

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLACTON TOWN BOARD,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 25 MAY 2024 AT 2.30PM
IN SAM'S HALL, IMPERIAL HOUSE, ROSEMARY ROAD CLACTON-ON-SEA CO15 1NZ**

Board Members present:	George Kieffer (Chairman), Sharon Alexander, Cllr Ivan Henderson, Neil Gallagher, Roger Hirst (initially via telephone and then in-person), Ella Latham, Rob Mitchell-Gears, Emily T Murray, Cllr Mark Stephenson and Giles Watling MP
In attendance:	Steve Evison, Lee Heley, Sam Jones, Pippa Brent-Isherwood (initially via telephone and then in-person) and Keith Simmons

[Note: Specific action shown in bold]

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members of the Board:

- Billy Ball,
- Ian Davidson,
- Craig Newnes,
- Laura Taylor-Green,
- Cllr Lesley Wagland.

12. INTRODUCTIONS

Those in attendance, and Roger Hirst via the telephone, introduced themselves for the benefit of the other attendees. Neil Gallagher, as a new Board Member, was welcomed. Neil was also Executive Headteacher of the Clacton County High School.

13. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE TOWN BOARDS' CHAIRMEN'S MEETING AND NO 10 RECEPTION

The Board's Chairman submitted a written report on a meeting/reception held for Town Board Chairmen with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Jacob Young MP) and the Interim Chairman of the Towns Unit of Government (Adam Hawksbee) on 15 May 2024. At the meeting, there was reference to the anticipated content of the 10 year vision, the utilization of consultants in developing Town Plans, the best practice consultation essentials being developed by Zencity (a consultancy engaged by central government), the fact that a change of Government could not be bound by decisions of the then Government on funding, the opportunity to borrow against future committed funding streams and networking with other Town Board Chairmen,

The written report was introduced by the Board's Chairman who also specifically referenced the progress being made locally and that many other Town Boards were broadly at the same point in development of their respective visions. The continuing need to produce the 10 year vision by 1 August 2024 was also commented upon.

The report from the Chairman was received.

14. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE (INC. YOUTH BOARD)

The Board was advised on the current position in respect of consultation to support the 10 year vision. In view of the timeline for production of the vision (1 August 2024) and the restrictions on consultation during the pre-election period up to the General Election on 4 July 2024, a re-focusing of activity had taken place to utilize the extensive range of existing consultation findings across a range of organisations with a view to identifying facts and views relevant to the development of the vision. These existing sources of opinions and wishes obtained through consultation included the views of young people locally.

Roger Hirst reported on experiences elsewhere in Essex Police Area in relation to diversionary measures to counter anti-social behavior and the learning that came from those experiences.

Neil Gallagher indicated that pupils in the upper age groups at senior schools locally could well relish the opportunity to talk about their wishes for the Town. **He agreed to lead on youth engagement and the Youth Board on behalf of the Clacton Town Board.**

That the update on consultation to support the 10 year vision be received.

15. INITIAL ACTIVITY AND EXPENDITURE

The Board was informed of the capacity monies received in respect of the Long Term Plan for Towns and the initial allocation of those funds (as referenced in the submission considered at Minute 16a below). There was then a discussion about some potential for initial activity that could happen in the shorter term.

In respects to initial activity, reference was made to the recent developments in Dovercourt under the Accelerator Scheme (again funded through Government). There, relatively simple steps like hanging baskets, jet cleaning and empty shop window wrapping had a marked positive effect locally. Shop owners/tenants were also approached to consider improvements to their shop frontages (and small grants were made available to support such steps). Billy Ball, in his role as Chairman of the Tourism Forum, had been invited to visit Harwich to consider measures from that Town's experience that could be useful for Clacton-on-Sea.

A wider discussion took place around street banners and way finder street furniture to help route footfall through the Town Centre.

It was agreed that:

- (a) Members of the Board be invited to identify activity and actions they considered should form part of the initial activity to improve the Town (based on the available finance) and to submit those proposals.**
- (b) The wrapping of 17 shop fronts in the Clacton-on-Sea Town Centre be supported and that the funding for this be from the initial funding provided to support the development of the 10 year vision.**

16. GOVERNANCE MATTERS:

a. TOWN BOARD GOVERNANCE SUBMISSION TO DLUHC

The Board was provided with a submission that had been made in respect of the Clacton-on-Sea Long Term Plan for Towns Scheme in early April 2024 that had been made following agreement with the Board's Chairman and the Tendring District Council's

Assistant Director of Finance and IT (as that Council's 'Section 151' Officer). The 'Section 151' Officer agreement to the detail in the submission was necessary, as Tendring District Council was the accountable body for funding through the Long Term Plan for Towns.

The submission was received and its content endorsed.

b. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE (TO INCLUDE OBSERVERS)

The Terms of Reference previously adopted by the Board (Minute 8 of 21 March 2024 refers) were re-submitted with amendments to reflect the membership of the Board of Neil Gallagher (see Minute 12 above) and Ian Davidson (Tendring District Council's Chief Executive), to provide for Observer status at Board Meetings of nominees from the Cities and Local Growth Unit of the Government's Local Growth Team and of Essex Police's District Commander.

The amended Terms of Reference, as submitted, be approved.

c. PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE BUSINESS OF THE BOARD

The Board was advised that the Government's expectation of Town Boards was that they operate in an entirely transparent way. As such, Government expected Town Boards to publish membership and governance arrangements (including minutes of meetings and decision logs) on the lead council's website. Government also expected Town Boards to publish:

- a documented decision-making process outlining the voting rights of the board
- profiles of board members
- all board papers in advance of the meeting
- draft minutes of meetings following the meeting
- final minutes, once approved by the board
- any conflicts of interest reported, within the published minutes

Town Boards should also follow the lead council governance and finance arrangements when considering private reports, with the default position being that all papers are open to the public.

The public access arrangements set out above be approved and implemented.

d. CODE OF CONDUCT/DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN BOARD ACTIVITIES

A paper entitled "Avoiding Conflicts of Interest and Upholding the Nolan Principles" was circulated to attendees at the meeting. The paper had been developed with due regard to the requirements set out in Government Guidance to Town Boards and Accountable Bodies. The paper recognized that Members of the Board brought beneficial views and knowledge from the business, public, voluntary or community interests from which they had been drawn from. As Board Members with influence over the use of public funding for which the Tendring District Council was the accountable body, Board Members were in a position of trust. The Nolan principles were set out for the Board as follows:

- **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work.

They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

- **Objectivity** – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty** – Holders of public office should be truthful
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Board Members were bound by those principles

On a practical level, the following provisions applied to all Members of the Board in respect of the business of the Board:

- In the event that there was a conflict of interest, the person so conflicted would immediately declare the nature of the conflict or potential conflict and withdraw from any business where the conflict would be relevant.
- Whenever a person had an interest in a matter to be discussed at a meeting the person concerned would not be entitled to remain present at the meeting during discussion of that matter.
- The Monitoring Officer of Tendring District Council could, at any time, authorise a person to remain in the meeting of the Board whilst a matter in which they have or might have had a conflict of interest was discussed, provided that the conflict of interest was declared and the Monitoring Officer had been given reasonable opportunity to consider the extent of the conflict of interest.

A Register of Interest would be maintained by the Monitoring Officer of Tendring District Council.

That the content of the paper entitled “Avoiding Conflicts of Interest and Upholding the Nolan Principles” submitted to the Board be approved and adopted.

e. COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

A draft protocol for communications about the work of the Town Board was provided to the meeting. It set out the principles to be applied to communications; the presumption that it would be the Board’s Chairman would be quoted in any press statements etc, a defined process for approving press statements etc, the distribution to Board Members of any such statements etc. It also outlined considerations in the event that the Board would wish to utilize social media.

The opportunity for Board Members to contribute to the development of an online presence for the Board was a topic raised in the discussion of this item. In particular, it was felt that

Billy Ball, as Chairman of the Tourism Forum, may be able to contribute to such a development of the online presence.

That the Town Board Communications Protocol submitted to the Board, as a draft, be approved and adopted.

17. NOTES OF THE WORKSHOP ON 15 APRIL 2024

The notes from the workshop on 15 April 2024 were submitted formally to the Board.

It was agreed to receive the Workshop Notes as submitted.

18. NEXT MEETING (26 JUNE AT 1.30PM)

In view of the announcement from the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, on 22 May 2024 that the United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election would take place on 4 July 2024, there was a general agreement among the Members of the Board that the scheduled meeting of the Board on 26 June 2024 should not proceed. **As such, the next meeting would take place on Friday, 19 July 2024.**

Civil Servants would be operating a national pre-election protocol from 25 May until 4 July 2024 and local government would be operating its own protocol from 4 June 2024. Given the need for impartiality in the operating of the civil service and local government, a number of actions and decisions would not be possible while the protocols were in place.

The meeting ended at 4.10pm

Chairman of the Board