with Boston Borough Council's strategic ambition 'Boston - Open for Business' where its corporate priorities are based on 'Prosperity, People, Place and Public Service'.

Based on the overarching aim of the Heritage Strategy and its original objectives, three themes can be highlighted which provide a clear focus of attention for action:

i) Understanding and Valuing

Boston is considered by a wide variety of heritage organisations to be of national significance in terms of the quality of its historic environment. However, they themselves admit that in terms of understanding this unique asset there are gaps in knowledge which can be filled in order to build a complete picture. Further work can be undertaken in order to understand Boston's historic environment to care for it appropriately.

In order to raise awareness of its significance, a wider appreciation of Boston's historic environment can be developed across key audiences through a variety of approaches such as training events, workshops and active promotion. This includes key decision makers within Boston Borough Council, those interested in Boston's heritage, local businesses and the local community (however, this is not just a specific training need but also a wider promotional and marketing requirement).

Awareness should be developed of the potential that Boston's heritage offers through demonstrating the success of projects that have already taken place as well as highlighting further heritage projects under development or underway which provide opportunities for people to get involved. This may involve community engagement or consultation, the chance to volunteer

for a specific role, or to identify specific training needs.

Crucial to this success will be to engage and enthuse those who will ultimately shape and champion the historic environment beyond the current decision makers. Boston Borough contains thirty-one schools and the opportunity to reach young people within an educational context would enable the strategy to also engage the wider community and would guarantee that future generations understood and valued their heritage.

ii) Realising Potential

It is clear there is great value in Boston's heritage and significant support locally, regionally and nationally.

With the continued challenges of resourcing facing local government the capacity to deliver both capital investment projects and other tangible outputs is restricted. The continued development of partnership working is necessary to enable project delivery. Partnerships can consist of versatile collaborations of both private and public sectors organisations at local, regional and national level. Recognising the ability of heritage to deliver desired outputs across a number of different policy streams (e.g. economic development, community cohesion, training and development etc.) will be vital to Boston Borough Council and

relates specifically to the first emerging theme of Understanding and Valuing.

Partnership working also carries significant opportunity in attracting external funding. Heritage can draw investment from a wide range of sources including the public and private sectors as well as charitable organisations, trusts and foundations. It has already been demonstrated that Boston has been a focus for heritage-led regeneration investment projects and this will continue for a number more years.

Considering the natural environment, this offers additional opportunities and there is the potential to build on the success of significant investment at sites such as RSPB Frampton Marsh to create further development opportunities.

Crucial to the success of Boston's heritage-led regeneration is not only consideration of its built and natural environment but how it connects together. In Boston town centre the value of placebranding has been highlighted by the recent public realm Explore and Discover project, but more can be done to further improve orientation and interpretation to make the town more attractive to locals, visitors and investors. Opportunities also exist to consider other routes through the town and borough, most noticeably improving connectively across the John Adams Way to the south end of the High Street. The creation of the Boston Barrier in the near future will also draw attention to the significance of Boston's waterways and port, providing further opportunity for exciting development.

There is a recognition of the realising of the town's potential within the developing Local Plan. The Inspectors

recommending:

'The Councils' will consider opportunities to support and extend the offer of the town centres as destinations through the following:

1. Supporting the redevelopment of land within the town centre boundary that can provide for retail and other town centre uses;
2. Enhancing existing sites and ensuring changes to premises having regard to the significance of heritage assets and the special interests of the Conservation Areas and their settings;
3. Enhancing the public realm through improvements to accessibility and signage;
4. Promoting town centre events;
5. Providing interpretation and promotional information;
6. Supporting proposals that seek to maintain the viability and attractiveness of the weekly markets;
7. Encouraging opportunities to support temporary uses in vacant premises in the primary shopping areas.

Finally, there needs to be an increased awareness of the value of Boston's historic environment through marketing and promotion. At one level, the local community needs to be made aware of the value heritage has to develop a greater 'sense of place' but to also reinforce the positive identity of the distinctiveness of Boston's historic environment and the opportunity this represents. Regionally, Boston needs to be promoted as a destination, and investment opportunities identified and prioritised to access funding to promote the town as such. Continuation of high profile programmes such as Transported's heritage inspired arts events, the Hanse Group and the national 2020 commemoration of the Pilgrims and the

400th anniversary of the founding of Boston, Massachusetts in 2030 should also receive greater attention.

iii) Effective Management and collaboration

Heritage is a unique and diverse asset; it is fragile and irreplaceable once lost. In order to manage the historic environment proactively and successfully, it is essential to first understand the asset. Therefore, as already highlighted, it is necessary for its special architectural and historic interest (and, if relevant, gain fuller understanding of the special qualities of the natural environment) to be fully understood. Further evidence must be gathered to gain a complete picture of Boston's historic environment and initial markers laid down to understand the value of this heritage relating to economic, social and environmental benefits, which can be recorded and monitored on a regular basis.

As the local authority, Boston Borough Council has a statutory duty to receive and process planning applications including those requiring listed building consent. They review within Conservation Area applications and are responsible for looking into potential breaches of listed building or Conservation Area permissible development and respond to complaints received about listed buildings, including buildings at risk. The allied Conservation Area Management Plan offers a number of priority actions and key objectives.

In addition to these statutory responsibilities, Boston Borough Council has developed successful partnerships such as that with Heritage Lincolnshire, a voluntary sector organisation that has provided specialist consultancy and advice on conservation, securing investment

and community engagement. With investment from Historic England, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lincolnshire County Council and a number of charitable trusts, the partnership has taken a proactive approach that could be used as a model of best practice in other areas.

Assessing each of these emerging themes against the current challenges provides an opportunity to identify a number of objectives which seek to provide clear direction to Boston's Heritage Strategy. These are set out in Table 1, highlighting relationships between each objective and the challenges it can address.



Table 1: Relationships connecting objectives to the current situation and strategic direction

No	Objective	Addressing Current Challenges	Strategic Direction
1	Further knowledge of Boston's historic environment	KA, UD, AI	i, ii, iii
2	Raise awareness of the value of and understanding of Boston's heritage assets with key decision makers	KA, CO, UD, EV, RV	i, ii, iii
3	Raise awareness of Boston's rich heritage amongst interested parties and allow them to maximise its potential and become active advocates in its conservation	KA, CO, UD, CA, LO	i, ii, iii
4	Encourage private business to appreciate the opportunities that heritage assets can present and contribute to local heritage initiatives	KA, CO, UD, EV, RV, AI	i, ii, iii
5	Encourage a vibrant programme of cultural heritage and arts activities that appeal to a diverse audience	KA, CO, CC, AI	i, ii
6	Raise awareness of Boston's heritage, its value and irreplaceable nature to develop greater local appreciation	KA, CO, UD, CA, CC, AI	i, ii, iii
7	Recognise and take up opportunities presented by heritage to attract external investment and continue to capitalise on identifying suitable opportunities	CA, AI	ii
8	Highlight the opportunities offered by Boston's heritage for tourism through improved marketing and promotion	KA, EV, LO, AI	i, ii
9	Demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits of Boston's heritage	KA, EV, RV, CC, LO, AI	i, ii, iii
10	Enhance the current capacity of the local authority to actively manage and conserve Boston's historic environment through creative local partnerships	KA, CO, UD, CA	i, iii
11	Prioritise increasing availability of conservation management advice and best practise guidelines for heritage assets	KA, EV, CO, UD	i, iii
12	Continue to develop projects which attract a diverse range of partners to maximise investment opportunities	KA, EV, CA, AI	ii, iii
13	Continue to build upon the success of existing public realm projects to create better 'connectivity' and placemaking to highlight Boston as a destination to a wider audience	KA, CO, EV, RV, UD, LO	i, ii
14	Address key outcomes of the Conservation Area Management Plan which aim to reduce the number of heritage assets at risk within Boston Borough (as noted on Heritage at Risk registers held by Historic England and Heritage Lincolnshire).	KA, CO, EV, RV, UD	i, ii, iii
15	Increase capacity within the local area for research, conservation and management of Boston's heritage. A co-ordinated programme of recruitment and skills training is required.	KA, CO, EV, RV, UD, CA, AI	i, ii, ii

Based on the key emerging themes of understanding and valuing, realising potential and effective management and collaboration, a number of objectives have been identified. These objectives have been distilled into a proposed outline action plan which can be found in Table 2. This provides a number of potential projects which are to be owned and delivered by a variety

of key stakeholders, mostly working in partnership with a combination of different organisations. They are divided into short term projects and those which are longer term projects. It should be noted that some of these projects will appear both as short term and long term prospects as by their nature some of the longer terms projects will require an initial stage of development.

Roles and responsibilities

Whilst overall ownership of the strategy should remain with Boston Borough Council (who recognise the significance of the historic environment of Boston as a key asset and seek to deliver the long term vision for Boston's heritage), it is anticipated that different ownership for these proposed actions will be attributed to a variety of different organisations depending on their expertise and capabilities. It is recommended that this Heritage Strategy is formerly adopted by Boston Borough Council. Actions identified within this strategy should be coordinated by a lead group of individuals and organisations passionate about conserving, protecting and promoting the historic environment. Key stakeholders could include individuals from Boston Borough Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Heritage Lincolnshire, Boston Heritage Forum, Cemetery Chapel Trust and Boston Preservation Trust.



Table Two: List of proposed activities connected to identified objectives

No	Objective	Proposed Action
SHORT TERM		
1	Further knowledge of Boston's historic environment	Identify funding opportunities to allow further work to be undertaken to continue to fill gaps in knowledge
2	Raise awareness of the value of and understanding of Boston's heritage assets with key decision makers	Develop projects to provide promotional presentations and workshop events on Boston's heritage and conservation and management e.g within activity programme of Townscape Heritage project
3	Raise awareness of Boston's rich heritage amongst interested parties and allow them to maximise its potential becoming active conservation advocates	Within projects and programmes provide promotional presentations and workshops and investigate training skills gaps and opportunities to encourage participation and advocacy
4	Encourage private business to appreciate the opportunities that heritage assets can present and contribute to local heritage initiatives	Explore engaging with stakeholders such as the Town Team on Boston's heritage assets & through the use of case studies/best practise demonstrate the value of heritage
5	Encourage a vibrant programme of cultural heritage and arts activities that appeal to a diverse audience	Capitalise on existing heritage projects in development to promote these, community involvement and opportunity e.g. Townscape Heritage Project, Pilgrim 2020, Hanseatic League, John Cotton 2030 etc.
6	Raise awareness of Boston's heritage, its value and irreplaceable nature to develop greater local appreciation	Provide community engagement / consultation events and continue to develop schools-based projects to increase understanding of what people consider of value and to increase awareness. Incorporate within delivery of heritage projects and arts initiatives such as 'Illuminate'
7	Recognise and act upon the opportunities presented by heritage to attract external investment and continue to capitalise on identifying suitable opportunities	Offer training on sources of funding available to heritage projects and identify the best opportunities for Boston's historic environment and locally community
8	Highlight opportunities offered by Boston's heritage for tourism with improved marketing & promotion	Seek opportunities to draw down funding to enable better marketing and promotion of Boston's heritage and wider offer and advocate opportunities to the local business communities through forums such as the Town Team.
9	Demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits of Boston's heritage	To explore commissioning analysis recording and monitoring of the current state and value of Boston's heritage

No	Objective	Proposed Action
10	Enhance the current capacity of the local authority to actively manage and conserve Boston's historic environment through creative local partnerships	Make recommendations to support existing capacity through investment, partnerships and upskilling to enhance capacity.
11	Prioritise increasing availability of conservation management advice and best practise guidelines for heritage assets	Ensure routes to appropriate advice are available within the CAMP for Boston Town Centre e.g. Shop front design guide
12	Continue to develop projects which attract a diverse range of partners to maximise investment opportunities	Prioritise projects (both within and outside the heritage sector) which offer greatest opportunity for partnership working
13	Continue to build upon the success of existing public realm projects to create better 'connectivity' and placemaking to highlight Boston as a destination to a wider audience	Prioritise involvement in projects already identified as public realm improvements and seek opportunities to work in partnership to deliver new schemes.
14	Reduce the number of heritage assets at risk within Boston borough (as noted on Heritage at Risk registers held by Historic England and Heritage Lincolnshire) which support key objectives within the CAMP	Identify priority heritage assets without an existing 'rescue' plan in place and develop an appropriate action plan for each
15	Increase capacity within the local area for research, conservation and management of Boston's heritage. A co-ordinated programme of recruitment and skills training is required.	Explore the feasibility of establishing a training centre in partnership with Boston College and the Heritage Skills Centre in Lincoln

Appendix One - Case Studies

There is a growing recognition on a national basis, supported by academic research and the results of evaluation undertaken on a range of initiatives, that heritage acts as a catalyst and a key resource for economic regeneration, place making and an enhanced quality of life. Boston Borough has developed this strategy within the context of best practice achieved in other areas both within and outside the East Midlands. It is clear that a partnership approach between the public, private and voluntary sectors is required in order to apply these models in the area and the following case studies demonstrate some of the relevant initiatives Boston could seek to emulate. Reference is also made to the potential Boston has in developing and further exploiting its Hanse links through examples drawn from both England and from Europe.

Nottingham:

Nottingham City Council produced a Nottingham Heritage Strategy covering 2015 - 2030 consisting of three key documents; the strategy itself, a List of Potential Heritage Projects and a Year 1 Action Plan. This document provided clear examples of Nottingham's distinctiveness and 'sense of place' recognising key opportunities to be developed in utilising the local heritage more fully, while also noting the challenges. They summarised their aims under three main headings - understanding, capitalising and celebrating within which they were clear objectives and key actions listed. A key requirement identified was the need to recruit a full-time heritage lead to drive forward the heritage strategy to work alongside a specifically formed heritage panel and heritage partnership.

Lincoln:

Lincoln City Council has produced a succinct Heritage Prospectus covering 2014 - 2020. Covering

four chapters the document looks at the current benefits and value of Lincoln's heritage as well as assessing its challenges and opportunities. The basis for this document can be dated to the establishment of the Business Improvement Group (BIG) which was established in 2005 and over a number of years drew in a number of strategic partners and the creation of the 'Visit Lincoln' brand which has been essential in Lincoln's 'placemaking' success. This was perhaps most successfully demonstrated by the 800 year anniversary celebrations of the Magna Carta in 2015, not only bringing more visitors into the city, but also successfully demonstrating the success of a joined up promotional partnership marketing strategy, but also the expansion of its 'offer' to include a conferencing and events centre.

Lincolnshire Cultural Strategy

A wider overarching document covering all of Lincolnshire has also been produced by Lincolnshire County Council which aims to set out a Cultural Strategy for Greater Lincolnshire. Launched in February 2017, this document advocates the role of culture, arts and heritage in attracting new businesses and tourists to the area, enhancing our sense of place and improving the quality of life of local residents. The strategy provides recommendations for five key areas of inspiring children and young people, nurturing, attracting and retaining talent, growing participation and engagement, supporting the economy and strengthening communities and places. Reference is made to the arts lead creative work already underway in Boston so further reference should be drawn from this document.

Derby:

Another Business Improvement District (BID) similar to that of Lincoln was established in Derby - two schemes

operating at the Cathedral Quarter and St Peter's Quarter. Similar to the PSiCA scheme in operation in Boston, Historic England has offered grant schemes to owners of Listed Buildings within the BID designated areas and has helped 72 buildings over the last five years renovate and refurbish their properties in terms of conservation best practice. As a result, the cultural quarter has been revitalised and perhaps its greatest achievement to date is the public endorsement through winning the Great British High Street award at the end of 2016. This demonstrates the strong link between economic regeneration, the importance of place-making and direct community engagement.

Kings Lynn:

The town of Kings Lynn, Norfolk is similar to Boston, being established as a prominent sea port and market town during the medieval period. Whilst the town today is slightly larger than Boston, the centre retains a significant medieval historic environment which has been identified as one of its major assets and a significant tourist draw. In 2006, Kings Lynn became the United Kingdom's first member of reformed Hanseatic League and has capitalised on this relationship, offering a large scale Hansa Festival for the last 10 years. Much could be learnt from the growth and success of this economically advantageous relationship with the Hanse.

Great Yarmouth:

Another east coast port which developed during the medieval period with a large market space, Great Yarmouth is a town which faces similar challenges to Boston. With a number of traditional industries in decline, the town's historic environment is seen as a crucial element of its economic regeneration, contributing to placemaking and tourism initiatives bringing together partners from the public, private and Third Sector. Similar to the work of Heritage Lincolnshire in Boston, the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust provides opportunities for the local community to become involved directly with heritage through a variety of education,

outreach and training programmes. These contribute significantly to building greater knowledge and awareness of Great Yarmouth's historic environment, developing skills within the local area and sharing their expertise abroad through an innovative European partnership. This exciting project brought the Preservation Trust together with the Devetaki Plateau Association in Bulgaria to work together in tackling common problems of the loss of traditional building skills, the erosion of cultural heritage and issues of high unemployment and social deprivation.

Kampen:

Almost identical in size to Boston and similarly set beside a prominent river, this Hanseatic town has one of the best preserved old town centres in the Netherlands. The town has a significant number of surviving medieval buildings from the 14th and 15th centuries and actively conserves its built heritage, including that from its more recent industrial past. In June 2017, the annual International Hanseatic Festival took place in Kampen with representation from a significant number of cities and towns across Europe. Boston Borough Council should look at this opportunity to learn how Kampen promotes its historic environment as a unique shopping and visiting experience and how it capitalises on its links with the Hanseatic League to build on the opportunities being part of this economic partnership network offers.

Further case studies can be found within the English Heritage publication 'Valuing Places: Good Practice in Conservation Areas'

www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/valuing-places/

Appendix Two - Policy Context and References

This document sits within a wider strategy context for Boston at both a local, regional and national level. Should a fuller perspective of this framework be required, the following policy documents are also relevant:

Boston Town Centre Conservation Management Plan, , Boston Borough Council

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 - 2036, South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2018, Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government

With reference to Boston's Heritage Strategy, the following are the key resources used.

- 1) 'Boston, Lincolnshire: Historic North Sea Port and Market Town' Historic England (2015)
 - 2) The Heritage Lottery Fund: <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/research-evaluation>
 - 3) Heritage Counts - Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/>
- Various references including East Midlands regional data for 2016, Heritage and Place Branding (2016), Heritage and Society (2016) and Heritage and Economy (2016)
- 4) Boston Borough Council: <http://www.boston.gov.uk/>
 - 5) 'Heritage Works: The use of historic buildings in regeneration' Historic England (2017) <https://www.bpf.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Heritage-Works-14July2017-for-web.pdf>
 - 6) Networked Heritage : Heritage shapes how people identify with the places they live, work and play. A publication from the RSA, in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund. <https://medium.com/networked-heritage>

The draft Boston Heritage Strategy was made available on Boston Borough Council's website and through social media from 17 March 2017 for comment, as well as part of a workshop facilitated by the Council's Heritage Development Officer with the Boston Heritage Forum on 20 April 2017. Members of the ViewPoint 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 draft strategy.

Appendix Four – Boston Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan

The following table lists the main objectives from Boston Town Centre’s Conservation Area Management Plan. This

is identified as being of key importance in supporting the Boston Heritage Strategy’s longer term actions.

Priority Objectives	
1	Continue to support the implementation of the PSiCA scheme
2	Support the aims and objectives of Boston’s Townscape Heritage Project
3	Continue to monitor all current enforcement action within Boston Town Centre Conservation Area, using further statutory powers if required
4	Use the Boston Heritage Strategy to identify areas of support for the Conservation Area Management Plan
5	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
Longer Term Objectives	
1	Identify properties at risk within the Conservation Area and take appropriate action
2	Provide access to advice and guidance on historic property management
3	Aid and assist the development in design to improve the special character of the conservation area
4	Continue to support public realm improvements
5	Continue to address traffic management concerns
6	Encourage sensitive and appropriate development/redevelopment

