

Future High Streets Fund

Call for Expressions of Interest

Application Form



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Applicant Information

Bidding authority: Tendring District Council

Area within authority covered by bid: Clacton Town Centre

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Additional evidence, such as letters of support, maps or plans should be included in an annex.

Applications to the Fund will be assessed against the criteria set out below. Further information on the scoring criteria and their weighting will be published by the department before the end of January 2019.

Submission of proposals:

Proposals must be received no later than 2359 on **Friday 22 March 2019**.

An electronic copy only of the bid including any supporting material should be submitted to highstreetsfund@communities.gov.uk.

Enquiries about the Fund may be directed to highstreetsfund@communities.gov.uk.

SECTION 1: Defining the place

This section will seek a definition of the high street or town centre to be covered within the bidding authority. Places should:

- Explain the high street/town centre geography
- Indicate the population of those living and travelling to this centre, how this links to the wider economic area and its role in the lives of those within the catchment area

1.1 Geographical area:

Include information setting out the extent of the high street/town centre area covered in the proposal and a description of this centre.

Please include maps and supporting evidence as annex documents if required.

Please limit your response to 500 words.

The Tendring District is situated on the coast in the north-east of Essex, with Clacton as its main town in terms of both population concentration (58,687 at mid-2017) and access to civic and leisure functions. Clacton itself also has a proud tradition as a popular holiday destination for those travelling primarily from London which continues to this day – attractions such as the now-closed Butlins (closed in 1983) paved the way for a range of holiday parks, and Victorian/Edwardian architecture within the Town Centre and surrounding residential areas is in many cases still in place. The District as a whole is comprised of a mix of coastline, rural hinterland and a number of discrete urban communities, including the other traditional seaside towns of Frinton and Walton, as well as the historic port town of Harwich. The nearest major towns are Colchester and Ipswich, which in terms of retail range and commuting for work are the predominant draws out of Tendring itself, as well as London which is accessible by hourly (increased at peak times) train services.

Clacton Town Centre is juxta-positioned between the town's Pier and seafront attractions and its railway station, reflecting the town's historical sea and rail transport routes, and spans some 700 metres between its extremities. It comprises an unusual arrangement, formed of streets arranged in triangles which serve to 'lead' residents and visitors towards the seafront. However, the main features of the Town (most prominently the train station, library and other civic buildings, shopping areas and parking facilities) are placed in a way which is no longer fit for purpose – there is often no clear flow from one asset to another which makes access difficult for residents and visitors alike, thereby reducing time spent in the Town.

This proximity to the seafront itself is of course an asset to Clacton, attracting visitors and locals alike especially in the Summer months to spend time in the town and allowing a variety of local businesses to thrive based on this seasonal increase, most notably Clacton Pier (which is undergoing a period of investment to become a year-round attraction) and other seaside entertainments. However, the current arrangement (with regard to aspects such as traffic flow and accessibility) mean that the two areas (i.e. seafront and town centre itself) operate almost as separate entities, with visitors more likely to bypass the shopping areas and residents more likely to spend time in the town for function rather than leisure, banking, postal services or the library for example. Furthermore, the physical geography of the seafront with promenades located both top and bottom of the cliffs means that access to mobile phone signals and the use of smart-phone technology varies dramatically between the different key commercial areas of the town.

Supporting maps:

- Map 1: The location of Clacton on Sea and its town centre.
- Map 2: The extent of the defined town centre.
- Map 3: Land use map.
- Map 4: The location of key assets and facilities.

1.2 Population and links to wider economic area:

Information on the population living and working in the town centre area, how the area acts as a centre of social and economic activity and its links to the wider economic catchment area.

With supporting evidence to include:

Resident and workplace population, travel to work catchment area, town centre footfall, commercial space, retail activity, cultural activities, diversity of uses and social/ historical importance of the centre

Please limit your response to 750 words.

Tendring has pockets of relative affluence contrasting with some of the most deprived wards in the country as identified in the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation [link](#). Golf Green Way (Tendring 018A) and Pier Ward (Tendring 016B) rank first and sixth in the IMD and are within and/or rely on our identified town centre of Clacton. Clacton Town Centre can be viewed as a 'Sub Regional Hub Town' – i.e. it serves those living in the rural areas of the District (arriving by car or public transport) with banks, postal and civic facilities within the identified town centre boundary, as well as superstores spread further around the town in its entirety.

The Tendring District contains a large rural hinterland containing a number of rural villages that form part of Clacton's wider catchment area. The rural parishes of St. Osyth, Little Clacton, Weeley and Thorpe le Soken are all located within fairly close proximity to Clacton (each within 5 miles approximately) and are home to a further 11,000 residents, making the total catchment population served by Clacton Town Centre around 70,000 people. Rural communities in the western part of Tendring are more influenced and better served by Colchester Town Centre and, to the north, Ipswich and (to a much lesser extent) Dovercourt have a stronger pull. The fellow seaside towns of Frinton and Walton, north east of Clacton, have their own town centres which serve a smaller, more local, catchment – however, businesses have reported that many Clacton residents use Frinton Town Centre as an alternative to Clacton because it has a higher quality retail offer and more convenient and accessible on-street parking.

Clacton does however remain the main focus of Tendring's tourism economy, with the proximity of a number of large caravan and holiday parks making for a reliance on seasonal trade. Effort has been made to increase the benefit of these visitor numbers to businesses and residents alike, however whilst in practice events such as the Annual Air Show tend to lead to increased footfall, this does not necessarily translate to increased revenue for business.

Tourism is one of the major employers within the town as a whole, with the Health and Social Care sector and the Local Council also being main sources of employment. Residents looking for other types of work are more likely to travel to Colchester, Ipswich or London, with no provision for flexible working space within the town centre boundary currently.

Schemes such as the introduction of free parking (various across the Town Centre) have been introduced in an effort to increase accessibility and flow, particularly in relation to our higher than average elderly population. However, in recent years issues (actual and perceived) around street drinking, anti-social behaviour and similar social issues have led to an increase in negative views of the town, most often from the elderly and young families which we are hoping to attract and retain, leading to reduced engagement with the town centre.

Through our Vision we intend to transform the existing offer in Clacton Town Centre; adapting the town to the change in demand for retail/experience based activities, increased accessibility (physically and digitally) and future-proofing the town whilst celebrating its seaside heritage.

SECTION 2: Setting out the challenges

Clear description of the issues and challenges facing this area.

This section will seek a description of the issues and structural challenges facing the high street or town centre area to be covered within the bidding. Places should:

- Describe the key challenges facing the area
- Provide evidence to support this argument (additional sources can be included in annexes). Set out why this place would benefit more from moving forward to co-development than other places within the area

We will not accept bids covering town centre areas that are not facing significant challenges.

2.1: Challenges

We recognise that each place will see different challenges. Supporting evidence on the challenges facing areas could cover the following:

- *Proportion and/or number of vacant properties*
- *Openings/closures of commercial units*
- *Diversity of uses in the town centre area*
- *Resident/customer surveys*
- *Pedestrian flows and footfall trends*
- *Evidence of congestion and air quality*
- *Perception of safety and occurrence of crime*
- *State of town centre environmental quality including provision of green spaces*
- *Accessibility*
- *Housing demands*

Introduction

Since its Victorian heyday, Clacton-on-Sea has been famous as a place for shopping, entertainment and relaxation, but national and local changes in the tourism and retail market mean Clacton no longer has a clear identity or proposition to offer the market. At the same time, public and business demand has also evolved, with town centres becoming cultural, civic, education and residential hubs with an increasing trend for people seeking ‘experiences’ from the places they visit, changes which Clacton has to date failed maintain pace with, largely because of a lack of coherent investment strategy by either the public or private sector.

As a result, public perceptions and outcomes for the town centre and wider area have been negatively impacted with the town centre becoming a place that no longer meets needs of the communities or businesses it serves. Alongside these issues within the town centre, Tendring and Clacton as the largest urban area in the district face major challenges including deprivation (being one of the most deprived Districts in the UK), unemployment and growing demand for development space, to meet the employment and housing needs of current and future generations. Despite its large conurbation and significant natural assets, Clacton town centre is one area that has not kept pace with some of the more affluent parts of the district and wider region and is in need of transformative regeneration to address both physical and socio-economic problems. Being a coastal town with a limited (and physically constrained) catchment population, Clacton is not able to compete with larger towns (such as Colchester, Ipswich and Chelmsford) for major retailers nor physically accommodate them and therefore the national decline in the retail sector has hit the town particularly hard. Such issues of ‘peripherality’ been raised by the Council in its submission of evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Coastal Towns [link](#). Regeneration would therefore provide the opportunity to address these issues.

Whilst these challenges are significant, identifying them gives us the opportunity to think strategically and change the future direction in Clacton Town Centre in order to positively impact on both the immediate area around the town centre and also support the transformation of outcomes residents and businesses in the broader region the town centre serves.

In order to best understand the challenges facing Clacton and consider the most effective response we have grouped the challenges into three broad themes namely;

1. Town Centre Offer and Perception;
2. Physical Layout and Built Environment; and
3. Transport and Connectivity

1) Town Centre Offer and Perception

The offer of Clacton Town Centre has not effectively kept pace with changing demand. There are a number of reasons for this, some are examples of national retailing trends facing all town centres whilst others have been specific to Clacton and Tendring district and are the result of a range of factors including significant socioeconomic deprivation, design and construction issues and a lack of effective stewardship / governance around the town centre, contributing to a compromised town centre offer.

- a) High levels of socioeconomic deprivation - Like many seaside towns, Clacton is an area of socio-economic stress and contains the first and sixth most deprived areas in the country (Pier Ward and Golf Green Ward). The local economy is further hindered by low pay. The median household income in Clacton is £13,648, compared to the median in England and Wales of £24,242. A major barrier to employment is a low skills base – 41% of adults in Clacton have no qualifications, which is almost double the national average for England and Wales. The number of children in Clacton passing five GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and maths is only 43 per cent – below the national average in England of 59 per cent. Clacton's issues have been the subject of consideration by the House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities and include poor health, high unemployment, low wages, low educational attainment and skills and an ageing population. These issues are reflected in the range and quality of shops and services, the general patronage of the town centre, the concentration of bedsits and HMOs, some of the visible issues around street-drinking, anti-social behaviour and under-investment, and some of less visible, but serious problems around drugs, crime and domestic violence. A competitive economy and an improvement in employment prospects and training opportunities will be key to tackling Clacton's deprivation and a healthy and economically viable town centre is going to be a major factor in achieving that.
- b) Uncompetitive town centre offer - Clacton has a lesser offer of 'big-name' High Street shops and chain restaurant/bars than larger regional town centres such as Colchester and Ipswich which are both within reasonable commutable distance by car, train and bus as well as a lower patronage from younger people and families outside of the peak summer season. The offer is broadly focused on convenience and lower-value retailing. Clacton lost M&S in November 2018 and Mothercare in February 2019 and it is expected that other national retailers will be lost in coming months. In many ways this limited offer is a product of local demographics, a disproportionate number of customers who are older with disabilities and/or health problems, along with a higher than average people on low incomes who tend to make short, local and targeted visits. The limited representation of big High Street brands in the town centre arguably reflects the needs and demands of local people who are less mobile and less likely or able to travel to Colchester or Ipswich. It also reflects also the demographic and socio-economic make-up of the town and some of its issues of deprivation. There is a significantly larger than average proportion of residents in the district who are aged 65 and over; in Tendring this equates to 29.5%, compared to 20.4% in Essex and 18.2% nationally. The age profile of local areas within Tendring varies, with Clacton having significantly higher proportion of older age population; 26% of its population are aged 45-64 whereas 28% are aged 65 and over. The mix of uses and activities is shown on Map 3.

By virtue of its weaker offer compared to larger centres, Clacton is not seen as a 'shopping destination'. Surveys undertaken as part of the retail study reveal that a primary reason for visiting Clacton is its closeness to home – i.e. its role in serving convenience shopping needs of the local population. Recent engagement with businesses, residents and younger people reveals that Clacton is seen as a centre for short or essential trips to access specific goods or services and not a place where people could, or would want, to spend an extended period of time. This is backed up by the results of the previous retail survey which indicated that 21% of respondents believe an increase in the choice and range of shops would encourage them to visit Clacton more frequently; this was followed by 9% suggested improvements to parking availability. Focus group meetings with young people in local schools reveal that many teenagers only use the town centre (in particular the McDonalds restaurant) as a meeting place before catching a train to Colchester to enjoy a day's shopping and a rounder experience. It is unlikely that Clacton will ever become a place for 'destination retail' and this should not be the ambition and therefore, significant interventions are needed through redevelopment of the Town Centre to deliver a broader range of uses that will bring a more varied mix of people into Clacton. With a shift from the dominance of retail on the high street to having to provide a more rounded 'experienced-based' offer, there is an opportunity for Clacton to claw back some of the trade that is currently lost to larger town centre, but only if that offer is attractive, competitive and unique.

- c) Declining Footfall and leakage to other centres - Evidence of the impact this weak town centre offer is having on Clacton can be seen in the declining footfall. Footfall data provided by Springboard (attached as Appendix 1) shows that there has been year on year decline in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 with a 5.8% drop between 2017 and 2018 which is substantially higher than the averages for the UK and East of England. The data shows that Saturdays tend to attract the highest level of footfall and that levels of footfall vary throughout the year. In January 2018, for example, footfall averaged just under 84,000 a week whereas August 2018 topped 101,000 a week – both figures substantially down (8.2% and 10.7% respectively from 2017 levels). This clearly shows the influence of the tourist industry has on creating additional footfall during the summer months, especially when special functions take place in the town centre such as the Clacton Air Show. The Council's retail study [link](#) demonstrates a considerable leakage of spend to those larger regional centres. Half the leaked expenditure is spent at Colchester town centre, followed by Tollgate Retail Park in Colchester (which has planning permission to expand) and then Ipswich. In 2015, the total amount of comparison expenditure leakage from the Tendring area amounted to £197m which, when compared to the total comparison expenditure generated within Tendring District (£399m), suggests that nearly half of comparison expenditure is spent at facilities outside the District. Engagement with residents and, in particular, younger people has indicated that the absence of big name restaurant and retail chains such as Nando's and Primark are a key factor in the leakage of footfall to Colchester and other larger centres. Without improvements to existing facilities in Tendring (including Clacton Town Centre) to attract residents to shop locally, it is projected that leakage in expenditure could increase to £237.6m by 2020 without intervention to revise the offer to better reflect the needs of current and future populations of the district.

For many of the big-name brands, the limited catchment, socio-economic and demographic profile of Clacton as well as these declining footfalls does not fit with their investment plans and against the background of a delinking retail sector nationally, Clacton has struggled to attract and retain those names.

Clacton also has a comparatively weak night time economy, with footfall figures showing that the town is essentially 9am-5pm most days, and dwell time within the town centre is low. There is also a dearth of facilities for young families beyond seaside entertainment (for example, Clacton Pier) and furthermore there is little to no function as a community hub or access to skills education for young people beyond the services provided by Community Voluntary Services Tendring, which itself operates under reduced funding.

Limited residential provision in the town centre 'core' is also an issue for Clacton. Unlike many successful towns across the UK, Clacton lacks a significant residential presence in the Town Centre 'core' with the provision that is available of low quality or transient dwellings housing

people contributing only limited amounts to the local economy. The Council's Economic Development Strategy identifies housing growth and a significant change in its commercial offer and its perception as key to regeneration.

- d) Difficulties in harnessing tourism and visitor potential - Clacton's tourism offer does bring additional footfall in the school holidays and summer months (as demonstrated in the Springboard data in Appendix 1) - but with a physical disconnect between the town centre and the seafront attractions and a limited evening and night-time economy (again demonstrated in the footfall data), increased footfall does not necessarily translate into a significant increase in the town centre or indeed to spend. Many visitors come to the seaside and visit the beaches, which is where they stay during the day but then head straight home or back to their holiday accommodation in the evening, completely by-passing the town centre.

Whilst Clacton is served by a number of holiday parks and caravan sites which cater for holidaymakers and other visitors, many of the mobile homes are individually owned and are effectively used like second homes rather than offering accommodation to the general public for holidays and short stays. Most of the parks are also served by a range of on-site services and facilities including shops, restaurants and clubs with evening entertainment making them fairly self-contained and self-sufficient. Because of this, Clacton Town Centre does not benefit significantly in terms of shopping, evening and night-time trade from the town's holiday park residents. The Council is seeking to work with the holiday park operators to promote the usage of the town centre and its attractions as well as the facilities offered on site and they have been actively involved in the 'Love Clacton' campaign [link](#) established by local businesses working with the Council.

In addition, Clacton has the potential to be the tourism 'hub' of the Tendring district, including supporting the growth of Harwich Port and broader visitor economy, similar to towns such as Bournemouth. In order to do this, the offer of the Town Centre must evolve.

- e) Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour - From the perspective of Tendring, scanning of local crime data reveals crime is unevenly distributed across the district, with top eight wards contributing to 51% of all recorded crime during period of April 2015 to September 2018. 17% of crime reported in the Pier Ward, where the Clacton Town Centre sits within. Crime is disproportionately in Clacton-on-Sea urban area, which contains 36% of the Tendring population, but population in day and night time (shopping or leisure) is likely to swell in the summer months with inward visitors. Seasonally, violent crime increases significantly in the summer months in line with the tourist season in Clacton, whereby more than 20% of those experiencing crime are visitors who do not live within the district of Tendring. This impacts adversely on the rate of violence when expressed as a rate per 1,000 residents. The fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is a major factor in why local residents and regular visitors do not now use Clacton Town Centre. The latest Tendring Public Perception Survey Results, provided by Essex Police (Appendix 2), indicate that around 40% of residents feel that crime and anti-social behaviour has become more of a problem in their area in the last 12 months.

With declining footfall and highest levels of relative deprivation, there is an increased perception that many parts of the town are unsafe and discussions with schools and parents indicate that they are worried about the safety of young people and would not encourage their children to visit the town centre unaccompanied. Also, with a high proportion of older residents, upon which the town centre is currently heavily reliant, the fear of anti-social behaviour is a particular concern. Information about reported crime and anti-social behaviour in Pier Ward (within which the town centre is located) has been provided by the Police and is attached as Appendix 3. This is a serious problem for the image of the town centre as a whole and whilst the scale of these problems, in statistical terms, might be small in comparison with other competing town centres, the perception of crime and anti-social behaviour is having a disproportionate negative effect on local confidence and footfall.

- f) Limited skills, opportunities and low-pay economy - Clacton provides 40% of Tendring's jobs and largely performs a role as a local service hub, with sector strengths in retail, education, health and public administration. Clacton (including both town centre and edge of town retail

such as the Waterglade Retail Park) is home to over half of Tendring's retail jobs (3,000) and nearly half of all businesses (200). Here, around a fifth of all economic activity is in the Retail sector. Within these opportunities the wage is usually national minimum wage or national living wage. The labour market within the retail outlets seems very static with little movement and change of workforce and the roles, when available, are predominately on a part time basis with the potential for taking on additional hours as and when required and are at entry level. With the town being a seasonal location, often hours increase in the height of the season and decline in the off season, with a few additional opportunities.

Travel to work flows demonstrate a net outflow of around 12,000 commuters from Tendring per day, largely to neighbouring areas such as Colchester, Ipswich and Braintree. There is also a large outflow to London, although anecdotal evidence suggests this is likely to relate mainly to the Manningtree part of Tendring, which benefits from a direct and relatively fast rail service to London. This suggests that number and nature of the jobs available in Tendring is not sufficient to meet the needs of the labour force internal to Tendring. As a result, the pull for labour for even wider functional geographies by existing employers with Tendring is relatively weak. These factors constrain the spending power of the local population and combined with Clacton's role as a local retailing hub undermines the potential for further growth.

Across Tendring district there are several areas with a larger proportion of residents with no qualifications. These include Clacton (40%) and Jaywick (55%). Clacton and Jaywick also have a lower than district average proportion of residents qualified to Level 4. At the same time there is also a lack of skills space in and around the town centre with all the main educational establishments in Clacton located outside of, and some distance from the town with little or no relationship with town centre businesses and provided limited benefit in terms of potential footfall.

Within the Town Centre 'Go Train' (Training Provider) has recently left to lack of update on their offer which included employability skills, confidence building and CV writing along with numerous other options. Other educational providers sit on the edge of the town centre but their position does not encourage significant footfall or usage of the town centre. The lack of education and skills improvement offers and number of low skilled jobs in the area leads to residents not adapting and improving their skills and moving up, leave them stuck in a currently cycle of 'deprivation' whilst not providing a feed of higher-skilled residents to support the diversification of the Town Centre economy. Working with communities and businesses to establish a skills offer will encourage local and national business to move to the town centre and broader area to create better offer with jobs can tackle this challenge and actually pull people from the wider Northern area of Essex into Tendring instead as well as provide a larger number of higher skilled employees to feed the wider regeneration of the Tendring economy, further enhancing prosperity of the area and increasing spend power of residents.

- g) Limited availability of quality workspace - Clacton Town Centre has a very limited offer of good quality workspace and in recent years, three major purpose-built office blocks (Jackson House, Harlech House and Reunion House) have been lost to budget hotel accommodation or residential (the latter under permitted development rights) which have also had a significant effect on lunchtime footfall. What is left is a stock of commercial property that is predominantly in retail use or small individual units mainly in A2 'professional services' use that are either unavailable through occupation or are old, inflexible or impractical in size and need of refurbishment to meet the needs of modern businesses. This lack of quality workspace has a significant bearing on the economy of the town, the availability of higher-paid jobs and the vibrancy of the town centre.
- h) Lack of coherent stewardship and leadership - Clacton Town Centre contains a fragmented array of national and independent businesses that are not strongly represented or marketed in a coherent, consistent or coordinated way. Tendring District Council and businesses have considered the potential to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) in Clacton Town Centre to enhance ownership of the town centre and drive improvements. Moves to develop a bid have been complicated because a large proportion of Clacton's businesses are small and below the threshold for business rates (to which BID levies would be linked) limiting the scope of

what can be achieved. An active Town Centre Partnership exists however has traditionally focussed on organising events, seasonal decorations and raising issues on behalf of businesses, it is currently small, poorly resourced and has limited capacity to undertake a more holistic role. The Clacton Town Centre Working Party has identified this as a major issue and is exploring the potential to put other stewardship measures in place, including the establishment of a 'Clacton Ambassadors' programme (as described as part of the vision statement Appendix 4) for which funding would be required.

- i) Poor public perception - Taken together, the issues outlined above head led to Clacton Town Centre developing a negative image and a poor public perception. Negative messages about the lack of quality shops and services, lack of parking, anti-social behaviour, street-drinking and the town's ageing population have been damaging to Clacton's image both within the town and further afield, and sadly undermine the town's many uniquely positive aspects. Engagement with local people, including younger people in the town's schools have re-enforced this view. It has become apparent that there is a distinct lack of pride in the town centre amongst its own residents and business owners and a complete lack of desire, particularly amongst younger people, to use the town centre, work in the town centre or contribute towards its resurgence – which has to change. Only transformative change, delivering highly visible interventions in line with a coherent long-term vision is likely to succeed in reversing this perception.

2) Physical Layout and Built Environment

- a) Constrained physical layout - The physical layout of Clacton Town Centre (as shown on Maps 2 and 4) is uniquely based on a historic pattern of large triangular blocks of development that dictate and significantly constrain the flow of pedestrians and vehicles. The result is a fragmented, illegible and impermeable town centre spanning several streets with key services and facilities that are located a considerable distance from one another (see Map 4) and that are poorly connected and related (including the railway station, off-street car parks, the library, the key anchor food store, the edge of centre retail park, the cinema, the post office and the town's seafront attractions).

There are very few logical, safe and welcoming pedestrian links or connections that follow pedestrian desire lines or offer a convenient 'cut through' between different triangular blocks. This means that users of the town centre (many of whom are elderly or disabled) find themselves walking inconveniently long distances and having to circulate around different parts of the town centre to access their desired range of shops and services, often also having to cross numerous roads at busy junctions.

Its fragmented layout results in significant disparities in levels of footfall in different parts of the town centre and some areas have become very dead, even in peak times, giving rise to fears of public safety and anti-social behaviour. The vision developed by the Clacton Town Centre Working Party identifies a number of key opportunities to address the identified layout problems for which property acquisition will be essential.

- b) Unattractive and under-utilised public realm - Being an expansive and fragmented town centre, there are numerous key approaches into the core of the town centre from different directions where a good quality public realm is critical to public perception and experience. Clacton Town Centre is weak in this regard and key linkages from the railway station, the seafront, the cinema and the edge-of-centre retail park have seen limited investment and are looking tired and uninspiring. The town square is awkwardly positioned on an island between the main shopping area and the amusements and is therefore unwelcoming and underutilised.
- c) Fragmented property ownership and low property values

Most property in Clacton Town Centre is in multiple private ownership with most businesses operating on an individual landlord and tenant basis. The only property in public ownership comprises the roads and pavements, two off-street car parks, one retail unit, the public library and three office buildings (including the Town Hall and the Council's main offices). This fragmentation of ownership presents a significant challenge in trying to deliver transformational

change, influencing the town centre offer and addressing connectivity and transport problems. It also makes it very difficult for the Council and its partners to deliver a shared vision for the town centre when so many private landlords have an individual stake. The Council has begun the process of identifying relevant landlords to involve them in the work of the Town Centre Working Party and to feed into, and assist in delivering, the vision.

Another issue is that land values are disproportionately low when comparing to surrounding Eastern region. Average residential land values in Tendring were estimated at £1,680,000 per hectare in 2017. This is within the lowest quartile for local authority areas in the south east of England. In Clacton, Zone A rents reduced from a high of £753 per sq m in 2007 to £538 per sq m in 2012 (equating to a reduction of 28.6%). The decline in rents in Clacton has been generally in line with Ipswich (a reduction of 30%). Rents in Braintree reduced from £646 per sq m in 2007 to £538 per sq m in 2012 (representing a reduction of 16.7%) whilst Sudbury (a reduction of 4.29%) and Colchester (a reduction of 8.9%) proved more resilient to Clacton. The current rental level of retail floor space in Clacton ranges from £127/sq.m (Jackson Road) to £250/sq.m (Pier Avenue). Clacton has lower commercial and residential property values than its larger neighbouring towns which reflects its weaker economic standing and the lower income potential. As a result, economic viability is often a barrier to investment and this is complicated further by the fragmented nature of property ownership in the town centre explained above. The incentive for landlords to take on financial risk to help achieve the wider vision for the town centre through diversification, expansion, refurbishment or redevelopment is limited.

Affordability of housing is also a major issue for the Tendring District and for Clacton. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment [link](#) produced jointly with Braintree, Colchester and Chelmsford Councils. Although house prices are generally lower in Tendring than the other areas within the Housing Market Partnership, they reflect the lower levels of household income and there remains a significant need to deliver affordable housing in Clacton both to meet the long-term needs of a growing population, but also to end the current reliance on hotel, bedsit and HMO accommodation for temporary affordable provision – much of which is located in and around the town centre.

There are a number of sites in the town centre that have obtained planning permission for mixed-use redevelopment where there has been no progress in implementing them, leaving vacant buildings and plots in key locations (site Map 4). A site visit in May 2015 identified approximately 3,580 sq m of vacant floorspace across 19 units within the centre. The proportion of vacant units has significantly reduced from 9.7% (29 units) in April 2014 to the current level of 6.4% (19 units) in May 2015. The attached Springboard data indicates that in October 2018, vacancy was down to 2.8% - although this was before the closures of M&S and Mothercare. The Council is concerned about the limitations of the overall town centre offer (outlined above) and that the town centre is now at a 'tipping point' where dropping footfall and changing shopping patterns will lead to further rises in vacancy. Intervention is therefore required now, to prevent a rapid decline.

3) Transport and Connectivity

a) Inconvenient transport access

The accessibility of a centre is determined by the ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel – including that which is provided to pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people – and the ease of access from the main arrival points to the principal attractions in the centre. The main centre car parks are located off Carnarvon Road behind Sainsbury's (which provides approximately 300 spaces), Wellesley Road (206 spaces), Jackson Road (90 spaces), Colne Road (approximately 70 spaces), seafront bays (50 spaces), Agate Road (24 spaces) and at the Waterglade Retail Park, with additional on-street parking also available along many roads. Clacton-on-Sea train station located within the boundary of the town centre and within walking distance of the Primary Shopping Area, provides services throughout Tendring, Colchester and central London. 62.6% of respondents across the survey area travel to Clacton town centre by car, 7.7% by bus, minibuss or coach and a further 18.7% walk. Only 1% of respondents travelled

to Clacton town centre by train.

Access the town centre by different transport modes is also compromised by its awkward layout. Bus services currently pick up and drop off passengers at a number of unrelated locations around the town centre positioned to efficiently serve different communities in the wider town within the constraints of the current road layout and one-way system, but not necessarily providing the best direct access to the town centre for passengers. The local bus company has raised the concern that its services are not attractive to many residents because for residents of some parts of the town, convenient access to the heart of the town centre cannot be achieved, threatening the future economic viability of those services (particularly as a large proportion of bus users are older people with free bus passes).

The Town Centre Partnership has warned the Council that town centre businesses are losing customers to online shopping and out-of-town retail parks, but there is also a perception amongst customers that the town centre offers no conveniently located parking. The two main car parks are located on the periphery of the town centre and serve different parts of the town centre in a disjointed way with limited safe or direct pedestrian links through to the main shops and services. This means no one car park is well positioned to serve the town centre as a whole. Many customers seek on-street parking spaces with more direct access for shops and services, but these spaces are limited and car users often struggle to find a space in the part of the town centre they are seeking to shop – leading them to circulate around the town's peripheral side streets in hope of finding a space. The vision for the town centre identifies opportunities to improve pedestrian connections to the key car parks and to increase capacity, for which property acquisition will be key.

The above outlines some of the significant challenges facing Clacton Town Centre and whilst the Council is working closely with local businesses and other stakeholders to put measures in place to protect it from further decline in the short-term, Clacton needs transformation change in order to achieve long-term sustainability. Without additional funding, the above challenges are set to worsen. Clacton and neighbouring Jaywick have no Parish/Town Council and are unable to fund developments via this stream, and under new NNDR thresholds many of the businesses pay either reduced or zero business rates. Whilst this is a benefit for the businesses themselves and the Council recognises it as an important part of achieving a thriving mix of independent and chain businesses, this again impedes on the financial viability of delivering transformational change.

With private investment constrained by the market factors set out above, significant public sector intervention is required to acquire the land and property needed to improve connectivity, centralise key facilities and assets, build new homes, connect the town centre to the seafront, facilitate the improvement in transport and digital infrastructure and create the foundations for a sustainable town centre with a diverse experience-based role. The vision developed by the Clacton Town Centre Working Party outlines the changes that will be required and the Council and its partners will be seeking maximum funding through the Future High Streets Fund to help deliver that vision. .

2.2: Rationale for selecting town centre area

Set out your rationale for choosing this town centre area as opposed to other centres within your local authority, and why this area is most in need.

Please limit your response to 500 words.

The Tendring District contains six individual town centres: Clacton, Dovercourt, Walton-on-the-Naze, Frinton-on-Sea, Brightlingsea and Manningtree. Of these centres, only Clacton is categorised as a 'Major Town Centre' in the Council's Local Plan and this reflects the fact that it is currently home to the largest concentration of economic activity in the district, and is the largest and most populous town influencing the widest catchment area. Compared with the district's other, much smaller town centres, Clacton Town Centre has by far the largest number of business units and covers the widest area in geographical terms. Clacton is also the key tourist location for the Tendring District.

Clacton is most in need of funding and assistance because the town as a whole suffers with the district's highest levels of unemployment, lowest educational attainment and skills, the most problems with health, crime and anti-social behaviour and contains two of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the whole of the country (Pier Ward and Jaywick Sands). Due to its peripheral coastal location, limited working-age population and distance from the strategic road network, Clacton has a relatively low industrial base for a town of its size and is therefore heavily reliant on the lower paid service sector industries including retail, leisure and tourism (which are highly seasonal) and public services for the provision of local employment.

With the long-established decline in traditional holiday tourism, the service sector economy of Clacton has become increasingly reliant on meeting the needs and demands of its own resident population. However, Clacton's has an increasingly ageing population with 28% over the age of 65 and a high proportion of unemployed and working people with lower than average incomes. This means that the rapid decline in retail on the High Street, the loss of major employers from the town centre, the subsequent drop in footfall resulting from the town centre's inability to compete with the offer of other towns (such as Colchester, Ipswich and Chelmsford) and online shopping and the growing problems around the town centre's public image are a serious threat to the sustainability of Clacton's economy and any chance of reversing the town's problems with deprivation.

It is clear that Clacton Town Centre needs to transform its offer, appeal and its image to meet the changing needs and demands of current and future generations; or otherwise face a very stark socio-economic future. Due to the unique physical, economic and social challenges outlined under Section 2.1 above, neither this local authority nor the local business community has the funding or resources needed to facilitate the level of transformation that is required without assistance from the government. We therefore enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to bid for the Future High Street Fund.

SECTION 3: Strategic ambition

This section will seek evidence of the level of ambition from the local authority, support from stakeholders and evidence that the local authority is well-placed to use the Future High Street Fund to tackle these challenges in a way that will fit with wider existing plans. Local authorities should:

- Set out a high-level vision for improving their area and how this links with need expressed in Section 2
- Demonstrate how this ambition will align with other funding streams (public or private)
- Cover how investment from government will support the area and help overcome these challenges
- Demonstrate engagement with and support from local stakeholders including other tiers of local government, if applicable (supporting evidence of this support such as letters should be attached as an annex)
- Show how this will link to wider strategic plans, including the Local Plan and Local Industrial Strategies e.g. around housing and local growth
- Provide an estimate of how much revenue funding they would need to support the development of their strategic vision and business case for a specific proposal

This phase relates to defining places and challenges and we therefore are not asking for specific project proposals at this stage.

However, if a local authority has been working on a specific project that they feel is deliverable in the short term if they were to receive capital funding at an early stage, we invite them to make that clear here. While the details of the project will not be considered in our decision-making at this stage, we may consider fast-tracking these projects during co-development.

We will not accept bids that do not provide sufficient evidence of support from local stakeholders.

3.1 Town centre vision and ambition for change

Set out your vision for regenerating your high street and how this links with the challenges outlined in section 2.

Please limit your response to 750 words.

We will transform Clacton Town Centre to become a safe, attractive and vibrant place with a clear 'identity' as the socio-economic hub of Tendring; a place to visit, invest and live. Enhancements to the built environment, civic service offer, and connectivity will deliver a mixed-use, experience-based proposition, integrating leisure, residential, commercial, public service, culture and skills provision into an enhanced Victorian seaside heritage and aesthetic. These interventions will support the diversification of the economy, creating a vibrant year-round visitor and residential offer whilst also seeking to shape places to improve outcomes for residents in one of the most deprived areas of the UK.

Physical redevelopment will revise the layout to enhance the legibility of the streetscape and civic spaces, concentrating uses to create a coordinated experience-based offer, enhanced dwell-times and footfall. An overarching and spatial vision (attached as Appendix 4) has been developed with partners to secure the physical redevelopment whilst also embracing the town's history, promoting and enhancing its architecture to restoring its Victorian character for a unique experience and atmosphere. Enhanced design, natural surveillance and amenity of space will be used to overcome issues of crime and antisocial behaviour as well as visually enhancing the place and perceptions of

safety, encouraging more visitors to the Town.

Acquisition and amalgamation of land / property in key locations is needed to deliver mixed-used residential and commercial developments, principally on public land, to create new attractors that generate local expenditure and purpose including space for residential, business incubation and civic uses as well as creating the anchor of a new tourist economy. Initial acquisitions will be driven by the public sector, using both public funding, developer contributions and enhanced stewardship to catalyse future investment by private sector through raising land / property values and enhanced marketability.

Redevelopment will deliver public realm improvements, creating pedestrian-friendly, all-weather spaces, providing improved gateways and enhancing the offer to the benefit of businesses and resident incomes. We will seek to enhance linkages between the Town Centre and seafront, ensuring both parts of the town work in a symbiotic and seamless manner, both physically and in marketing and branding. This work combined with an improved family friendly restaurant/evening offer located will contribute to a stronger all age, all-year night time economy within Clacton.

Physical regeneration will enhance community cohesion through the creation of a public 'community hub' directly within the town centre; new incubation space for business and new skills and public service infrastructure to enhance outcomes for residents both in Clacton and the wider district, being the catalyst for improving the place and providing a space for the delivery of more focused public and health services. These improvements, coupled with enhanced digital connectivity will widen the town centre's appeal to the whole community in Tendring, ensuring it responds to resident and visitor needs, contributing to increasing outcomes for residents in some of the most deprived communities whilst preventing leakage to other towns in the local area.

Moreover, physical regeneration will ensure the Town Centre is easily accessible by all modes, with a particular emphasis on enhancing connectivity between Clacton and the wider district. We will seek to better located and electric-car-ready parking provision with interactive signage and digital payment methods to enhance the attractiveness and convenience of Clacton as a place to visit. We will increase the provision of secure, on-street parking to improve footfall for existing businesses in the short-term whilst also reviewing the parking strategy for Clacton. Public Transport access will be relocated and streamlined whilst physical redevelopment will create new safe and direct pedestrian to provide greater ease of access to and from the core of the town centre from all directions for people of all abilities, adding the vibrancy. This will include creating coach parking facilities and encourage the flow of day visitors, routing these visitors through the town centre on their way to the seafront.

Delivering this vision will be the catalyst for transformation of the wider region, and to take it forward a group comprising of officers, members and community representatives will be constituted to further develop the strategy and oversee the eventual delivery in Clacton. The existing town centre working group will be formalised to take forward the work outlined in this vision and FHSF bid as well as promote Clacton as the visitor and business hub for the area, supporting the growth of economies and neighbourhoods across Tendring as well as wider eastern region, through an enhanced offer.

3.2 Engagement and alignment of vision

Set out how your town centre vision aligns with other funding streams, both public and private, including details of partnership working with the private sector in this area.

Show how your vision fits with wider strategic plans such as housing, transport and Local Industrial Strategies.

Please limit your response to 750 words.

Our vision for Clacton Town Centre has been developed using approved aims from the Council's Corporate Plan, Economic Strategy and emerging Local Development Plan. These have been informed by feedback received from stakeholders and businesses at a number of events as well as through ongoing engagement at key board / groups such as the Community Safety Partnership and the Town Centre Working Group. The paragraphs below summarise the alignment between the vision articulated in this Expression of Interest and the vision, aims and objectives of each of those documents / groups.

Strategies

Economic Development Strategy: The Council's Economic Development Strategy [link](#) was adopted in 2013 and is currently in the process of being updated. It identifies Clacton (with Jaywick) as a 'Tier One Location' with the most potential for economic growth and where the case/need for public sector intervention is strongest. It requires a bold response to address current decline and proposes that quality of the town needs to be a key attractor for new residents and businesses, with new cultural infrastructure. Sensible planned housing development and population growth is a core component of improving the town and driving business creation and satisfying demand for local people to establish and grow their businesses.

Emerging Local Plan: The Tendring Local Plan [link](#) has been submitted to the Secretary of State and is in the process of being examined. Clacton is categorised as a 'Strategic Urban Settlement' where approximately 4,700 new homes are proposed, of which 2,000 have already obtained planning permission. Clacton Town Centre and Seafront is identified as a Priority Area for Regeneration – to be the focus for investment in social, economic and physical infrastructure and initiatives to improve vitality, environmental quality, social inclusion, economic prospects, education, health, community safety, accessibility and green infrastructure. It also a 'Major Town Centre' which will be the focus for town centre uses including retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism and cultural, community and residential development.

Clacton Town Centre Vision: Love Clacton: The Clacton Town Centre Working Party has collaborated to produce the 'Love Clacton' vision / strategy for the town, detailing interventions and changes that will be delivered by the business community to enhance the opportunities from Clacton as well as being a marketable product that can be used to secure investment to Clacton. See Appendix 6.

Haven Gateway Partnership: The Haven Gateway Partnership vision [link](#) is committed to partnership working that facilitates the delivery of an inclusive economy for the Haven Gateway area's residents, workers and businesses by capitalizing on its location as a key international gateway and realizing its potential for significant growth through an additional focus on innovative sectors, knowledge-based employment and the provision of appropriate housing and infrastructure and skills. This aligns closely with our vision for the Town Centre outlined above whereby we seek to maximize opportunities for residents and Clacton's geographical and social position in the District.

Tourism Strategy: In line with the vision outlined in this bid The Tendring Tourism Strategy [link](#) recognises the role that tourism-led regeneration can have on improving the quality of life of our residents, communities and create more jobs and wealth. This Tourism Strategy, combined with key aspects of this bid, provides the platform to achieve this potential.

Community Safety Strategy: The Tendring Community Safety Partnership [link](#) has been a key partner in the Town Centre Working Party with a focus on tackling the town's issues with crime and anti-social behaviour. The vision for change aligns with the objectives of the partnership and its strategy.

Funding Streams

One Public Estate (OPE): Essex County Council and Tendring District Council are developing proposals in anticipation of potential future rounds of the One Public Estate Programme [link](#) to bring forward a joint scheme with other partners to regenerate the town centre, working closely with other partners to maximise the contribution that public sector assets make to the town centre.

Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN): The Council is working with telecommunications and technology experts Cisco to formulate a bid to the LFFN fund [link](#) with the aim of securing funding for the installation of fibre-optic in the town centre and along the seafront in order to facilitate seamless digital access for the provision of free wifi and other digital platforms.

Local Delivery Pilot: Tendring is one of the areas in Essex subject of Sport England's LDP [link](#) aimed at getting people more active. The proposals to establish 'Ambassadors' for the Town Centre is one of the measures that aligns with the aims of the LDP.

3.3 Support for town centre vision

Provide details, including letters of support, for your vision from (where applicable):

- *Other tiers of local government including Mayoral and non-Mayoral Combined Authorities and county councils where applicable*

Other local stakeholders including:

- *Local Enterprise Partnerships*
- *Business Improvement Districts*
- *Private sector*
- *Community groups*

Please limit your response to 500 words and include evidence of this support as an annex where appropriate.

Clacton Town Centre Working Party: The Clacton Town Centre Working Party was established in 2018 to bring leadership, co-ordination and a greater consensus to the many opportunities and issues that will contribute to the sustainability and growth of Clacton as a vibrant and important seaside town. The Working Party is led by Tendring District Council but includes the chair of the Town Centre Partnership and representatives of ten local businesses and a range of public sector and voluntary bodies. The vision reflects the ideas and aspirations generated through discussions with the stakeholders on the Working Party and some of the partners have written to the Council individually to re-affirm their support for the vision and the Council's submission to the Future High Streets Fund.

Town Centre Partnership and Businesses: The chairman of the TCP has played a key role in the work of the Town Centre Working Party and representing a large proportion of the town centre businesses in articulating their concerns and challenges and putting forward ideas for change and improvement. The chairman of the TCP has written individually to support the vision and the Council's bid. The Council has also engaged with businesses individually to understand specific concerns and ideas that have been raised.

Schools and Younger People: The Council has actively engaged with the teachers and pupils of Clacton's two secondary schools to understand perceptions of the town centre from a younger-person's perspective. Direct focus group meetings have been held with pupils and further engagement is proposed. Their ideas and aspirations of younger people have been fed into the vision for the town centre.

Tendring Community Safety Partnership: Outside of the Clacton Town Centre Working Party, the Council has been in regular engagement with the TCP through its dedicated Community Safety Officer and through direct discussion with senior Police officials to understand issues surrounding crime, anti-social behaviour and street drinking.

Transport Providers/Agencies: The Council has worked with the local bus company, the chairman of the Taxi Association, Essex County Council's Transport Officers, North Essex Parking Partnership and local businesses to explore both the short-term and long-term opportunities to improve accessibility and transport to the town centre. The vision incorporates the key concepts developed through discussions with these stakeholders.

Technology Providers: The Council has been working with, and taking advice from Cisco to develop the art of the possible in terms of digital technology and to formulate a LFFN bid to secure fibre-optic connectivity to the whole town centre and seafront.

Voluntary Sector: Tendring Voluntary Community Services (CVS), the Salvation Army and Essex County Council's Youth Wardens have been key partners on the Working Party with a particular focus on how volunteers can engage more positively with the town centre, the potential for an Ambassadors scheme for the town centre and how to address current concerns about street drinking and anti-social behaviour.

Letters of support for the vision have been received from some of the Council's stakeholders and they are attached as Appendix 5.

3.4 Estimate of revenue funding needed

Provide details of how much revenue funding you need to develop project plans for capital funding (including detailed business cases).

Include estimated breakdowns of how you would spend this revenue funding

Please limit your response to 500 words.

Property and Development Support: The partners have in-house expertise to contribute to the development of proposals. Additional support is needed in project management and in specialist technical areas. Potential projects will require acquisitions and construction and accuracy of data and viability will be pivotal. At the time of writing the partners had been unsuccessful in securing £75,000 from the last One Public Estate fund, but it is the intention to bid again for funding to carry out investigatory and feasibility measures related to one of the identified project areas and will directly feed into these proposals. The Initial work will identify the optimal sequence of works for practical purposes and optimal development mixes in order to maximise self-sufficiency in Capital terms and ensure ongoing sustainability.

| Activities | Delivery | Estimate |
|--|---|----------|
| Project management | Jointly engaged project manager employed by the partners to project and programme manage feasibility investigations, investigating further co-location potential and business case production | £60,000 |
| Project engagement | Joint engagement of specialist advisors for market research, public engagement and project marketing | £60,000 |
| Land assembly | Specialist external surveyors to advise on the likely approach to and cost of acquiring necessary land interests | £45,000 |
| Land appraisals | Specialist external surveyors to undertake studies for the main sites (Capacity Study, Constraints, Planning Advice, Costs) | £45,000 |
| Planning and regulatory work | Specialist external surveyors to determine requirements for regulatory constraints and create Town Centre Plan for adoption as supplementary Planning Guidance | £30,000 |
| Producing a design approach for key sites | Externally appointed Architect to produce outline designs for project sites | £250,000 |
| Resolve engineering issues | Structural and Civil Engineering support to the above to be recruited from external firms | £40,000 |
| Produce cost model | External Quantity Surveyors to produce preliminary cost modelling and planning | £40,000 |
| Financing and disposal planning | Specialist external surveyors to advise on potential deliverable values, external financing potential and costs and options for disposal or retention either fully or by leasing. | £50,000 |
| Undertake Desktop survey works on the proposal sites, likely to include: | | |
| Archaeological Survey | Specialist external advisors to be jointly appointed | £5,000 |
| Soil/Contamination investigations | | £15,000 |
| Arboriculture Assessment | | £2,000 |
| Preliminary ecological appraisal | | £5,000 |
| Undertake site investigations to public and owned sites only | | |
| Topographical survey | Specialist external advisors to be jointly appointed | £25,000 |
| Asbestos Surveys | | £10,000 |
| Contingency | For resulting detail arising from the foregoing. | £70,000 |
| | | |
| Total | | £752,000 |

Funding

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| OPE grant (subject to revised proposal for next round) | £74,500 |
| Partners' Revenue Contribution | £100,000 |
| Partners' staffing contributions (1/2 FTE per partner) | £40,000 |
| Revenue support sought | £537,500 |
| Total | £752,000 |
| | |

Community Policing Support: The Council working with Community Safety Partnership and Essex Police is seeking support to fund a town centre policing team to help eliminate current issues over crime and anti-social behaviour and restore confidence amongst businesses and residents in the lead up to any transformational schemes. The Council is already funding an Anti-Social Behaviour Patrol Officer to be deployed in Summer 2019, but a full-time dedicated policing team comprising one sergeant, two PCs and 4PSCOs at an estimated annual cost of **£320,000 per annum** is considered necessary.