

### Clacton Town Board - Long Term Plan for Towns

#### Purpose

This paper provides background information on Government's Long Term Plan for Towns policy, and the tasks required under the programme in the coming months. The paper gives a briefing to new members of the Clacton Town Board, based on Government guidance.

#### Introduction

In the Autumn Statement 2023 the government announced the new Long-Term Plan for Towns, to regenerate 55 towns, including Clacton on Sea.

Each town will receive a **10-year endowment-style fund with £20 million of funding** and support to give towns long term certainty to deliver projects over multiple years and the flexibility to invest in interventions based on evolving local needs and priorities. This will ensure a focus on long-term strategic transformations as well as shorter-term improvements.

A new Town Board will bring together community leaders, employers, local authorities, and the local MP to develop a 10-year Long-Term Plan) for their town, setting out the town's vision and priorities for investment and regeneration, aligned to themes of safety and security, high streets, heritage and regeneration, and transport and connectivity.

Towns will be required to demonstrate how they have developed plans in consultation with local people. As part of this plan, areas will be expected to bring something to the table, whether that is the time and resource of key people, local match-funding or properties to include in regeneration projects.

#### The Investment Plan

Through their Long-Term Plan, towns will identify the measures that matter most to local people under three broad investment themes:

##### **1. Safety and security**

It is impossible to level up a town if people do not feel safe to go into the town centre and businesses are unable to trade because of crime and anti-social behaviour. Towns that feel or are unsafe repel consumers, deter investors, and undermine the norms and behaviour that underpin a thriving society, and pride in place.

**Interventions could include** new and improved security infrastructure, such as CCTV and street lighting; providing additional hotspot policing and local authority wardens; as well as diversionary activity such as support for community outreach facilities.

## 2. High streets, heritage and regeneration

High streets have been centred on retail since the 1960s. As domestic and retail needs have increasingly been met online and in out-of-town retail centres, the challenge for high streets has been whether they are able to adapt. The hollowing out of high streets and town centres can affect the liveability of a place, making it less attractive for, and harder to retain more highly skilled workers.

**Interventions could include** remediating and repurposing vacant shops – including converting these to high quality housing and investing in wider improvements to housing stock; preserving and improving heritage sites in the town; creating and maintaining parks and green spaces; supporting high street cleaning projects; new markets/high street days; establishing Business Improvement Districts; running high street rental auctions; supporting skills and community development so local people can take up opportunities that emerge from business-led regeneration.

## 3. Transport and connectivity

The ease with which town residents can access high streets, jobs and local shopping centres is critical if towns are going to thrive into the future. This means offering sustainable transport options, linking different parts of the town with new infrastructure, safe ways in which people can walk or cycle into the centre, as well as ensuring public transport options are viable and attractive.

Investment will need to be used alongside other themes, particularly safety and security. But used well, this funding could make towns more connected - increasing footfall and viability – to high streets and local shopping centres, and accessibility to local employment opportunities.

**Interventions could include** new infrastructure schemes; road improvements; new programmes to encourage cycling; and making the town centre more walkable and accessible.

### Timetable

- **By 1 April 2024:** Town Board established. Once a Town Board has been set up, capacity funding will be released to support the development of investment plans, including additional community engagement activities. Ongoing support and engagement will be available from the government's Towns Taskforce.
- **From 1 April 2024 to 1 August 2024:** Development of the Long-Term Plan (vision and investment plan) including community engagement activity.
- **By 1 August 2024:** Town Board submits their Long-Term Plan. The Plan will set out how funding will be allocated and spent, with the local authority as the body ultimately accountable for funding.
- **From August 2024:** DLUHC assess plans as they come in, and release 2024 to 2025 capital and revenue funding once plans are approved. (DLUHC say this will be a light touch assessment.)

# **Annexe 1 - Guidance on the Creation of the Long Term Plan**

## **10-year vision**

The Town Board's 10-year vision should be a long-term, strategic document. It should be backed by insights gained through engagement with local people, to create buy-in with the public. It should include:

1. A 250-word vision statement that articulates, at a high level, the vision for the future of the town and how success will be judged.
2. The strategic case for change, building on the evidence in the pack provided by DLUHC with, where relevant, more granular local data and stories.
3. The outcomes and objectives the town is trying to meet and how these align with the priorities of the local community, including what local people think needs fixing, the opportunities the investment offers over the decade, and priority outcomes for 2034 and beyond.
4. The planned direction of travel for the regeneration of the town, across the 3 investment themes.
5. Clear evidence that the Town Board is community led, including through its membership, ways of working and distinction from the local authority, and evidence of buy-in from local businesses, civil society and communities.
6. How the Town Board will attract and combine new and existing private, public and philanthropic investment, setting out the existing commitments and ambitions to secure further support going forwards.
7. High-level delivery milestones over the 10-year lifespan of the programme.

## **Three-year Investment Plan**

Annexed to the Long Term Vision the Three Year Investment Plan should set out:

- the interventions and powers the Town Board wishes to use over the three years for each investment theme;
- how the Town Board will use the interventions locally and how much they will cost; and
- how the interventions will address the outcomes set out in the 10-year vision, grounded in evidence and data.

Local authorities will receive the investment from the Long-Term Plan for Towns over the next three years to fund the Town Board's three-year investment plan.

Local authorities should also be engaged throughout the development of the plan, including discussing the list of interventions and powers to be used from the toolkit. In many cases, the council will need to formally agree through its own structures to deploy powers or interventions where they interact with council responsibilities.

## **A toolkit for community engagement**

Community engagement is at the heart of the Long-Term Plan for Towns, so plans should reflect local priorities and be co-designed with communities, businesses and residents, drawing on available evidence and data.

Some community engagement principles Town Boards might wish to consider when developing their Long-Term Plans:

1. Map the assets in the local area to build from existing strengths and work with community groups who have existing relationships and expertise in community development to design engagement and ensure sufficient reach.
2. Engage early and identify priorities and ambitions to ensure the plans are co-created with the community from the start.
3. Use local knowledge to understand where engagement has typically been weakest and which groups have been underrepresented.
4. Go to where the people are and be creative. Hold engagement events in the social spaces where people meet, for example, the local high-street, youth clubs, pubs, schools and community centres. Maximise the opportunity to get the view from as broader set of residents who may not typically attend consultation events.
5. Use participatory tools, such as participatory budgeting. This can act as a hook to engage residents, helping to identify local solutions and bring forward innovative ideas.
6. Identify opportunities for community ownership of plans and delivery. Consider how community partner members of the Town Board, such as community organisations, can have a clear role in the process.
7. Commit to ongoing accountability. The Town Board should plan ongoing opportunities for engagement with the community at key milestones within plans. People like to stay informed of developments, share progress and how their input has fed in at regular stages throughout the process; this could be done through email, press release, exhibition or in-person events.
8. Seek opportunities for building the development of community leadership and capacity into delivery plans.
9. Don't over-complicate it.