

Clacton Town Board Update

30 January 2025

Following our last Board meeting the Government published the Devolution White Paper (Dec 2024). The paper confirmed that the government are retaining the Long Term Plan for Towns and will reform it into a new regeneration programme.

Unfortunately, we have not yet received the new guidance and timelines promised for the New Year, which has necessitated the postponement of the Board meeting. This delay affects some of our work, particularly the consultations, but we are continuing to make progress in other areas.

UPDATES ON CAPACITY FUNDED PROJECTS

Clacton Town website: The Clacton Town website is progressing at pace, with build and content development being undertaken ahead of testing in the next few weeks. A date is being fixed for the sub-group looking at the logo, name, and strapline; this group (Mark, Sharon, and Billy) will meet soon and provide an update to the March Board meeting.

An important element of the website is the 'meet the board' page, where we have included headshots and a few words for each board member and will include a link to each member's Linked In page to ensure the information remains up to date and relevant. **We have asked any board member who does not wish to include this within the board page, to let us know as soon as possible. Also, if anyone does not have a headshot photograph that can be used, please advise us so that we can arrange this.**

Shop Wrapping: As mentioned at the last meeting QD are relocating to Station Road. This is scheduled for 12th February, and we are pleased to report that permission has been granted for window wrapping the remainder of their vacated premises. We are proceeding with Section 215 processes on other vacant premises where appropriate.

Cleaning: An initial assessment has concluded that there is not sufficient budget to fund an additional pavement clean or increase Veolia's bin emptying frequency during the busy summer season. Also, options such as enhanced cleaning agents and moss treatments are restricted in scope. Given these limitations, reallocating the funds toward capital improvements, such as replacement bins, may deliver greater long-term value. Any expansion of cleaning services will be evaluated as part of the wider refuse/cleaning contract renewal in 2026, which could include enhanced street cleaning and bin emptying, subject to available budgets. We can explore further options at the next Board meeting when we review the budgets.

Graffiti: Enforcement measures are now being implemented through powers available under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Banners: Approximately 65 street light columns include integrated banner fixings. Should we utilise all locations, annual strength testing costs would be around £6,000. We are awaiting feedback from the Highways Assets team regarding requirements for a private contractor (previously used for Christmas light weight testing) to potentially provide a more cost-effective

service. Business sponsorship is not permitted to cover this cost, as Highways prohibit commercial advertising on their lighting columns. The working group for shop wrapping and banner designs will consider design styles to align with the new Clacton branding/logo development, aiming for installation for the start of the season.

Community Consultation: Following the Board's decision, CVST has been contracted to undertake the resident's consultation, as per their original tender submission. This is due to start in early February, but subject to the new guidance being published, so may be delayed.

Free Public Wi-Fi Pilot: Tendring District Council and Essex County Council have submitted an expression of interest for the "Illuminate & Connect" 2025 pilot funding opportunity. This is organised by BABLE and Signify¹. It invites UK and Irish cities/local authorities to use public Wi-Fi technology to tackle town centre challenges like digital inclusion, smart transport, tourism, and environmental monitoring.

The pilot can cover a maximum area of 300m² area, and we have proposed that this would provide free public Wi-Fi and digital signage for safety and tourism information focussing on the area between the Town Hall and Clacton Pier. If successful, this could be rolled out to a wider geography, and by enabling street lighting devices with Internet of Things (IoT) capabilities (i.e. connecting them securely to monitor/send and receive data), a host of other digital intelligent services could be delivered e.g. real time car parking information.

We can update the Board at the meeting in March if we get through to the next round and are invited to submit a full bid.

DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR)

Finally, Board Members will likely have seen the proposals for Devolution in Greater Essex, including support from Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council to pursue this alongside Local Government Re-organisation – which would see Tendring District Council merge with neighbouring authorities to create a new unitary council. A further update is anticipated on this in the coming days when we should learn if Essex is on the Priority Programme for this work.

If Devolution and LGR go ahead it should be noted that the Long Term Plan for Towns initiative will continue. We will keep the Board updated as this process develops, and we have the opportunity to bring an item exploring the implications to a future Board meeting

¹ **Signify** (formerly Philips Lighting) offers BrightSites streetlighting, which integrates Wi-Fi and lighting into one unit, enabling digital Wi-Fi rollout through existing streetlighting infrastructure. **BABLE** is consultancy that helps cities achieve digital transformation and sustainability goals. They will guide bidders through the pilot process, from planning to post-deployment support. Successful bidders may be featured in future Signify promotional materials.