Public Document Pack

Tendring
District Council

CLACTON TOWN BOARD

AGENDA

DATE:	**Thursday, 10 October 2024**
TIME:	**2.00 pm**
VENUE:	**Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE**

MEMBERSHIP:

Kieffer (Chairman)	**Hirst**
Alexander	**Mitchell-Gears**
Ball	**Murray**
Davidson	**Newnes**
Farage	**Councillor M Stephenson**
Gallagher	**Taylor-Green**
Councillor I Henderson	**Councillor Wagland**

DATE OF PUBLICATION: Date Not Specified

AGENDA

1 **Welcome - Chair**

2 **Apologies for Absence**

3 **Minutes from the Board's meeting on 19 July 2024 (Pages 5 - 10)**

4 **Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Board's Code of Conduct**

5 **Update on actions from the previous meeting**

6 **Update on the use of the capacity funding (Pages 11 - 14)**

7 **Update from Tourism Group (Pages 15 - 20)**

8 **Developing the Long Term Plan for Clacton**

9 **Link to the NEEB Plan**

10 **Delivery Plan and Forward Plan**

11 **Any other Business for the Board**

<u>Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting</u>

The next scheduled meeting of the Clacton Town Board is to be held in the TBC at 10.00 am on Thursday, 12 December 2024.

<u>Information for Visitors</u>

<u>**FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**</u>

There is no alarm test scheduled for this meeting. In the event of an alarm sounding, please calmly make your way out of any of the fire exits in the hall and follow the exit signs out of the building.

Please heed the instructions given by any member of staff and they will assist you in leaving the building and direct you to the assembly point.

Please do not re-enter the building until you are advised it is safe to do so by the relevant member of staff.

Your calmness and assistance is greatly appreciated.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLACTON TOWN BOARD,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 1.30PM
IN THE WEST CLIFF THEATRE, TOWER ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA CO15 1LE**

Board Members present:	George Kieffer (Chairman), Sharon Alexander, Neil Gallagher, Cllr Ivan Henderson, Roger Hirst, Rob Mitchell-Gears, Cllr Mark Stephenson and Cllr Lesley Wagland.
In attendance:	Steve Evison, Sam Jones, Lee Heley, Ella Latham, Greg Myddleton and Keith Simmons

[Note: Specific action shown in bold]

19. WELCOME FROM THE BOARD'S CHAIRMAN

The Chairman, Mr Kieffer, welcomed those in attendance to the Board meeting.

He then congratulated Nigel Farage on being elected as the Member of Parliament (MP) for Clacton at the United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election on 4 July 2024. He looked forward to welcoming him to participation in the work of the Board. He also recorded the commendation of the former MP, Giles Watling, for his advocacy for Clacton-on-Sea alongside the District and County Councils that had been instrumental in securing the Long Term Plan for Towns support from central Government to this point.

Mr Kieffer also drew attention to the departmental name change from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as being responsible for the Long Term Plan for Towns programme within central government.

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members of the Board:
- Billy Ball,
- Ian Davidson,
- Nigel Farage MP
- Emily T Murray
- Craig Newnes,
- Laura Taylor-Green,

21. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE BOARD

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 24 May 2024 were submitted to the Board for confirmation.

It was AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 24 May 2025 be received and confirmed as an accurate record of that meeting.

22. UPDATE TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference previously adopted by the Board (Minute 16 B. of 25 May 2024 refers) were re-submitted with an amendment to reflect the membership of the Board of Nigel Farage MP (see Minute 19 above). The Board was also advised that the reference to the West Cliff Theatre in the organisation details within the membership section were in need of correction.

The amended Terms of Reference for the Board, as submitted, be approved as detailed above.

23. (i) UPDATE ON THE LONG TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS – CLACTON-ON-SEA(ii) QUICK WIN IDEAS AND BUDGET – FOR APPROVAL COMMUNITY AND (iii) STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND NEXT STEPS

In respect of these three agenda items for the meeting, the Board received a presentation on the Long Term Plan for Towns setting out the background to the last Government's initiative, the intention to provide a "ten year endowment-style fund" of £20M, the geography of the Clacton on Sea programme, the role of the new Town Board in overseeing the vision, goals and objections of the programme and the intentions for a three year investment plan towards that 10 year vision.   The presentation to the Board then outlined the draft vision and the strategic case for change.

In considering what might be included in the three-year investment plan, it was important to consider the views of local people. From the range of consultation exercises referenced at the Board's last meeting, there appeared to be three broad areas that were particularly relevant to the themes within the long-term plan for towns' initiative. They were:

Safety & security
- ASB priorities - people using or dealing drugs, street drinking, knife crime, fly tipping and criminal damage.
- The most popular suggestion for enhancing safety was an increased police presence and local patrols and the two most popular activities were 'sports' and 'gyms for teens'. Clacton beach was noted as a specific location where young people felt unsafe.

High Streets, Heritage & Regeneration
Greater variety of shops; more events; physical environment - cleaner & greener and safe spaces. Residents value the culture and heritage and natural asset of the beach. Businesses felt that most activity was centred around the seafront, with limited connection to the town centre.

Transport & Connectivity
Improved parking; safer pedestrian & cycle routes; frequency, cleanliness & reliability of buses; train station arrival/accessibility; broadband speeds.

Based on the data and consultation outcomes the proposed priority interventions for the three-year investment plan discussed included those below. The reference numbers quoted were those from Annex C of the Government's guidance to local authorities and Town Boards in developing the three-year investment plan and 10-year vision for their Town. The presentation to the Board set out all of the interventions from that guidance.

Safety and Security –
- S1: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'
- S2: Engage with Police Force and together consider interventions to focus on visible crime prevention in defined areas places
- S3: Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime and reduce reoffending.

High Streets, Heritage & Regeneration –
- H1: Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements
- H5: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities
- H7: Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.
- H11: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses
- H12: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally

Transport and Connectivity
- T1: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.
- T2: Funding for bus infrastructure and connections to speed up journeys.
- T5: Funding to improve rail connectivity and access.
- T7: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities

At the time of the Board's meeting, there was still a need to hear from the Government about the future of the long-term plan for towns' initiative and, specifically, the timetable for submitting the three-year investment plan and 10-year vision (i.e. whether this would be extended beyond 1st August). In addition, the DLUHC/MHCLG's commissioning of Zencity for consultation around a set of questions had not (thus far) generated data for the Board to utilise (Minute 13 of 25 May 2024 refers).

However, the Clacton-on-Sea initiative had received £250K for capacity funding. The potential use of this funding was set out in the presentation as:

- Shop wrapping and plans for shop front grants and encouraging private sector investment. The Board felt that shop wrapping would promote engagement of the public in the consultation exercise by using QR codes on the shop wrapping images, encouraging people to respond.

- Cleaning & graffiti removal -Have a town blitz to tackle immediate issues. Put up flags and lamp post banners to promote local attractions, facilities and amenities.

- Community engagement – Create an ongoing dialogue with residents, businesses and visitors. On the basis of confirmation of the Long Terms Plan for Towns initiative progressing as originally envisaged, this could now focus on longer-term priorities and opportunities.

- Improved communication and connectivity of regeneration projects.

The Board also looked at additional start up proposals, including:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour working with the police and looking at prevention projects
- Understanding the car- parking issues
- Undertaking public realm designs
- Launching shop-front improvement grants.

The need for shop wrapping and street lamp banners etc. to develop branding and themes that could, themselves, then be built upon was referenced by several Board Members. The suggestion of a small group of Board Members to oversee these elements was put to the Board. The interlinking of the shop wrapping and lamppost banners with a Town Board website design was also commented upon. In respect of securing improved shop frontages, there could also be planning enforcement options to examine to complement the other measures.

In considering the response to criminality and anti-social behaviour, there was a recognized need to ensure the activities the Board was wanting to pursue linked with the action plan of the local community safety partnership. The Board was advised that during the summer months, the Police undertook joint patrols with the Council's community ambassadors (as part of Operation Sunbeam).

The discussion at the Board also touched on the need to capture the views of young people given that the initiate was to create a long-term legacy for their Town. The concerns of young people (in previous consultations) in respect of safety in and around the beach area was something the Board was interested in exploring; together with measures to address these concerns.

The prospect of developing spatial priorities (and look at possible 'One Public Estate' options to advance those priorities) was referenced. Any re-purposing of existing buildings or new build provided an opportunity to try to design out opportunities for crime. Increasing green spaces and providing children play spaces would both soften the built environment and encourage family use of space where families could be currently discouraged from using due to perceptions of that space. The discussion highlighted the benefit from expanding on the spatial priorities presented and for this to also to take account of crime hotspots.

In relation to 'Christmas Tree Island', the provision and arrangement of public benches was a topic of discussion. The potential benefits of removing several/all of the benches was commented upon as well as some consequences that would need to be worked through; these included displacements of street drinkers and the needs of those with limited mobility who could currently take temporary rests using those benches. There was a need to consider that the street drinkers currently using those benches might be dispersed to other parts of the town and the impact this would have on policing.

There was an opportunity to harness the benefits of smart technology in public spaces; such as smart bins to inform emptying cycles and smart parking signs to help motorists find car parks with spaces.

The role and funding of the Town Centre Manager, together with a referencing of the amount of resource required for Clacton-on-Sea was touched upon in the dialogue at the meeting. This would need to be further considered and clear arrangements put in place. A

'go to' person for businesses in the Town Centre was mentioned by several Board Members.

Beyond the Town Centre, there was a genuine need to look to diversify the economic activity in and around the Town to support sustainability of the Town. The advantage of a longer-term strategic spatial plan for the Town would enable a focus on key sites to support that sustainability. An example of this was the Adult Community Learning Centre (which would become vacant on the basis that the service relocated to the intended Clacton Civic Quarter (alongside the library, registration services and the University's Centre for Coastal Communities) at the junction of Station Road and Carnarvon Road in Clacton-on-Sea), with its current building at St Osyth Road, Clacton-on-Sea providing an opportunity to be repurposed as a hub for small and developing business units and thereby contribute to the diversification referenced.

It was AGREED:

(1) **That Sam Jones be thanked for developing and delivering the presentation to the Board's meeting and that it and the draft proposals for the three year investment plan and 10 year vision be circulated to Board Members for comment;**
(2) **that the proposals set out in the presentation for use of the £250K capacity funding be approved;**
(3) **that further discussion with Tendring District Council take place around the funding and role of the Town Centre Manager in so far as this role relates to Clacton-on-Sea;**
(4) **that, a small group of Board Members be tasked with overseeing the development and deployment of shop wrapping and street lamp banners etc. (including the elements of the branding and themes across those items);**
(5) **that Essex Police be requested to identify crime data relevant for the Clacton-on-Sea Town Centre over time and, potentially, in comparison to other comparable Town Centres;**
(6) **that a spatial plan for Clacton-on-Sea Town Centre be further developed, picking up the discussions at this Board Meeting around expanded spatial priorities and overlayed with crime hotspot data to be obtained through (4) above; and**
(7) **that the presentation to the Board and the current draft of the Clacton-on-Sea Long Term Plan be circulated to the Board Members for comment.**

[Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the Board's Chairman received correspondence circulated on behalf of the Deputy Director of MHCLG (with responsibility for the Long Term Plan for Towns programme) advising that the new Minister for Local Growth, Alex Norris MP, had suspended the 1 August 2024 deadline for submitting the three-year investment plan and the 10-year vision. The correspondence received went on to state that MHCLG would be in touch in due course with further details on next steps and confirmation of the revised timelines. The Board's Chairman shared the correspondence received with all Board Members.]

24. NEXT MEETING

The Board was advised that a date, time and venue for the next meeting would be circulated. It was anticipated that it would be in mid-September 2024.

[Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the Board's Chairman was consulted in respect of holding the meeting in early October 2024.]

The meeting ended at 3.20pm

_____
Chairman of the Board

10 October 2024

Update on the use of Capacity Funding

Overview

In July the Clacton Town Board agreed the proposal to use a proportion of the £250k capacity funding to implement some immediate improvements identified in the community and business consultations. These included:

- Website and communications - £30,000 (over three years)
- Vinyl shop wrapping and street banners - £25,000 (year one)
- Increased cleaning & graffiti removal (linked to the above) - £21,000 (with potential match funding from Tendring District Council?)

An indicative allocation was also set aside for capacity, particularly the Town Centre Manager, or similar in years two and three. In addition to the budget set aside for future consultations and engagement (community, business and visitor surveys)

Capacity Funding Updates

1. **Clacton Town Regeneration website – improved communication and visibility**

The Board agreed to fund a new Clacton website as a shop front for regeneration projects in the town; to demonstrate work in progress and success to local residents and businesses, and act as a springboard for external investment into the wider Clacton vision. The website will be adapted as the Board evolves. The audience will be residents, businesses and potential investors.

The website will also be able to signpost to other relevant pages, such as local authorities, the local tourism group/destination marketing website, etc. A news page will be updated by the Board to include the latest news.

The website will be targeted at those looking to find further information on Clacton regeneration and the various initiatives being taken forward. The website will be the base for this and should ideally include an element of interactive mapping to showcase existing and future projects.

In addition, it will:

- Detail what the Board does and who is part of it.
- Showcase the breadth of partnership working and how funding translates to changeable change on the ground.
- Create a sense of pride of place within the community and sense of momentum for change.
- Have clear contact details for the Board.
- To improve the relationship between the Board, local residents, businesses and investors and instill a sense of confidence in the journey ahead.

The winning contractor will need to include a design element, and the Board will be consulted on this.

Whilst the Board do not yet have an identified brand, we have also welcomed the submission of branding concepts and colour palettes as part of the tender return.

Timetable:

Contract Start	21st October 2024
Mobilisation period	21st October 2024 – 7th March 2025
Contract end	Latest end date 14th March 2025

Quotes have been received from five companies, and these are due to be scored w/c 7th October. An update will be provided at the Board meeting.

2. Shop wrapping & Street Banners

Following the success of a similar scheme in Dovercourt, the Board agreed to allocate funding to some immediate improvements to empty shops in Clacton Town Centre. The scheme entails applying attractive, image-printed vinyl wraps to the front windows of currently unoccupied retail properties. This project aims to improve the visual appeal of the town, supporting pride in the town, and also helping to market empty properties. We are also looking to include a map/wayfinding in one of more key shop windows.

16 empty shops have been identified and property owners written to. To date we have received owner consent from 3 properties, and these are all situated in Station Road.

We are proposing to complete the installations on these three properties as phase 1, and hopefully use them to show chase the improvements to the other owners who have

not yet responded. They can also be updated with additional vinyl at a later stage to help promote community engagement.

There will be a presentation of the proposed designs and overview of the scheme at the meeting.

Shop wrapping timetable:

Owner's permission sought	July – Oct 2024
Contractors – design	July 2024
Installation phase 1	Oct – Nov 2024
Installation phase 2	Nov- Dec 2024
Installation phase 3	Jan – Mar 2025
Contract end	March 2025

In addition, the Board identified the opportunity to improve the vibrancy of the town centre by re-introducing banners attached to the lighting columns in the town. These were removed a few years ago and not replaced. These banners could feature non-commercial designs that promote the town's identity and attractions. Board members also suggested that they could be used as part of a wayfinding/trail system (as they currently are doing between the station and the town centre in Colchester), or they could support way finding through "zoning" or "quarters" (such as Canterbury).

The Board agreed that it was key that we need to have a clear branding for the town centre improvements and this to be included on the banners.

Banners timetable:

Permission sought	Oct – Dec (10 week application process, plus time for queries)
Design procured and agreed	Nov - Jan
Mobilisation period	Feb - Mar
Contract end	March 2025

Increased Street Cleaning and Graffiti removal

Clean streets are essential for creating a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike. Currently the streets are scheduled to be cleaned twice a year.

No further work has been pursued on this whilst Tendring District Council have been trialing a new contractor. However, this is now being revisited, and updates will be provided at the meeting.

Regarding graffiti, this can significantly detract from the aesthetic appeal of an area and contribute to a perception of neglect. Removing graffiti promptly helps maintain a clean, welcoming environment and discourages further vandalism.

Following the Board's decision Tendring District Council have started a targeted graffiti removal program focusing on prominent areas within the Town Centre, particularly:

- The old Sainsbury's building on High Street
- The walkthrough between High Street and Rosemary Road
- Other affected areas as identified.

However, it should be noted that there have been issues obtaining signed disclaimers from property owners, which are required due to the nature of the work and products used.

27 August 2024

INTRODUCTION:

In March 2024 **Clacton Coastal Tourism Group** was formed; we the members are made up of local businesses, community groups, trusts, and the district council - all members hold a direct interest and involvement in the success of the town's tourism offer.

We are grateful to the council's leadership who were responsible for initially promoting the idea of the group to the tourism stake holders. We are pleased to report that we currently have representatives from the following organisations:

- Billy Ball – Clacton Pier   **(Chairman)**
- Jon Rowe – Clacton Pier   **(Secretary)**
- Billy Peak – Clacton Pavilion & Magic City
- Penny Smith – Hastys Adventure Farm & Millers Barn Golf Park
- Mark Broad – Greensward Café
- Norman Jacobs – West Cliff Theatre & Clacton and District History Society
- Rosie Georgiou – Clacton Creatives
- Surya Hotels – The Kingscliff & Tom Peppers
- Cllr Ivan Henderson – TDC's Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Economic Growth
- Mike Carran – TDC's Assistant Director Economic Growth & Leisure
- Jane Stewart – Community Rail Partnership

Our group's aim is to work together to identify, and where possible address, the positives and negatives surrounding the Tourism offer in Clacton. We as a group seek to promote and further regenerate tourism within our town. This will include raising the profile of our attractions, accommodation, natural environment and heritage for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

TOURISM AT THE HEART OF OUR TOWN:

The benefits of tourism to the town and district are far reaching, and we have recognised some of these below:

1. Economic Impact
- **Revenue Generation:** Tourism brings in substantial revenue through spending on accommodation, dining, attractions, and shopping. In fact, the sector is worth almost £402 million to the Tendring District. This influx of money supports local businesses and contributes to the local economy.
- **Local Businesses:** Many of Clacton's businesses, such as caravan parks, amusements, restaurants, cafes, and visitor attractions, rely heavily on tourists. The seasonal nature

Clacton Coastal Tourism Group
Chairman's Contact Details: Billy Ball
No. 1 North Sea, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 1QX
T: 01255 421115 info@clactonpier.co.uk
Page 15

Let's work together
1

of tourism means these businesses often depend on peak tourist periods for their financial survival.

2. Employment Opportunities
- **Job Creation:** Tourism creates a wide range of jobs, from direct employment in hotels and attractions to indirect jobs in retail, transportation, and service industries. This is especially crucial in smaller towns like Clacton, where tourism is a major employer. To support this statement, it is important to recognise that the industry is responsible for almost 9000 jobs in Tendring, which is equivalent to 17.9% of the areas employment.
- **Seasonal Work:** Tourism also offers seasonal employment opportunities, often providing first jobs for students, and employment options for temporary workers during peak times and acting as a gateway to further employment.

3. Cultural and Social Benefits
- **Preservation of Heritage:** Tourism encourages the preservation of historic assets, culture, and tradition, as tourists often seek authentic nostalgic experiences. Clacton-on-Sea has a rich seaside heritage, and maintaining this is key to attracting visitors who in turn have supported the regeneration of local assets like, the West Cliff Theatre, Pavilion, Pier and others.
- **Community Engagement:** Events and attractions driven by tourism, such as the Clacton Airshow and Seafront Fireworks, foster a sense of community pride and provide entertainment for both visitors and locals alike.

4. Infrastructure Development
- **Improvement of Local Amenities:** The need to cater to tourists often leads to improvements in local infrastructure, such as better roads, public transport, and recreational facilities such as our beaches, which also benefit local residents.
- **Investment in Attractions:** Tourism motivates investment in local attractions, like Clacton Pier, Pavilion, Theatres, Farm Parks, and other attractions which not only draws visitors but also enhances the town's overall appeal.

5. Environmental Considerations
- **Conservation Efforts:** To maintain its appeal as a tourist destination, Clacton needs to preserve its natural environment, including its beaches and coastal areas. Tourism can incentivise environmental conservation and sustainable practices.
- **Education:** Many of our local attractions even seek to educate visitors about environmental matters, hosting school trips and the like.

6. Further promoting the Town's Image
- **Visibility and Recognition:** Tourism raises the profile of Clacton-on-Sea, attracting media attention and promoting the town as a desirable destination. This can lead to increased investment and further opportunities for growth.
- **Lasting legacy's:** The feel-good factor, a product of days out and making memories leaves a positive legacy which often counteracts possible negative perceptions of the town.

Overall, tourism is integral to Clacton-on-Sea's identity and economy, helping sustain its community and ensuring the town's continued prosperity.

TIME FOR ACTION:

Since the formation of the CCTG, we have met on three occasions to discuss and identify the opportunities and challenges before us. In doing so we have to accept that we are not the first group to have come together with the aim of improving tourism in the town and wider district.

Many of us have experience of some of the historic local working groups that set out with good intention but amounted to little. We share frustrations expressed by local residents & seasonal visitors who remember the town in its heyday and when it was clean, tidy, well-kept and vibrant.

We have joined this group and given up our time to try and make a difference. We will work together as partners, and where possible seek to deliver positive improvements via our collaboration. In instances where the group identifies issues and challenges beyond our control, we will aim to communicate these to our partners in the public sector and will offer our time and experience in suggesting possible solutions.

Ultimately, we the members share a passion for our town and its future. The willingness from members of this group to work together stems from a common interest in wanting to see local tourism continue its journey of progression and regeneration. In particular we recognise and agree with the local authority's tourism strategy, that we must work to:

1. Increase visitor numbers – day trip & staying over
2. Increase the economic benefit / spend per head
3. Improve the profile and perception via, PR, online presence, social media and a successful marketing strategy.
4. Continually improve the visitor offer

THE CHALLENGES:

At our initial meetings we recognized the importance of stirring up passion for, and pride in our town and the many assets we have to offer. We understand the challenges being faced to turn around the image of the town to become a place where people of all kinds can feel welcomed and have fun (relax) in an environment that is a clean, tidy, safe, easily accessible and convenient for them to enjoy their time with family and friends.

We recognize that passion alone will not achieve all the changes that we believe are necessary and we are aware that funding is often the biggest challenge in delivering change. We hope that the Clacton Town Board will consider the suggestions that this group makes when making recommendations to government funding partners.

We the CCTG wish to identify the areas listed below as those most critical to the sustainability and ongoing success of not only the towns tourism industry, but to the local community as a whole:

- Town centre presentation – ensure the town is **clean, tidy and maintained**
- Vacant stores and shop fronts - address issues of **empty** but once loved **premises**
- Marketing & branding of Clacton the town, attractions and events - **cohesive marketing**

- Town centre information – **signage and advertising strategy** in the town and seafront
- Tourism data – **provision of data to identify trends,** bed space, visitor numbers etc.
- Accommodation – data on **current stock,** support for **increase in quality bed numbers**
- Parking - accessible & convenient with **enough parking for locals & visitors**

Town centre presentation – TLC Team

There is an urgent need to pay attention to the appearance and maintenance of our town centre and address some of the anti-social behaviours it attracts.

We would like to recommend the creation of a focused team of people that would be dedicated to maintaining the appearance of the town centre. They would make a positive impact on cleanliness and presentation being readily recognised by public and businesses with the ability and resources to deal swiftly with emerging issues such as littering, graffiti, fly posting and repair / maintenance of street furniture and lighting.

As a presence in the town centre the team would also be in a position to report and impact on antisocial behaviours such as street drinking, gang gatherings and loitering that affect people feeling safe and welcomed in the town.

We suggest the creation and funding of the town centre TLC Team (The Loving Clacton Team) would be a meaningful and constructive use of levelling up funding (or similar), providing employment and with possibility to extend the role to include funding and activities within in the Governments Anti -Social Behaviour Action Plan.

Vacant stores and shop fronts

Vacant stores are prolific in the town, and we understand the regeneration of the town centre is an ongoing challenge. We support the local authority's engagement with freeholders to achieve this. In the meantime, we believe the appearance of these premises creates a depressed image rather than a buoyant / vibrant commercial area. This undoubtedly impacts on marketing the town. We understand that funding may be available to improve shop fronts.

We would like to recommend that these shop fronts could be 'wrapped' with images displaying Clacton's community, its many attractions, heritage locations and natural resources.

We would like to suggest the local community – schools, colleges, photographers etc. are engaged in developing the content for the wraps so further promoting ownership and pride in the town.

The wraps could include a QR code, which when scanned would link users to a 'You are here' style map. It could give information about the images displayed on the shop fronts with details about the locations of the images and directions to these areas as well as nearby attractions and amenities.

Marketing and branding of Clacton the town, attractions and events

At present there appears to be no visible focused marketing of Clacton that attracts visitors nor gives them or residents current / comprehensive information about up coming events and what they can find in the area.

The CCTG has applied via Tendring Shared Prosperity Fund for funding to develop a dedicated website that is well-managed, attractive and accessible. The funding if agreed will not only develop but help maintain the website to ensure content that is current and of good quality.

We propose that the website is controlled by the Clacton Coastal Tourism Group with local businesses, organisations and event co-ordinators being able to request promotion space.

It is proposed that if funding is made available, we would engage local colleges to identify tourism student support to maintain and populate the website so providing both a vital local source of information whilst also providing a learning opportunity.

Town centre information

When visitors arrive at the town they would benefit from improved information.

We propose the installation of quality digital info and advertising points at key locations; ideally at entry points to the town such as outside the rail station and on the triangle on the esplanade. These will provide dynamic street-based advertising opportunities and negate the need for unsightly hard copy posters and flyers so bringing some control and co-ordination of this activity.

In addition, we would propose street-based signage / information boards mounted on streetlighting and other street furniture.

Local tourism data

We need current and accurate underpinning data to better inform discussion and decision-making in support of planning for tourism in Clacton. This must be based on credible evidence of current resources, projected needs and emerging trend. Commissioning reports in these areas, or at the very least, accurately updating the information currently held would help inform decisions for the future.

Whilst the there is a need for comprehensive data, there are of course some headline elements of data that are crucial to better understanding the tourism drivers. These should include, annual visitors number, demographic, transportation choices, dwell time, day trip numbers, overnight stays, accommodation and parking strategy. The latter of which are significantly important enough to warrant their own sections below.

Accommodation

There is a need to profile the quality, quantity and type of holiday accommodation in the town and surrounding area. This should reflect not only the 'traditional' bedspace but also those

available through emerging trends in private letting of property, and the use of campervans, and glamping sites etc.

Considering overnight stays amount to only 10% of the visitors to the district and yet these contribute half of the income relating to tourism, it seems logical that this is an area that should be supported for growth. Particularly as we would only need to grow the overnight visitor numbers by a modest amount to see significant economic benefit.

This could be achieved with positive application of existing planning policies and actively supporting proposals from quality operators who seek to invest on our district. Significant benefits have been recognised in seaside towns such as Blackpool, where marked improvements have been made in the accommodation offering. This has led to an increase of year-round functions, events and conferences, bringing more people to the respective towns out of season than ever before. In a number of cases resulting in more permanent jobs in place of the historic seasonal alternative.

Parking

We encourage an urgent review of parking strategy to benchmark current availability and usage. This should include the location of parking spaces that serve the town centre and seafront – the convenience of parking and traffic flow is critical to reviving use of the town centre and visits to tourist attractions.

The consensus between attraction operators is that the current number of parking spaces is inadequate for peak periods and the parking data will be key in informing suggestions for improvements. With the ultimate aim to inform the parking strategy as we move forward.

COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER:

Clearly there is much to do to see our town and tourism prosper in the way that we truly believe it can. There are challenges, but there are also opportunities. For the first time in many years, it feels as though Clacton's voice is getting stronger, we have a group of like-minded passionate people, who are committed to doing their bit for our sector.

What we hope is that this collaboration is infectious and the members of our wider community are driven to support our efforts and do their bit to help promote **Progress, Passion and Pride** in their respective sectors.

Clacton was built as a seaside resort town, and it has always been in the premier league of such towns throughout the UK, let's work together to return it to the top of that division.

Signed;

Billy Ball, Chairman – for and on behalf **of Clacton Coastal Tourism Group.**

6