

CABINET

24 MAY 2024

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, REGENERATION AND TOURISM

A.3 PROGRESS WITH TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION THROUGH THE CLACTON LONG TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS AND DOVERCOURT HIGH STREET ACCELERATOR

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Council is committed to town centre regeneration and has been allocated funding by Government to support a long term plan for Clacton and a pilot High Street Accelerator project in Harwich and Dovercourt. This report updates Cabinet on progress and welcomes funding associated with these two schemes and delegates approvals on spending.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 15 December 2023, Cabinet considered a report titled Government Funding Opportunities for Tendring. This report provided further information on the Long Term Plan for Towns Funding and the High Street Accelerator Programme. These opportunities for the district complement the ongoing Levelling Up Fund and Capital Regeneration Project schemes in Clacton and Dovercourt, and future potential funding from the Levelling Up Partnership.

Clacton long term plan for towns

- The Cabinet approved the acceptance of the £20m Long Term Plan for Town Funding from government, delegated entering into agreement with DLUHC to the Corporate Director with S151 Officer, and delegated the formation of the Clacton Town Board to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism (15 Dec 2023), including the appointment of an independent chair. George Kieffer was chosen as the chair of the Clacton Town Board on 1 March 2024 and the board was formed on 15 March 2024 and held its first meeting on 21 March 2024. Membership of the board is drawn from the Clacton community, business and public sector members including Tendring District Council. Draft Terms of Reference were approved by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism on 15 March and by the Clacton Town Board in 21 March 2024.
- The Government has not yet entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, but asked for the submission of information at the start of April to demonstrate progress on governance arrangements in advance of release of the first £200,000 in 2024/25. DLUHC officials responded positively to the progress made in Clacton setting up the Board, and the Council has received the Grant Determination letter dated 30th April 2024 confirming that Government will release the £200,000 capacity funding. This is in addition to £50,000 already received. Funding can be used to support public engagement (for example residents, visitors, community groups, young people and businesses) as well as for

delivery of projects. An indicative budget was submitted in the April 2024 information return to Government.

- The Clacton Town Board, supported by the Council, will now develop a single long term plan to be submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by 1 August 2024. In line with Government guidance the plan will identify the measures under the three broad investment themes: safety and security; high streets, heritage and regeneration; and transport and connectivity.
- Given the tight timelines for delivery of the long term plan for towns and the importance of engagement and consultation, the Council will allocate £30,000 of the total £250,000 received to date to fund community engagement with residents in Clacton. This will leave £230,000 to be allocated to further activity. The aim is to find out issues that residents want to see tackled in the town, in particular against the themes of fund's investment themes of safety and security; high street, heritage, and regeneration; and transport and connectivity. The delivery partner for this work will be chosen through a request for quotations. This external support for resident engagement will compliment work with businesses and young people that will be completed by the Council.

High Street Accelerator in Harwich and Dovercourt

- The Council accepted the full £237,000 (£50,000 and £187,000) of High Street Accelerator Funding on 5th March 2024 and the Corporate Director for Place and Economy and the Section 151 Officer approved the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Council on 9th January 2024. The High Street Accelerator Board was formed and held its first meeting on 4th March 2024. The board is chaired by Paul Milsom, Managing Director at Milsom Hotels and Restaurants. It has representatives from the Harwich and Dovercourt business, community and public sectors, including Cllr Ivan Henderson, Deputy Leader of Tendring District Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism. The Board has approved Terms of Reference.
- The Council has successfully spent the first £50,000 of Accelerator funding for 2023/24 on improvements to Dovercourt high street, set out in detail later in this report.
- The national High Street Accelerator Programme includes a £5m capital fund. The ten participating councils nationally could apply for a share of up to £500,000 to improve their high streets' green spaces and create more pleasant environments for residents to meet and socialise. The Council submitted an expression of interest on 1st March 2024 and published a notice of decision by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism Portfolio Holder on 16 April ahead of receiving funding. The funding covers:
 - Improved accessibility to the town centre from the beach.
 - Improved access from Cliff Park
 - High Street and the Queen Victoria statue public realm improvements
 - Pocket Spaces

The expression of interest is included in an Annex to this report.

- Government has approved the submission of the expression of interest and written a letter of 8 May 2024 offering £500,000 funding (£450,000 capital, £50,000 revenue), which is expected to be spent within this financial year (2024/5). Given the scale of projects currently under way across the Council, and the nature of the works, represents a high

delivery risk. The Council will discuss with Government the feasibility of delivery as part of the Memorandum of Understanding.

- There has been a rapid increase in the scale of capital allocations to the Council by government against very tight spend timescales. The Council recognises that it may have to return some or all of the funding earmarked and not complete projects if:
 - the conditions imposed by government require completion to undeliverable timelines; or
 - the council cannot spend government funding on the project within agreed deadlines, and so would have to allocate its own funding to the project instead; and / or
 - the council's capacity is overstretched and is unable to utilise external resources.
- Officers are exploring options to ensure the necessary capacity for delivery will come in to the authority and will report back to Cabinet on progress.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Welcomes and acknowledges receipt of the Grant Determination Letter awarding the second tranche of Long Term Plan for Towns capacity funding in the sum of £200,000 to support the development of the Long-Term Plan, including additional community engagement activity;**
- b) allocates up to £30,000 of the funding in a) to support community engagement and consultation in support of the development and implementation of Clacton's Long Term Plan for Towns;**
- c) delegates the authorisation of the spending of the remaining Long Term Plan for Towns Capacity Payment of up to £220,000 (as set out in the report) to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism following recommendations from the Town Board on how best to use this money, in line with Government's Guidance, to support the development of their Long-Term Plan;**
- d) subject to (c) any such decisions will require a report in support explaining the projects and made following consultation with the Chief Executive and S.151 Officer, taking into account the latter's responsibility to submit a Statement of Grant Usage and an Assurance Letter to DLUHC.**
- e) Welcome and acknowledges year 2 (2024/25) of the High Street Accelerator (HSA) Funding offered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to the value of £187,000 to support improvement of the town centre in Harwich and Dovercourt;**
- f) delegates the authorisation of the spending to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder for the specific projects, the decisions will identify the impact on resources to deliver across the Council;**
- g) welcomes and acknowledges receipt of the Grant Determination Letter received 8 May 2024 awarding £500,000 funding (£450,000 Capital, £50,000 Revenue) for**

financial year 2024/25 to spend in line with the expression of interest in support improvements to green space in Harwich and Dovercourt; and

- h) Delegates the authorisation of this spending to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm; and delegates entering into a Memorandum of Understanding for this funding to the Corporate Director (Place and Economy) in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Council is committed to building pride in the District, championing the local environment, and promoting local heritage. The funding provided by Government under the Long Term Plan for Towns and High Street Accelerator will support the Council to implement its priorities in Clacton and Harwich. The Council agreed in March 2024 to take forward the Long Term Plan for Towns and the High Street Accelerator in its highlight priorities for 2024-25. The planned physical improvements and regeneration initiatives in Clacton and Harwich are ready to bring substantial benefits not only to their residents but also to visitors from across the district and beyond. Community engagement and consultation is a key part of the Long Term Plan for Towns, and so allocating funding to this activity supports the delivery of the programme to the timelines required by Government.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option is to not use the funding for either Long Term Plan for Towns or for the High Street Accelerator. This option has been considered carefully, as the scale of project delivery in addition to other current and potential projects under the levelling up banner, will put a significant strain on Council resources. The Council already faces capacity challenges as it builds financial sustainability for the long term, delivers other levelling up schemes, and manages business as usual.

However, the scale of benefit of these two schemes is such that it is recommended to proceed, with additional resourcing, across a number of specialisms including front line delivery and back office support to be put in place to enable project delivery. It is also noted that project delivery will be kept under review and if at a future point it is not considered possible to meet the time scales required by Government, the Council will not proceed with schemes, to avoid consequent financial risks.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Corporate Plan (2024-2028)

The Council has adopted a new Corporate Plan – a key document which lays out the high-level priorities for the authority over the next four years. The Long Term Plan for Towns and Accelerator projects meet the following themes in the plan:

- Pride in our area and services to residents

- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities
- Championing the local environment
- Promoting local heritage
- Working with partners to improve quality of life

Highlight Priorities 2024-25

On the 12th March 2024 the Council set out its highlight priorities for 2024-25, which included delivering the Long Term Plan for Towns and the High Street Accelerator under the raising aspirations and creating opportunities theme.

We will celebrate business success, encourage cultural, tourism and economic growth:

B1 Develop a long term plan for Clacton-on-Sea working with partners in a Town Board

B2 Implement Levelling Up Fund, Capital Regeneration Partnership Projects and High Street Accelerator Schemes, taking these through design and planning

Economic Strategy 2020-24

The Tendring Economic Strategy was updated in 2020. The Strategy uses evidence from Office of National Statistics to demonstrate that there have been some important changes in the district's economy in recent years which require a change in approach.

The successful Levelling Up application complements the following areas for Action set out in the Strategy

- The Clacton Town Board is a new opportunity to bring together partners in the town to develop and drive action.
- The Accelerator will further the Council's development of high-quality public realm projects in Dovercourt town centre, making it an increasingly attractive place for people to visit, capitalising on the growth in tourism locally.

Tendring District Council Local Plan 2013 - 2033

Delivery of these projects will align with the following strategic objectives set out in Section 1 of the Local Plan, adopted on 26th January 2021:

- Providing sufficient new homes
- Fostering economic development

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a key aspect of the Long-Term Plan for Towns, so plans should reflect local priorities and be co-designed with communities, businesses and residents, drawing on available evidence and data. The requirement for the Town Board to produce a 10-year vision requires clear evidence that the Town Board is community led, including through its membership, ways of working and distinction from the local authority, and evidence of buy-in from local businesses, civil society and communities. It should describe how these stakeholders have been engaged to date, and how that engagement will continue going forward.

The Council expects to spend a proportion of the funding accepted under this report for the Long Term Plan for towns on community engagement, as set out in the recommendations. Options for engagement include working with local community and voluntary groups, young people, and engaging with Clacton Councillors, with businesses and with the town board itself. The Council plans to outsource the engagement with community and voluntary groups given the expectation of government for extensive public engagement.

Government guidance on the Long Term Plan for Towns states *“Engage early and identify priorities and ambitions to ensure the plans are co-created with the community from the start. Use local knowledge to understand where engagement has typically been weakest and which groups have been underrepresented. Seek out relationships with community groups to establish how engagement can work better for these groups and overcome barriers such as income, ethnicity, age, disability and language. Go to where the people are and be creative. Hold engagement events in the social spaces where people meet, for example, the local high-street, youth clubs, pubs, schools and community centres. Maximise the opportunity to get the view from as broader set of residents who may not typically attend consultation events.”*

The Tourism Group in Harwich and the High Street Accelerator Board has been fully engaged in the High Street Accelerator programme, providing ideas for the wrapping of shops in the town centre, and discussing the remaining spend at regular meetings. This group includes local businesses, voluntary groups, and councillors.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	yes	If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant effect on two or more wards <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Involves £100,000 expenditure/income <input type="checkbox"/> Is otherwise significant for the service budget
		And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	Updates on the Levelling Up schemes were added to the Forward Plan on 08/02/2024. Updates on the LT Plan for Towns, LU Partnerships and HS Accelerator were added on 16/04/2024.

X The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:

In accordance with the Government’s Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Long Term for Plans Guidance for local authorities and Town Boards, published on 18 December 2023, the Council remains the accountable body for funding and executing plans, Town Boards are responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan, working closely with local people.

The guidance states once Towns Boards are established Government will release approximately £200,000 capacity funding at the start of the new financial year 2024 to 2025, to

support the development of the Long-Term Plan, including additional community engagement activity. Town Boards should advise local authorities on how best to use this money, to support the development of their Long-Term Plan.

Local authorities are being encouraged to help empower the Town Board in realising the role and driving forward a community-led vision for change. This may include providing advice and support on legal duties like impact assessments, to help leaders with non-public sector backgrounds navigate those requirements they may be less familiar with.

Where the grant is awarded via a non-Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) route, and the recipient is a local authority, the first line of defence is provided by the local authority and is the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) as they act at an operational management level within the local authority in receipt of the funding.

The Chief Financial Officer will be required to submit a Statement of Grant Usage and an Assurance Letter to DLUHC. The Chief Finance Officer will be required to provide written confirmation that they have undertaken to actively apply all the necessary checks to ensure proper administration of its financial affairs regarding the funding programme, particularly in respect to financial administration and transparency of governance. The first line of defence will also include compliance checks to ensure the governance requirements around the Town Board are being met.

Accountable bodies must work with all their stakeholders to understand how proposed projects can be delivered in compliance with subsidy control. Accountable bodies should use the assessment framework as well as drawing on their responses in the wider proposal (particularly any deliverability information) in assessing subsidy control.

The Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) (a statutory document which sits alongside the Statement of Accounts, which is inspected by External Audit and which follows the CIPFA format) covers the seven principles of Local Code of Governance (for Local Government) and expects adherence with Principle E - Developing the Council's entity, including the capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it. Within the AGS for 2023/24, the Council stated it would review departmental plans against the new Corporate Vision to incorporate resources / capacity to deliver priorities, projects and service provision. Applications for external funding and submission of expressions of interest must be made with consideration to resource and capacity to deliver in addition to existing commitments and service provision.

The Council must ensure that it is performing its statutory Best Value Duty with regards to the use of resources and service delivery. Best value authorities must demonstrate good governance, including a positive organisational culture, across all their functions and effective risk management. Cabinet's attention is drawn to the Government's Statutory Guidance issued on 8th May 2024 "Best value standards and intervention: a statutory guide for best value authorities"

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/Best Value Standards and Intervention Statutory Guide for Best Value Authorities](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/Best-Value-Standards-and-Intervention-Statutory-Guide-for-Best-Value-Authorities) 08.05.24

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Long Term Plan for Towns

The Long Term Plan for Towns provides £20 million of funding and support over the next ten years. Government have confirmed that the Long Term Plan for Towns Funding will be 25 percent resource, 75 percent capital. There will be an annual sum released which can be carried over to the following financial years if agreed with DLUHC as part of the investment plan submission.

DLUHC are providing £250,000 capacity funding to support the development of the investment plan, including £200,000 which the Council has received following the setting up on the Towns Board. This funding forms part of the overall £20M allocation to Clacton under the scheme.

This report recommends allocating £30,000 of this £250,000 funding towards community engagement and consultation to support the development of the town, leaving £220,000 remaining to allocate.

High Street Accelerator

High Street Accelerator Pilot Programme year two will make a total of £187,000 resource available over this financial year (2024/25), to add to the £50,000 made available in (2023/24).

£50,000 of the 2023/25 funding was spent on:

- Launch/community event.
- Shop wrapping.
- Shop cleaning.
- New website.
- Way Finder signs.
- New map of the area.
- Shop Grants for the Easter Competition,
- A video and photos of the event/high street changes,
- Hanging baskets including maintenance,
- Bunting and room hire.

Government has made £500,000 of funding available through the High Street Accelerator this financial year (2024/25) for green space in the Dovercourt, £450,000 capital and £50,000 revenue. This grant is based on the expression of interest (annex) submitted by officers. The deliverability of this project will be scrutinised closely to ensure the Council has sufficient capacity and time to deliver the scheme before agreeing to proceed. The report authorising expenditure will set out the project plan for delivery and the impact on council resources.

X	The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:
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Although there are no major comments over and above those set out elsewhere in the report, it is worth highlighting the governance arrangements set out above are consistent across the range of Levelling Up and Capital Regeneration Projects and therefore broadly mirror the robust arrangements in place already.

It is also worth highlighting the potential financial risks mentioned elsewhere. Amongst the various governance activities that will need to be put in place, arrangements will be made whereby the Service and the Finance Team will work closely together, supported by regular meetings, with the aim of ensuring that all associated projects are delivered within time / budget and / or that management interventions are made in a timely manner where necessary. In

terms of delivering the projects on time, the issues relating to capacity as set out elsewhere in the report are noted and will form an important element to underpin the success or otherwise of the various schemes and projects.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

<p>A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;</p>	<p>The Council recognises that these additional town's projects bring in additional resource to accelerate the delivery of the council's ambitions for pride of place and meet the Council's 2024/5 highlight priorities. However, at the same time the Council is mindful of the strain this can place on the authority during the accelerated period of delivery. As a result we are developing proposals to target our resources on project delivery.</p> <p>As project proposals are developed for the Long Term Plan for Towns and the High Street Accelerator the Council will ensure the need for sustainability is taken into consideration – so that the council is not setting up long term financial liabilities from short term additional funding from government.</p>
<p>B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and</p>	<p>The Council recognise the key risks to manage with these programmes are the capacity of the authority and its partners to deliver, the relationship with the town centre partnerships, and the risk of project overspend, and is resourcing the projects to enable these risks to be managed, working within the service and with the wider corporate organisation. Additional resources will be required within finance, legal, procurement and assets to take forward enhancements to the green spaces. Decisions to implement the requirements of external funding should address resource implications.</p>
<p>C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.</p>	<p>The cost and performance of the projects under the Long Term Plan for Towns and Accelerator projects will be monitored by Government, which strengthens the ability to understand the effectiveness of the interventions.</p>

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

Long Term Plan for Towns

- 5 April 2024: Submission to government of update confirming the set up of the Town Board, indicative budget, and compliance with guidance.
- DLUHC releases the next £200,000 of capacity funding to support the development of the Long-Term Plan, including additional community engagement activity
- Between 1 April and 1 August 2024: Town Boards submit their Long-Term Plans (comprising their 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan) to government.

- DLUHC assess plans as they come in, and release 2024 to 2025 capital and revenue funding once plans are approved.

High Street Accelerator

- May 2024: Notification that the Green Spaces bid was successful, and funding received.
- Decision of the Leader published to accept the funding, including approach to addressing delivery and capacity constraints.
- May 2024: Year 2 High Street Accelerator funding received, £187,000.
- Accelerator partnerships to provide quarterly monitoring reports to show progress against the programme KPIs.
- 31st March 2025: All funding to be spent.
- April 2025 to October 2025: Evaluation period.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Capacity and delivery

The Council needs to manage the delivery risks of the projects under these two programmes, given the Council is also tasked with other levelling up schemes, business as usual, and work to secure long term financial sustainability. The Council is planning the work to ensure there is sufficient skilled resource to project manage, commission, procure, and manage legal and financial arrangements to deliver the projects. However, in prioritising these programmes, the Council may need to decide to deliver other work to a longer time scale, and may not be able to take on new opportunities that emerge while these projects are underway. The Council may also need to return unspent money to government if it is not possible to progress projects under the Accelerator banner to the timelines set. Unspent money for the Long Term Plan for towns is expected to be rolled forward into future years.

Finance

There is a risk of financial overspend, which could occur due to unbudgeted cost inflation, poor financial management, or late delivery past the deadline for DLUHC agreed spend. Clarification is being sought from DLUHC as to whether funding needs to be committed or fully defrayed within the allocated financial year. The Council will manage each programme sufficiently closely to be aware of financial risks ahead of time, so that decisions can be taken to progress or stop, should costs increase.

Engagement

Both schemes also have engagement risks, with the relationship between the Council and the Towns Board and the High Street Accelerator Group to be set out clearly. Terms of Reference have been adopted by the High Street Accelerator Partnership and Clacton Town Board which help to clarify the relationship between the Council and the partnerships and set out roles and expectations.

Communications

There are communication risks when projects are developed closely with the local businesses, community groups and residents, which may be made public ahead of time. A communication protocol is in development to mitigate this risk with the Clacton Town Board.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

It is not anticipated that the acceptance of these funds will adversely impact on any groups with protected characteristics. Individual projects will need to take equality impacts into consideration in their development and design.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The suite of funding opportunities available under the government's Levelling Up banner are targeted towards areas which have a need for economic recovery and growth, and a need for regeneration. The funds set out in this report have a particular focus on town centres and offers the opportunity to regenerate, encourage new businesses and public services to locate there. There is also the opportunity to provide a better place for residents and visitors to enjoy, socialise and support the growth in the largest high streets in the district. This provides significant social value.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030

The projects under these programmes are not expected to have a significant impact on the Council's ambition to be net zero, in particular in relation to scope one and two direct emissions by the authority and in its use of electricity.

It is possible that the long-term plan for towns projects will have an impact over time, especially under the theme of transport and connectivity, as it may have an impact on the use of motor vehicles. However, at this stage the detail of projects is not known and so it is not possible to assess the likely impact.

OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder	Both the Long Term Plan and the High Street Accelerator have been specifically aimed at decreasing anti social behaviour. Police are on both Boards ensuring all projects are delivered taking into consideration guidance on crime and disorder.
Health Inequalities	<p>These funds have the potential to positively impact health inequalities, providing an opportunity to address challenges with regards to accessibility in the town centres.</p> <p>There is also the opportunity to improve walking and cycling access, provide green spaces and improve the offer for residents and visitors alike supporting improved mental health, improving perception and pride in place.</p>

Area or Ward affected	Clacton Town Centre, Dovercourt: Harwich & Kingsway Ward
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PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 15 December 2023, Cabinet considered a report titled Government Funding Opportunities for Tendring. This report provided further information on the Long Term Plan for Towns Funding, which was announced on 1 October 2023, and the High Street Accelerator Programme, which the Council was made aware of by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 13 September 2023. These opportunities for the District complement the ongoing Levelling Up Fund and Capital Regeneration Project schemes in Clacton and Dovercourt, and future potential funding from the Levelling Up Partnership. <p>Long Term Plan for Towns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As reported to Cabinet in December 2023 the government announced the new Long-Term Plan for Towns at Autumn Statement 2023, to regenerate 55 towns, including Clacton on Sea. • Each town will receive a 10-year endowment-style fund with £20 million of funding and support. The funding will be underpinned by an investment plan overseen by the new Towns Board, in consultation with local people. • The Cabinet approved the delegation of the formation of the Board to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism (15 Dec 2023) and the Board, including the appointment of an independent chair has now been established and Terms of Reference and governance arrangements submitted to DLUHC. • The Clacton Town Board, supported by the Council, will now develop a single long term plan to be submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by 1st August 2024. In line with the guidance the plan will identify the measures under the three broad investment themes: safety and security, high streets, heritage and regeneration and transport and connectivity. • DLUHC have supported the Long Term Plan for Towns with an £200,000 capacity funding, in addition to £50,000 previously received, which can be used to support public engagement (for example residents, visitors, community groups, young people and businesses) as well as for delivery of projects. The budget for this will be agreed by the Council and the Town Board. The Council submitted an indicative budget as part of the April submission to government, subject to town board approval and formal decision making. • The Council is the accountable body for the programme and the responsible authority for funding for the Long Term Plan for Towns. Therefore the Council will have to perform

its own governance in relation to decision making and funding in addition to engagement with the Town Board.

High Street Accelerator

- On 13 September 2023, TDC were advised by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that Tendring had been identified as one of ten authorities to pilot the Government's new High Street Accelerator Pilot Programme and it was agreed that Dovercourt high street would be the beneficiary.
- In year one (2023/24), a partnership of local stakeholders was formed and a fund of £50,000 was made available. This fund was spent on a number of projects to enhance the look of the high street, to market the area and to provide a successful community event to launch the initiative on 30 March 2024.
- For this financial (2024/2025), £187,000 is available from DLUHC for each High Street Accelerator Partnership to support further projects in line with the long-term vision to regenerate and revive a declining high street. This funding must be spent in the current financial year.
- Alongside the funding for the pilot, DLUHC invited the Council to submit an 'Expression of Interest' for a share of £5 million funding (£4.5m CDEL and £0.5m RDEL) available as part of the High Street Accelerator Pilot Programme. This additional funding is intended for Accelerator partnerships to deliver projects to improve green spaces and parklets around the high street.
- TDC requested their full allocation of £500,000 to be used on green schemes that are intended to draw footfall in the high street. The Council's Expression of Interest was successful, announced in May 2024. This funding must be spent in the current financial year. The report authorising expenditure will set out the delivery approach taking into account the very tight timescales for delivery and the overall capacity of the Council.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

[Cabinet Report 6 October 2023](#)

[Cabinet Report 15 December 2023](#)

[Accelerator Application: Decision](#)

[Accelerator Green Spaces EOI: Decision 15 May 2024](#)

[Clacton Town Board Set Up: Decision 1 March 2024](#)

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

[Regeneris Report \(tendringdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/regeneris-report)

Name	Lee Heley
Job Title	Corporate Director – Place and Economy
Email/Telephone	lheley@tendringdc.gov.uk 01255 68 6006

Annex 1 Terms of Reference for Clacton Town Board

Clacton-on Sea Town Board - Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

The Town Board has been created to develop a Long-Term Plan for Clacton, comprising a 10-year vision and investment plan (initially 3 years). The Board will be responsible for providing a strategic view and leadership for the promotion and development of the town. It will be facilitated by Tendring District Council and is supported by endowment style funding from central government.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop and agree a Town Investment Plan in consultation with the local community, including a 10-year vision and develop a clear programme of interventions. 2. Identify evidence requirements and draw on existing evidence as appropriate to support the development of a Town Investment Plan 3. Provide support and oversight to the delivery of the agreed Town Investment Plan. 4. Provide perspective, add value, develop project ideas and work alongside other key partners including Tendring District Council, Essex County Council, Department for Work and Pensions. 5. To ensure better co-ordination and use of existing resources and to maximise leverage of additional public / private investment. 6. To consider strategic issues facing Clacton and to provide leadership in relation to them. 7. To involve private, public and voluntary sectors in the work of the Board through a proactive approach to communication and engagement. 8. Maximise the town's asset base to enhance the prosperity of Clacton for all members in our community and for future generations. 9. To connect, advocate for and champion partnership working across Clacton, including, celebrating achievements, promoting the town to relevant bodies on a local, regional and national level. 10. To adhere to The Seven Principles of Public Life (I.e. the 'Nolan Principles').

Membership

Nominated deputies will provide representation when a Board member (listed below) is unable to attend.

The term of office for members will initially be for one year, with the potential to serve future three-year terms. Membership of the Board, including its Chair, will not be remunerated. However, reasonable travel expenses may be reimbursed at the relevant prevailing HMRC non-taxable rate subject to production of necessary receipts, not otherwise reclaimed from their nominating organisation.

Where members join the board by virtue of their office, their membership will end when they leave office.

Organisation Member

Independent Chair George Kieffer

Local Business, Mc Donalds Craig Newnes

MP for Clacton Giles Watling

Clacton Tourism Group Billy Ball

Police & Crime Commissioner's Office Greg Middleton

NHS/Alliance Laura Taylor Green

University of Essex Dr Emily Murray
Tendring District Council, Leader Cllr Mark Stephenson
Tendring District Council, Deputy Leader Cllr Ivan Henderson
Essex County Council Cllr Lesley Wagland
Westcliffe Theatre Rob Mitchell-Gears
CVS Tendring Sharon Alexander
Tendring Education Strategic Board TBC

OPERATION & ADMINISTRATION

1. Meetings will be organised at least quarterly, with the option to call additional meetings when required. 2. Public sector officers will be present at meetings to observe and contribute to discussion but will not hold voting powers. 3. Meeting formats will be flexible, including for example headline guest presentations and group discussions. 4. Non-members to be invited to Board meetings to provide input to relevant agenda items as appropriate. 5. The Town Board members will agree a communications protocol which will set out the parameters in which internal and external communications will be conducted. 6. To periodically review the Board's priorities, membership, and working practices to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.

ACCOUNTABLE BODY AND RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

1. Tendring District Council (TDC) is the accountable body for the programme and the responsible authority for funding for the Long Term Plan for Towns and the Levelling Up Partnership funding, and holds the funding from the Government. 2. TDC will have to perform its own governance in relation to decision making and funding in addition to engagement with the Town Board. 3. TDC will perform secretariat functions for the Board including, but not exclusive of, recording attendance, minute-taking, and convening meetings.

FUNCTION

1. It is members' responsibility to feedback information from the Town Board to their relevant organisations. 2. Sub-groups / working groups will be convened to address specific areas requiring expertise, linking in with existing partnerships where appropriate. 3. The Board will work with partners to deliver the Town Investment Plan and wider regeneration activities in Clacton. 4. In the event of a Board decision, the group will seek consensus. Where consensus is not possible, a simple majority of members present will suffice, and in the event of a 50/50 split the chair will have the casting vote. 5. The meeting will be quorate when there are at least eight Board members present either in person or virtually if the meeting is hybrid. 6. In the event that a Board member is unable to attend, they can be represented by a named deputy only. 7. New members can be adopted by a consensus vote.

CHAIR

1. The Chair will lead the Town Board and ensure effective representation across the membership. 2. The term of the Chair will be for one year initially, however extensions to this term will be permitted with the support of the Board. 3. The Chair will be the lead contact between the Board and representatives for Tendring District Council as accountably body and responsibly authority. 4. They will chair the meetings in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Board. 5. To connect, advocate for and champion partnership working across Clacton, including, celebrating achievements, promoting the town to relevant bodies on a local, regional and national

level. 6. There will be no remuneration for the post of Chair 7. A Vice-Chair will be nominated by the Board.

Amendments

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed and updated as required, by agreement of Board members.

Annex 2 Terms of Reference for High Street Accelerator Board.

Terms of Reference: High Street Partnership

Terms of Reference

The High Street Partnership ('the Partnership') is a group made up of representatives and stakeholders of Dovercourt High Street including local businesses, representatives of the Council and other public sector stakeholders.

The Partnership works together to support and promote the High Street and its future wellbeing and viability as a place to live, visit and invest.

*The principal area covered by the Partnership is shown in **Appendix 1***

1. Vision

Our vision for the High Street is set out in High Street vision which highlights the need to improve perception, support businesses to grow and increase footfall.

2. Aims

To work together as key High Street stakeholders to promote the attractiveness and use of the High Street by local residents, businesses, and visitors.

3. Actions

- To contribute to the development of a vision for the High Street.
- To consult and engage with the local community and businesses to develop a list of potential actions to promote and improve the High Street.
- To support the development and delivery of a range of High Street events and activities to encourage footfall, increase dwell time and grow the reputation of the High Street as a place to visit.
- To identify opportunities to collaborate with the Council, public bodies, and landowners on improvements to High Street spaces and buildings.
- To seek opportunities for the provision of local arts and cultural delivery in the High Street with relevant arts and cultural partners.
- To attract additional private investment into the High Street to boost the attractiveness and economic health of the High Street.
- To work with the Council to support the delivery of key regeneration projects, by ensuring effective engagement throughout project delivery.
- To work with the Council and other bodies to secure funding from various sources for the High Street improvements.
- To coordinate the sharing of data on the High Street to contribute to the effective monitoring and evaluation of High Street performance.
- To prepare an action plan for the work of the Partnership.

4. Structure

The Partnership is comprised of members who have an interest in the High Street's future development.

Once accepted, each member will have full voting rights at the High Street Partnership's Meetings, which will take place at agreed intervals

The meetings will provide an opportunity to update all High Street Partnership Members with information about relevant activity that has occurred since the last meeting.

The High Street Partnership will consist of up to 14 members who are appointed for a period of 2 years. The members of the Town Board are comprised of representatives from:

- Local Businesses
- Representatives from Harwich and Dovercourt's hospitality, tourism and leisure sector
- Representatives from Harwich and Dovercourt's cultural and arts sector
- Representatives from local VCSFE groups
- Local Residents
- Elected representatives (Local Councillors / MP)
- Police

The High Street Partnership will be supported by officers from Tendring District Council, who will act as Observers and have no voting rights.

At least 50% of members of the Town Board will need to attend a meeting for the meeting to be quorate.

All members of the Town Board will have an equal vote. In the event of a tie on any vote, the Chair will have a casting vote.

Officers of the Council attending the Town Board will act as Observers and not have voting rights at meetings.

5. Task & Finish Groups

The Partnership's Board may seek to establish task and finish groups, as appropriate, to deliver projects such as events, project support/development activity, focussed activity on development of retail or the night-time economy.

Task and finish groups will be established only with agreement of the majority of members of the Partnership Board. These groups will make recommendations to the Partnership Board, unless specifically given permission to carry out actions or incur expenses on behalf of them at a quorate Board meeting.

6. Meeting Scheduling

High Street Partnership Meetings will meet on no less than 6 occasions annually and meetings will be held in accordance with a calendar approved by the Group's members.

Agendas and documents will be issued prior to each meeting. All meetings are to be minuted.

The Chair, supported by the Council and in consultation with members of the Town Board, will be responsible for:

- Setting the agenda for each meeting
- Keeping the meeting moving and on time
- Encouraging broad participation from members
- Summarising agreed decisions and actions
- Ensuring accurate minutes of each meeting are produced

High Street Partnership members have a responsibility to:

- Attend meetings and positively engage in discussion.
- Contribute knowledge and expertise to benefit the High Street and the activities of the Partnership.
- Represent the agreed views of the Partnership in discussions with wider stakeholders.

7. Partnership Member's Conduct

All Partnership members are expected to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, as defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life. They are:

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Conflicts of Interest

The following provisions shall apply to all partnership members:

- In the event that there is a conflict of interest, the person so conflicted shall immediately declare the nature of the conflict or potential conflict and withdraw from any business where the conflict would be relevant.
- Whenever a person has an interest in a matter to be discussed at a meeting the person concerned will not be entitled to remain present at the meeting during discussion of that matter.
- The Partnership may, at any time, authorise a person to remain in the meeting whilst a matter in which they have or may have a conflict of interest is discussed, provided that the conflict of interest is declared.

8. **Finances**

The High Street Partnership will seek funding from a wide range of potential sources, including in collaboration with the Council and other bodies, to achieve the aims and actions as set out in the Terms of Reference.

The Partnership is unconstituted so Tendring District Council is defined as the Accountable Body to hold funds on behalf of the Partnership.

All proposals for expenditure by the Partnership will require the approval of a majority of the Partnership.

Appropriate budgetary control and management measures will govern all the finances of the Partnership including receipt and expenditure of funds with fully transparent authorisation and accountability. A statement of annual account will be produce.

9. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

All Project Board members will be asked to vote on any proposals to change the Terms of Reference.

10. Dissolution

If any member of the Partnership decides it is necessary or desirable to dissolve the Partnership, they shall call a meeting of the Group with not less than twenty-one days' notice, informing them of the proposed dissolution. The proposal will be carried if approved by at least two-thirds of those present and voting at a quorate meeting.

I agree to abide by the Terms of Reference

Name:

Date:.....

Signature:

Annex 3 **High Street Accelerators Green Space Funding.** Expression of Interest

About this form

Alongside the £2.5 million seed funding, there will be up to £5 million funding (£4.5m CDEL and £0.5m RDEL) available as part of the High Street Accelerator Pilot Programme. This additional funding is intended for Accelerator partnerships to deliver projects to improve green spaces and parklets around the high street, if these are necessary to the high street vision.

The funding is specifically intended for greening the high street where you have established your Accelerator, for example by installing green walls or planters, or creating parklets or other gardens. Greening projects can bring a number of benefits to the high street, including helping to increase its vibrancy and visual appeal and providing new social spaces that increase the dwell time of visitors to the area.

The funding will be available to be spent in financial year 2024/25 and each Accelerator partnership will have the opportunity to apply for up to £500k (up to £450k CDEL and up to £50k RDEL per Accelerator partnership). Accelerator partnerships that would like to utilise the funding will need to complete this expression of interest (EOI) form with details of your green space proposal. We would like to understand the impact you expect this funding to have on your high street and how your greening projects will be sustained over the medium- to long-term.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) will consider your proposal and, on the basis that it is rational and aligns with the general aims of the funding, we will provide funding in advance of expenditure in a single payment at the start of the 2024/25 financial year. A separate Memorandum of Understanding (or Grant Funding Agreement if you have a non-local authority treasurer) will be drawn up upon approval of your proposal, and as part of this we will require assurances that the funding will be spent within the 2024/25 financial year. We will monitor this spend through the governance and KPI monitoring structures for the pilot, which will be set out in the MoU (or GFA).

Please use this form and email the completed version to HighStreetAccelerators@LevellingUp.gov.uk by **5pm Friday 1 March 2024**.

Section 1 – Contact Information

- 1. Name of High Street Accelerator**
Dovercourt High Street
- 2. Contact name**
Barbara Pole
- 3. Role in High Street Accelerator**
Pilot lead for Tendring District Council
- 4. Contact phone number**
01255 686230
- 5. Contact email address**
bpole@tendringdc.gov.uk
- 6. Amount of funding requested (up to £450k CDEL and £50k RDEL)**
£500k

Section 2 – Your Proposal

Question 1: Please explain why the high street is in need of green space funding. (250 words)

As a seaside town, the focus of publicly accessible open space in Dovercourt is its attractive stretch of beach and Cliff Park which provides a substantial green space, and adjoins the historic Beacon Hill Fort, which has potential to be a unique visitor destination and nature reserve.

While in close proximity these assets feel disconnected from the town centre due to the lack of quality pedestrian routes. Improving connections, especially for those with limited mobility or young children would integrate these open spaces as part of a greater town centre offer, encourage trips and increase dwell time.

The streets themselves are the main public spaces outside of the seafront and Cliff Park. However, they are not optimised for people as the street design is functional and focused on traffic movements. These areas are also drab and uninviting with relatively narrow footways, and routes that are not easy to cross. The majority of footpaths have asphalt surfaces which have numerous patch repairs, which look unsightly.

Guard rails and barriers on key junctions further detract from the quality of the public realm. The lack of planting is noticeable and this gives the streets a stark appearance. There is little in the quality of the public realm in the town centre that, on its own, would attract people to come and spend time. Improving this is key to the regeneration of Dovercourt.

The poor quality public realm further detracts from the character and distinctiveness of the town centre and degrades its image.

Question 2: Please set out your proposal for using the green space funding to improve your chosen high street. (500 words)

Improved Access from the Beach (CDEL) – Better access from the beach to the high street has been raised by the community on a number of occasions and this funding will give us the opportunity. There is currently good access from the seafront to Empire Road which is a combination of paved and tarmacked surfaces. However, between Empire Road and Kingsway there is a stretch of soft surface that is unmaintained and therefore difficult to navigate with a wheelchair etc. The proposal is to provide a hard surface and landscaping which retains parking but provides an accessible route.

Horticultural Scheme (CDEL) – The Queen Victoria statue with beach access sits at the end of Kingsway and provides sight of the high street. However, this particular of cliffs is overgrown and has a restricted view of the seafront, uneven paving and is uninviting. Clearing and landscaping from the top to the bottom of cliffs will improve the sight line, open up the view of the sea and will entice visitors to explore above cliff level.

Access from Cliff Park (CDEL) – The creation of a new pedestrian link with landscaping from Cliff Park to the high street. This will open up the park and help to better integrate the open space with the town centre. The proposal is to provide a 3m pathway with street light that links up to the parks paths.

High Street Public Realm Improvements (CDEL & RDEL). – Dovercourt was granted the Capital Regeneration Projects funding with a proportion being spent improving the streetscape along Kingsway from the seafront to the station. However, this does not include the high street which it crosses and there is a real danger that this project will have a negative impact on the high

street by making it even more unappealing and drab compared to its surroundings. However, by replicating some of the designs through the high street we can maximise the available funding and provide a cohesive offer to the community and really lift the area as a whole.

Pocket Spaces (CDEL) – To transform small areas of public realm into usable pocket spaces. An area at Station Plaza and one on the high street which will enhance the environment and provide much needed resting spaces and possible cycle stands. These projects involve footway improvements including a footpath build out at a junction in the high street with distinct public space paving and the provision of a new feature trees with a timber benches. They could also include the provision of other seating objects and feature lighting elements.

To ensure the sustainability for the above, there is the opportunity to work with the CVST have a number of volunteers who do community gardening and they have suggested that if we provide the equipment they will maintain the baskets and planters ongoing. We also intend to encourage the shop owners to maintain their our frontage by providing the equipment needed.

Question 3: Please explain the impact you envisage your proposal will have on your chosen high street? (250 words)

Ending in January 2024, ECC ran a public consultation regarding Dovercourt Public Realm. They had 133 responses and some of the elements that the residents consider most important were improved paving and footways, landscaping improvements, reduced speed limits, addition benches and new wayfinder signs. Some of the common themes were that the shop fronts were tired and needed improving, improved accessibility and concerns over the high street declining with empty shops. Between the HSA funding and the green space funding it is the intent of the partnership address these points raised and provide a better, more friendly space.

The footfall in the high street is declining and the shops are closing earlier all the time leaving the space open for anti-social behaviour and petty crime. By making improvements to the look and feel of the high street we aim to encourage a more social space that gives the community a sense of pride and encourages a nighttime economy supporting the younger generations need for meeting spaces and activities.

There is also the opportunity to entice visitors into the high street by creating public realm that is providing a walkable, friendly space with accessible, attractive links between the beach, park and high street.

We are expecting that the impact will be seen before the end of this financial year by providing the first set of baskets/planters from the HSA funding. We can then expand on this once we receive the green space funding and provide more sustainable features such as planters, benches, trees etc

Question 4: Please tell us about your approach to project management. (250 words)

Landscaping between Empire Road and Kingsway:

This will require a stretch of land to be dug up, drainage installed, tarmacked and landscaped providing access for wheelchair users. There is potential for approximately 15 car parking bays away from the high street.



Risks/mitigation:

- The stretch of land is currently unclaimed and an owner could come forward. However, the intended work would be improving the area.
- The cost for the works go over the budget due to contamination etc..

Plan

- Desk top feasibility and potential costings for the works – March 2024
- Start tender process – March/April 2024
- Commission works – June 2024

Public realm improvements

Queen Victoria Statue: To remove overgrown hedging and make improvements to the cliff side landscaping. Working with Assets and Public Realm at TDC who have scoped this work previously.

Public realm and pocket spaces: Provide planters, baskets, trees, benches etc. to complement future works. Utilise the landscaping plans provided by ECC for Kingsway and adapt for the high street. Widen areas of paving where required.

Risks/mitigation:

- This would require permission from ECC Highways for anything to be put on the pavements. Working in partnership with ECC colleagues will ensure that we meet their expectations.
- The cliffs at the seafront are unstable in places so specialist advice would be required as to what can be removed and what can be planted. TDC's Asset team have a large amount of experience with this areas and will be able to advice us.

Plan

- Liaise with ECC regarding specifications and detailed design – March/April 2024
- Procure the supplier – May 2024
- Arrange installation – June/July 2024

Question 5: Please tell us your plans after the funding period has ended. How will you ensure your green space is maintained in the medium to long term? (250 words)

Majority of the upkeep required will be supported by local community groups, volunteers, the Partnership and TDC.

The new hard standing from Empire Road to Kingsway will not require any major support as low maintenance landscaping. This will require light touch maintenance to ensure it is clean, tidy and not in disrepair.

With regards to the public realm, we are currently working with the Community Volunteer Service Team (CVST) who have offices in the high street. The organisation currently has a number of volunteers who provide gardening services to various areas around Dovercourt and they are will to add the water and maintenance to the planters to their current task. We would provide any tools they require.

With regards to hanging baskets we intend to provide free baskets to shops who are willing to maintain them and will ask them to sign a SLA as a show of commitment.

Benches and trees should be self-sufficient but they will be monitored in case of graffiti or in need of attention.

Improvements to the top of the cliffs will be maintained by TDC's Public Realm team through their BAU. This team also has volunteers who can support this activity.

Section 3 – Eligible Expenditure Schedule

Please provide a breakdown of forecast grant expenditure, to the level of detail currently known.

Item of Expenditure	CDEL (in £) forecast expenditure	RDEL (in £) forecast expenditure
Providing landscaping and hard surface between Empire Road and Kingsway	£50,000	
High Street public realm including planters and baskets	£40,000	£10,000
Horticultural scheme to create green space	£30,000	£30,000
Pocket spaces including a footway build-out, paving, trees, benches etc.	£80,000	£10,000
Access from Cliff Park to the town centre including paving and landscaping	£250,000	
Total:	£450,000	£50,000