

Plan for Neighbourhoods: Overview, governance, and boundary changes

Purpose

At the Autumn Budget, the Chancellor confirmed that the Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPFT) would be retained and reformed as part of a new regeneration programme and that they would honour the commitments made to the 75 communities promised funding by the previous government, including Clacton on Sea. On 4 March 2025 the new regeneration programme, the Plan for Neighbourhoods, was launched.

This paper sets out an overview of the Plan for Neighbourhoods Prospectus, including what has changed from the previous LTPFT programme. It also gives a summary of the governance and boundary guidance.

Neighbourhood Boards (in our case called a 'Town Board') are required to confirm their finalised membership and place boundary by 22 April 2025.

Recommendations for the Board:

1. **Updates:** To note the overview of the new Plan for Neighbourhoods (and the changes from the LTPFT programme);
2. **Board Membership and Governance:** To approve the proposal to fully retain the Towns Board chair, board members, and governance structure to serve as the new board under the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme; and
3. **Boundary Amendments:** To consider the proposed amendment to the Clacton-on-Sea 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' boundary for submission to MHCLG.

Background

The new Plan for Neighbourhoods aims to provide up to £20 million per place over a 10-year period. The approach involves establishing Neighbourhood Boards to develop and implement comprehensive Regeneration Plans. These plans will outline a 10-year vision and a 4-year investment strategy, focusing on long-term, sustainable solutions rather than short-term fixes. Time will be set aside to establish strong foundations, including governance, management systems, and community involvement.

How does it differ from the Long-Term Plan for Towns?

In many ways the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme is very similar to the LTPFTs programme. It still has a 10-year funding programme, and the funding is still split 75% capital and 25% revenue. It will still be overseen by a board (now designated a Neighbourhood Board) and subject to a long-term vision and investment plan (now called the Regeneration Plan), and it still requires meaningful engagement with the local community.

It has some notable differences though:

1. Boards are being given a longer timescale to ensure that a) the engagement gives us the opportunity to hear from everybody, especially marginalised communities; and b) the Board has time to get established and to get the plan right.

2. The focus is around 3 new objectives aligned to the government's missions:
 - a. Thriving places - improve physical infrastructure & public services
 - b. Stronger communities - enhance social capital and community resilience, build social trust
 - c. Taking back control - empower local people to shape their future.
3. It is a much broader programme, and Government has doubled the number of interventions that the budget can be spent on without requiring additional business cases (see below).
4. The Investment Plan will need to focus on the first four, rather than three years.
5. There is a strong emphasis on crowding-in other investment.

Regeneration Plan and Pre-approved Interventions

Further details regarding the content, form, and submission timetable for Regeneration Plans will be provided in forthcoming guidance. The process, as outlined in the Prospectus to date, is similar to the LTPFT. Neighbourhood boards must collaborate with local residents and the local authority to draft the plan, which will include an overarching vision for change over the next decade and a more detailed investment plan specifying the "interventions" the Board intends to pursue.

The list of interventions has been expanded beyond high streets, safety, and transport, offering greater flexibility in what can be delivered. Below are some examples of potential spending ideas:

- **Regeneration, High Streets, and Heritage:** Public realm improvements (including cleaning street furniture and enforcing shop-front improvements), enhancing green spaces, arts and cultural activities.
- **Housing:** Safe and supportive environments for rough sleepers, neighbourhood renewal, climate-resilient homes, community land trusts.
- **Work, Productivity, and Skills:** Business support, skills provision, support for the visitor economy.
- **Cohesion:** Measures to improve cohesion (e.g., different cultures), impactful volunteering.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Community-level health provision, co-location of services in retail spaces, prevention, drug and alcohol support.
- **Transport:** Active travel enhancements, local bus services, improved rail connectivity and access.
- **Safety and Security:** Designing out crime, police interventions, tackling anti-social behaviour, town centre management (improving local trading, action plans, etc.).
- **Education and Opportunity:** School-based programmes to support young people's development, support for families and young children, community-based adult learning.

Community Engagement

Whilst community engagement was at the heart of the previous programme, the Plan for Neighbourhoods has a stronger emphasis still on building trust, empowering local communities, and targeting areas where engagement has been weakest. For Clacton this is being addressed in the work commissioned from CVST. The Board may want to consider how we strengthen engagement in the longer term, as the Regeneration Plan is developed. The guidance includes suggestions such as participatory approaches, and delegating roles to community groups.

Funding Profile

Delivery funding will be released from the beginning of the 2026/2027 financial year, once the Regeneration Plan has been approved. To facilitate this, an additional £200,000 of capacity funding will be released at the start of the 2025/2026 financial year (see agenda item 10). The guidance states funding can be rolled over.

The figures in the table are all hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Grant	25/ 26	26/ 27	27/ 28	28/ 29	29/ 30	30/ 31	31/ 32	32/ 33	33/ 34	34/ 35	35/ 36	Total
Revenue	200	382	256	432	432	432	432	437	450	450	450	4,599
Capacity	200	150										*600
Grants		232	256	432	432	432	432	437	450	450	450	3,999
Capital		360	1736	1605	1605	1605	1605	1605	1605	1605	1605	14,936

*including £250k from previous year

Total £19,537,000

Board Governance

The guidance for appointing the chair and board members, as well as the governance arrangements, remains broadly the same as the previous LTPFT's programme (set out below). We are not expected to make changes unless necessary. Therefore, it is proposed that the current Clacton Town Board's membership be fully retained to serve as the Neighbourhood Board.

- **Chairperson** - an independent chair, appointed by the Local Authority, in consultation with the MP. The incumbent Town Board chair can be retained.
- **Deputy Chair** – it is for the chair, in partnership with the local authority, to consider appointing a deputy chair (note this is not mandatory)
- **The Board** – *must* include the local MP, senior representative from the police (e.g., PFCC), and local councillors from each tier of the local authorities. Other representatives can include community groups (such as the CVS), local businesses/business groups, culture heritage & arts organisations, public agencies & anchor institutions (health, schools, higher education, relevant local authority officers). These are all represented on the current board.
- **Working Groups** – It is recommended that the Board considers using smaller working groups to deliver the programme's strategic objectives – setting up appropriate groups with additional subject matter experts when required – rather than increasing the size of the Board.
- Council officers can **provide secretariat support** and sit as an observer to the board if agreed with the chair.

Boundary Guidance and Proposed Amendments

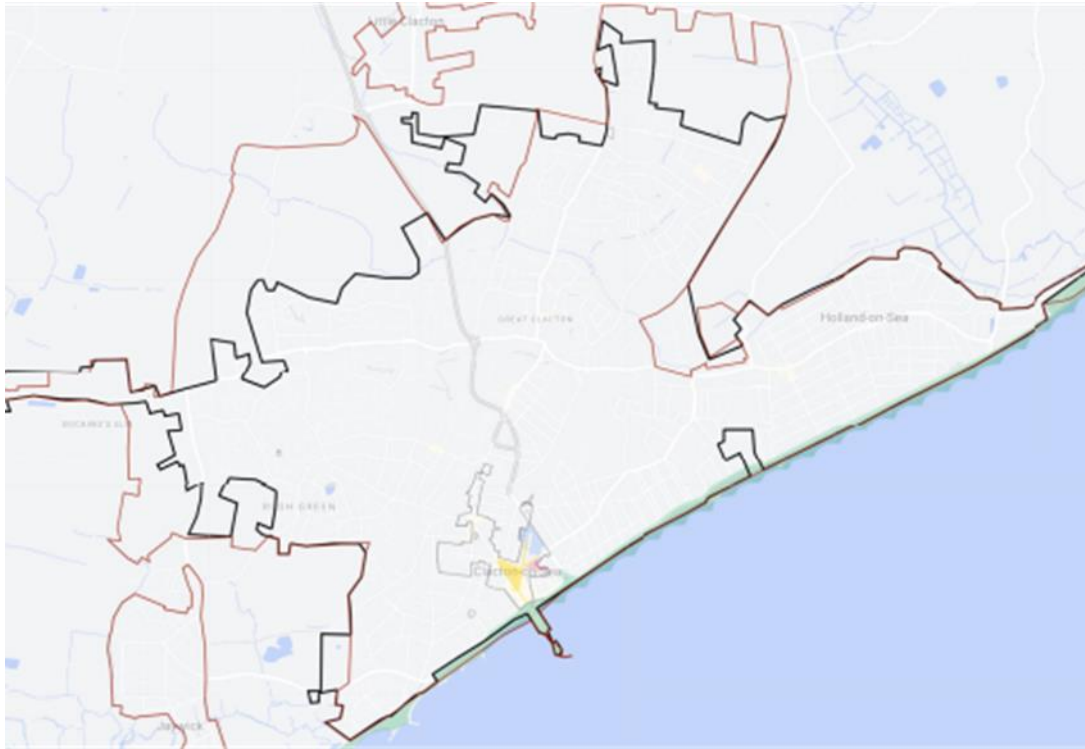
The current boundary (adopted initially under the LTPFTs programme) was based on the existing built-up area of Clacton-on-Sea. The Board are requested to either confirm that we wish to retain this boundary, or set out any amendments to this under our Plan for Neighbourhoods submission. Any amendments must:

- remain within the spirit of the programme
- retain the place that was originally selected
- remain contiguous
- not introduce additional, separate population centres into the agreed area (for example, different communities or neighbourhoods)
- have the agreement of the board and a clear rationale.

Given the 10-year span of the programme, the Board is invited to consider expanding the boundary to include the proposed mixed-use development sites outlined in the current District Council Local Plan. These sites include approximately 5,000 new homes, and the residents within these areas are likely to benefit from the broader programmes of the Plan for Neighbourhoods in the longer term.

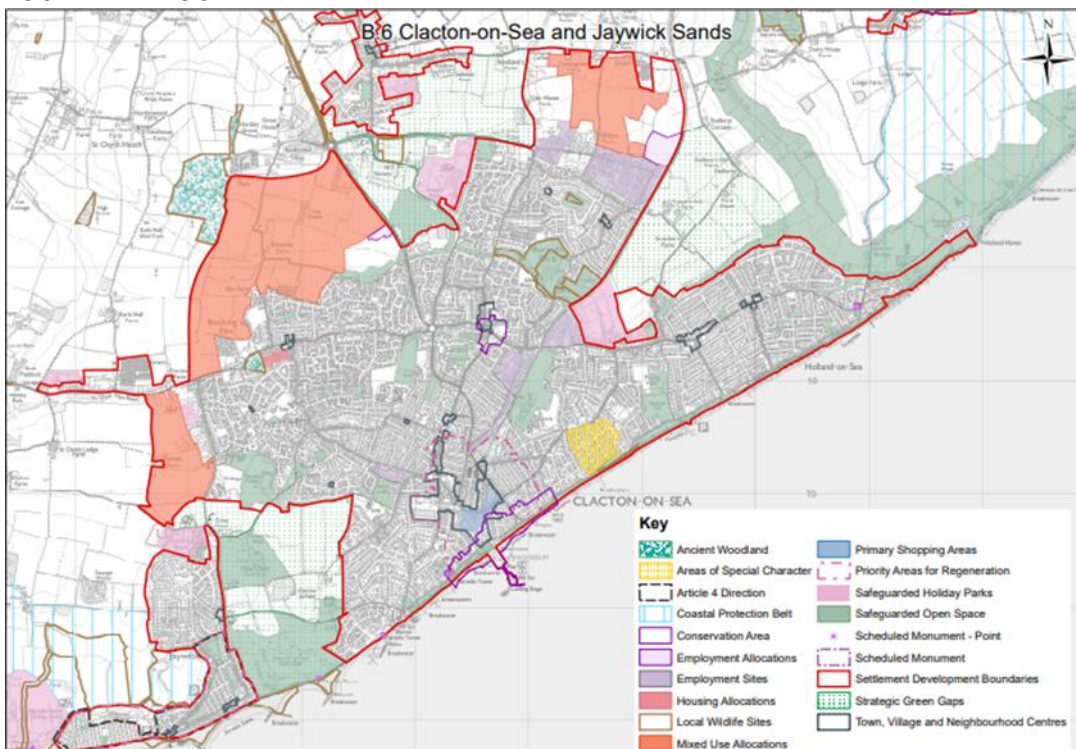
For clarity it is not proposed that we include Little Clacton or Jaywick Sands (also detailed in the Local Plan), as these are separate neighbourhoods and not contiguous to the main Clacton settlement.

DEFAULT BOUNDARY (in black)



Possible extension to include three mixed-use development sites as outlined in the Local Plan (in orange).

LOCAL PLAN BOUNDARY



Next steps/key dates

February to April 2025:

- Neighbourhood Boards and local authorities receive a tailored data pack detailing metrics across the 3 strategic objectives, and polling on local sentiment around investment priorities for their area.

- Neighbourhood Boards to confirm finalised membership and any proposals to alter the 'default' area boundary for spending in their community to MHCLG by Tuesday 22 April 2025. This includes:
 - confirmation that MHCLG has signed off a previously agreed board and boundary.
 - board chair and member details.
 - a nominated contact for the place's Neighbourhood Board
 - confirmation of the proposed geographical boundary
 - supplementary documentation (for example, terms of reference and code of conduct)
 - outline of capacity funding spends to date and plans for additional spending.

Spring 2025:

- MHCLG to review membership and boundary proposals and confirm to places whether acceptable. (Where membership and boundary proposals remain the same, MHCLG will expedite the process. Where further information or changes to the proposed boundary are required, MHCLG might contact the local authority to discuss or seek further information.)
- Further guidance on fund delivery, Regeneration Plan submission, assessment and approval to be published.
- MHCLG issues 2025/26 capacity funding payment.

Spring 2025 to Winter 2025:

- Neighbourhood Boards develop their Regeneration Plan in consultation with the local community and submit it to MHCLG for assessment and approval.

From April 2026:

- First programme delivery funding payment to be made to lead local authorities, commencement of delivery phase.
- MHCLG issues 2026/27 capacity funding payment to all places