



SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGENERATING SEASIDE TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities was appointed by the House on 17 May 2018. The remit of the Committee is “to consider the regeneration of seaside towns and communities”.

The Committee will explore the following key issues in detail and would welcome your views on **any or all** of the following questions. Please note that questions are not listed here in any particular order of importance.

This is a public call for written evidence to be submitted to the Committee. The deadline is 1pm on Tuesday 9 October 2018.

Background and understanding

1. What are the challenges facing seaside towns and communities? Which of those challenges are common to many seaside towns, and to what extent (and why) have such challenges persisted over a number of years?
2. Has sufficient research been conducted to provide robust analysis of the economic and social health and vitality of seaside towns? What are the main conclusions to be drawn from such data and research – and where are the principal gaps in knowledge and understanding?

Housing and demographics

3. To what extent are seaside towns affected by issues arising from the nature of their housing stock, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and former tourist accommodation that has been converted for other uses? How might any such issues be addressed – and are any changes to Government policy required?
4. Do population transience, and demographic changes more widely, present any particular issues for seaside towns and communities? What is the nature and scale of such issues, and how can local organisations and communities be assisted in seeking to address them?

Transport and connectivity

5. Do problems relating to transport and connectivity (including digital connectivity) present a barrier to economic growth for seaside towns and communities? What action has been taken to address such matters, and is any further Government action required? To what extent would addressing such issues create the opportunity for future inward investment and growth?

The role of the visitor economy

6. How successful have initiatives that seek to promote tourism and the visitor economy in seaside towns proven to be? How important are these sectors to the economies of seaside towns? Is sufficient attention being given to the potential contribution that could be made by other sectors, beyond tourism?

Physical regeneration

7. Are sufficient tools and resources available to local authorities, property owners and other stakeholders to allow them to promote and deliver the restoration and regeneration of the physical environment in seaside towns? Could new approaches – or the removal of any existing barriers – support further regeneration?

Social and economic regeneration

8. What work is being done in seaside towns to support social and economic regeneration, and to improve social mobility across the whole community? What more could or should be done by the Government, and relevant organisations, to deliver such initiatives?
9. What role should local businesses, SMEs and social enterprises play in seeking to deliver regeneration in seaside towns? How effective is any help currently provided to these groups by the Government, local authorities and others? Are there any barriers to growth that could be addressed by changes in policy?

Education, health and wellbeing

10. Is educational provision in coastal communities of a good enough standard? Do coastal communities experience any particular challenges around the provision of secondary, further and higher education and, if so, what action should be taken to promote positive change?

11. Is there evidence to suggest that certain health conditions are more prevalent in seaside towns? What factors might contribute to levels of poor health in coastal areas? Would any targeted interventions help to address any such issues in these areas?

Delivery structures

12. What impact has the Coastal Communities Fund had upon seaside towns and communities? Are any further targeted interventions from Government required?
13. To what extent is it currently possible to develop a 'vision' for individual seaside towns? Is there a need for longer-term thinking and, if so, is that need currently being met? What role should Government departments, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and other stakeholders play in delivering against such a vision, and is any action required to improve integrated working between these groups?
14. Are there fiscal or financial measures available which could help to support the regeneration of seaside towns? Could the Government provide any financial freedoms or investments which would help to generate positive change?

People and place

15. What role should local people and local communities play in the regeneration of seaside towns and communities? Do good processes of community engagement, and community resilience and capacity building, currently exist and, if so, could they be applied more widely?
16. Do any integrated models of regeneration, bringing together local communities, businesses, public sector bodies and others to pursue common goals, currently exist? If so, how do such models seek to promote physical, social and economic regeneration in seaside towns? How can any lessons learnt from such work be applied more widely – and is further innovation required?

Guidance for making submissions

Written evidence should be submitted online using the written submission form available at <https://www.parliament.uk/regenerating-seaside-towns-committee-submission-form>

If you do not have access to a computer you may submit a paper copy to:

Clerk to the Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns, Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW.

The deadline for written evidence is 1 pm on Tuesday 9 October 2018.

Short, concise submissions, of no more than seven pages, are preferred. A longer submission should include a one-page summary. Paragraphs should be numbered. Submissions should be dated, with a note of the author's name, and of whether the author is acting on an individual or corporate basis. All submissions made through the written submission form will be acknowledged automatically by email.

Personal contact details supplied to the Committee will be removed from submissions before publication but will be retained by the Committee staff for specific purposes relating to the Committee's work, such as seeking additional information.

Submissions become the property of the Committee which will decide whether to accept them as evidence. Evidence may be published by the Committee at any stage. It will normally appear on the Committee's website and will be deposited in the Parliamentary Archives. Once you have received acknowledgement that your submission has been accepted as evidence, you may publicise or publish it yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee. If you publish your evidence separately, you should be aware that you will be legally responsible for its content.

You should be careful not to comment on individual cases currently before a court of law, or matters in respect of which court proceedings are imminent. If you anticipate such issues arising, you should discuss with the Clerk of the Committee how this might affect your submission.

Certain individuals and organisations may be invited to appear in person before the Committee to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the Clerk, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct.

You can follow the progress of the inquiry at www.parliament.uk/regenerating-seaside-towns/

Draft Response
Call for Evidence – Regenerating Seaside Towns

Deadline 09/10/18 – Submissions of no more than seven pages, longer submissions should include a one-page summary.

1. What are the challenges facing seaside towns and communities? Which of those challenges are common to many seaside towns, and to what extent (and why) have such challenges persisted over a number of years?

Infrastructure – Limited 180-degree access leading to traffic problems in the centre and entry roads, managing the holiday traffic in Skegness is difficult due to the poor road network and condition of the roads. Lincolnshire does not have a motorway and is dominated by single carriageway trunk road and minor roads.

Seasonal/low paid and unskilled jobs to service the tourist industry. The lack of further education institutions and skilled year-round employment means the town loses valuable talent. The dependency on benefits influences the local tax base meaning that the locally funded cost of Councils is less fairly distributed than in affluent areas.

Difficult to attract skilled persons, professionals and Doctors to the area. Local GP surgeries, the local urgent care centre and nearest hospital have all reported this as an issue. Additional strain on medical services in summer months due to the large influx of tourists and temporary residents, without this being factored within funding calculations, puts an additional strain on these under resourced services.

Underfunding of local hospital trusts and the centralisation of specialist services into Lincoln which is a minimum of one hour away over poor roads, is a threat to health. This is exacerbated due to the local population having a higher proportion of elderly retired and poorer families who are more likely to have chronic medical conditions requiring frequent hospital treatment and do not have access to a car. The influx of tourists during the summer increases demand for A&E services.

Housing Stock and inability to build – high number of small B&B's and small hotels for sale, a perceived increase in the number of HMO's, lack of affordable, starter and retirement homes. Due to flood zone and existing unused permissions the local plan does not support any further housing development. Existing permissions are held by two building companies. Housing classified as affordable generally isn't for those on low pay.

Tidal Flooding – Skegness is at significant risk from tidal flooding with existing sea defence life being reduced by rising sea levels caused by global warming.

It is believed by this Council that these challenges are common to other seaside towns and that they have persisted over many years and are getting progressively worse.

2. Has sufficient research been conducted to provide robust analysis of the economic and social health and vitality of seaside towns? What are the main conclusions to be drawn from such data and research – and where are the principal gaps in knowledge and understanding?

No, this Council believes there is a lack of robust analysis of the economic and social health and vitality of seaside towns. The majority of research conducted for this area covers the whole of East Lindsey which is a large area consisting of affluent towns and countryside villages, along with more deprived areas consisting of declining market towns and the coastal strip. This Council when completing a major funding application could find little research specifically on Skegness or surrounding coastal towns and finds that a lot of the research available is out of date. Grant funders want to see this research as evidence of need and in its absence applications are more likely to be declined, frustrating potential investment.

This Town Council wrote to the local planning inspectors in January 2018 regarding the evidence base for the local plan with concern that the evidence base is out of date or lacking and that the plan itself was not robust enough and lacked ambition and strategic thinking.

Consultation for the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), identified the following areas where further evidence is required:

- Evidence on number of HMOs within the town and their perceived expansion
- Local heritage listings
- Need for further health care facilities
- Provision for utilities to increase capacity for the town, in particular water.
- Evidence which considers the demand for a commercial leisure destination; demand locally and interest from the market.
- Flood risk, further detail to identify how flood risk can be mitigated in areas which could come forward for new development
- Alternative methods to increase the delivery of affordable housing
- Local housing need survey, in particular assessing affordable housing needs
- The need for a Western Relief Road (A52 to A158)
- The need for higher education facilities and interest in the education sector to expand provision into Skegness
- Market sector analysis of economy
- Demand for and impact of caravan parks on Skegness

3. To what extent are seaside towns affected by issues arising from the nature of their housing stock, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and former tourist accommodation that has been converted for other uses? How might any such issues be addressed – and are any changes to Government policy required?

Public consultation suggests that the town is affected by the nature of its housing stock and that it is not providing suitable and affordable accommodation, there is a perception that an increase in HMO's results in a drop of housing value and an increase in anti-social behaviour. It is not possible to evidence this due to the lack of research around these issues. Tighter controls within government planning policy could help to address this and prevent developers from holding planning permissions and not building.

4. Do population transience, and demographic changes more widely, present any particular issues for seaside towns and communities? What is the nature and scale of such issues, and how can local organisations and communities be assisted in seeking to address them?

Yes, extra pressure is put on the town's road and rail network and health services, there are a high number of temporary residents that do not seem to be taken into account when funding

decisions are made. It is suspected that there is a considerable “off radar” residency, with people living on non-residential caravan parks for most of the year and then moving into B&B accommodation when parks are closed.

Skegness Town Council supports the fairer funding campaign for Lincolnshire.
<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/a-fairer-funding-deal-for-lincolnshire/131671.article>

5. Do problems relating to transport and connectivity (including digital connectivity) present a barrier to economic growth for seaside towns and communities? What action has been taken to address such matters, and is any further Government action required? To what extent would addressing such issues create the opportunity for future inward investment and growth?

Yes, poor transport networks present a barrier for economic growth and commuting. Investment in the road and rail infrastructure is needed to promote industry growth and create skilled employment opportunities. The NDP Steering group suggested a transport hub is needed to promote investment, economic development and job opportunities.

Digital connectivity is acceptable in major centers of population, but much of the coastal strip and adjacent hinterland comprises small villages and hamlets which either have no coverage or very poor coverage unsuitable to support businesses increasingly reliant on an on-line presence. The cost of providing traditional infrastructure to these areas is not economically justifiable for the digital suppliers. Therefore, universal connectivity will need to be either supported by government funding or there will need to be legislative changes to force infrastructure providers to install in non-profitable areas.

6. How successful have initiatives that seek to promote tourism and the visitor economy in seaside towns proven to be? How important are these sectors to the economies of seaside towns? Is sufficient attention being given to the potential contribution that could be made by other sectors, beyond tourism?

Skegness Town Council has had an unsuccessful Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) application but has witnessed the positive impact on other coastal Towns where CCF funding and other funding streams have been forthcoming. Tourism is essential to the town and some success in extending the season has been seen through the Lincolnshire Coastal Destination Business Improvement District although this is still in its infancy.

The Council does not believe that enough attention is being given to the potential contribution that could be made by other sectors and would welcome any support and investment to explore this and diversify the offer of Seaside towns. Better working partnerships between authorities and support to Town and Parishes to attract locally targeted funding is needed for further regeneration.

7. Are sufficient tools and resources available to local authorities, property owners and other stakeholders to allow them to promote and deliver the restoration and regeneration of the physical environment in seaside towns? Could new approaches –or the removal of any existing barriers – support further regeneration?

Better working partnerships between authorities and support to Town and Parishes to attract funding is needed to encourage further regeneration. A lack of officer resource in County and

District authorities, due to funding pressures, is resulting in less engagement with Town and Parish Councils who understand local needs. Asset transfer needs to be made easier with national guidelines and assistance for Town and Parish Councils, rather than this being developed ad-hoc, inconsistently and as a result at a higher cost.

8. What work is being done in seaside towns to support social and economic regeneration, and to improve social mobility across the whole community? What more could or should be done by the Government, and relevant organisations, to deliver such initiatives?

Skegness Town Council's (STC) Business Plan theme is "***Taking Control Taking Responsibility***". This refers to the Council's ambition to step up, using the powers under the Localism Act to take more responsibility for those areas important to the residents of Skegness and to the local community. This Council has already taken on the responsibility for cutting more than 130,000 m² of grass verges and is in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Council is also working on a project to regenerate the center of the Town by replacing the derelict Pavilion building in Tower Gardens and take over the management of the gardens and other assets in the Town to improve the area.

The Environment Agency is sometimes seen as a block to economic development in the area, the government needs to review its coastal defence strategy to ensure it supports sustainable growth. Further government investment and support from relevant organisations is needed as a catalyst to deliver and build on these initiatives, attract further investment and to make the most of the local capacity and energy to drive change.

9. What role should local businesses, SMEs and social enterprises play in seeking to deliver regeneration in seaside towns? How effective is any help currently provided to these groups by the Government, local authorities and others? Are there any barriers to growth that could be addressed by changes in policy?

Business need support with training and developing year-round trade, they also need confidence that any investments will be fruitful in delivering a satisfactory return. As previously identified many businesses need supportive infrastructure whether transport or digital to consider investing in non-tourism industries. In the retail sector, high rents and business rates are crippling many remaining retail businesses. Changes in regulation to encourage lower business rents and to discourage landlords from leaving premises empty could help develop new high street offerings. Government should also consider the change in the retail habits of shoppers and whether business rate levels should be adjusted to create a more level playing field between on-line and traditional retailers.

10. Is educational provision in coastal communities of a good enough standard? Do coastal communities experience any particular challenges around the provision of secondary, further and higher education and, if so, what action should be taken to promote positive change?

Skegness lacks higher and further education provision. People leave for university and do not return to the area due to the lack of skilled and professional employment opportunities. As a result, education levels of the permanent resident population is low. Positive change would be promoted by providing higher and further education opportunities for example a specialist leisure training facility or national training academy.

11. Is there evidence to suggest that certain health conditions are more prevalent in seaside towns? What factors might contribute to levels of poor health in coastal areas? Would any targeted interventions help to address any such issues in these areas?

Skegness is a popular resort for people to retire to. People with health and mobility issues are attracted to the area due to the sea air and flat terrain. Skegness has deprived areas and due to this sees a higher prevalence in smoking rates and related diseases, along with mental health and wellbeing issues and addictions. Targeted interventions to promote education and aspirations, health and wellbeing and addiction recovery, along with initiatives to reduce social isolation would help to address these issues. However, the underlying issues will only be permanently tackled by raising aspirations, income levels and education.

12. What impact has the Coastal Communities Fund had upon seaside towns and communities? Are any further targeted interventions from Government required?

CCF funding is desperately needed in Skegness, improvements can be seen in other towns that have had significant CCF and other funding which then in turn creates a confidence in the area which attracts further investment. Skegness Town Council had an unsuccessful £3.7 million CCF bid in 2017. There is an impression that once external funding is initially obtained it is easier to attract further funding as track record has been established and all the supporting background evidence for applications is in situ. Further targeted interventions and funding from the Government is desperately needed in Skegness to tackle the issues it faces.

13. To what extent is it currently possible to develop a 'vision' for individual seaside towns? Is there a need for longer-term thinking and, if so, is that need currently being met? What role should Government departments, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and other stakeholders play in delivering against such a vision, and is any action required to improve integrated working between these groups?

A cohesive and supported vision is difficult to achieve. There is no single corporate entity responsible and held accountable. Skegness Town Council is developing its own Neighbourhood Development Plan and has its own Business Plan. The LCDIB has a vision for the coastal strip. ELDC has a vision for East Lindsey. LCC has a vision for Lincolnshire. The Local Enterprise Partnership has a regional view and many other organisations have their own plans and strategies. However, these don't necessarily support each other and whilst they all might include Skegness the vast majority are not specific to the Town. Wider ranged plans are watered down by County or Regional priorities which tend to focus on major towns and cities. Further work is needed to develop a long-term cohesive vision that is supported by all authorities and organisations in the area. Government should support this by ensuring there is a duty to undertake this work and should provide authorities with the necessary resources to engage and support their local councils more robustly and effectively.

14. Are there fiscal or financial measures available which could help to support the regeneration of seaside towns? Could the Government provide any financial freedoms or investments which would help to generate positive change?

Business Rate relief or revaluation to reflect the rapidly changing retail sector. Grant funding to recognise the disproportionate impact high levels of Council Tax benefit has on local council funding. VAT relief for tourism related goods and services could be provided along with other incentives to attract investment and economic development.

15. What role should local people and local communities play in the regeneration of seaside towns and communities? Do good processes of community engagement, and community resilience and capacity building, currently exist and, if so, could they be applied more widely?

Local people and communities should play as big a role as possible but need support, due to the deprivation in the area whilst there is a willingness there is sometimes a lack of knowledge, skill and expertise to successfully get projects off the ground and make successful funding applications. Town and Parish Councils are uniquely placed to work towards regeneration of seaside towns but need the resources to support this that does not place further burden on the deprived area. Specific grants available over a 3 to 5 year period could provide the necessary seeding to get groups established, mobilised and sustainable. Improved engagement, support, capacity and resource is needed for authorities to successfully work together on projects, plans and visions that are collaborated on right from the start.

16. Do any integrated models of regeneration, bringing together local communities, businesses, public sector bodies and others to pursue common goals, currently exist? If so, how do such models seek to promote physical, social and economic regeneration in seaside towns? How can any lessons learnt from such work be applied more widely – and is further innovation required?

Cornwall appears to have created an environment where Local Councils work closely with other authorities with a shift in local service delivery. There has been considerable support from Cornwall Council and what appears at least from outside to be a close working relationship. Cornwall appears to have been successful in attracting grant funding for development both for initial schemes and subsequently for successive additional developments.

Authors: Mr S Lerner, Town Clerk and Mrs K Ford, Deputy Town Clerk
On Behalf of: Skegness Town Council

SKEGNESS TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT TO: DIRECTION AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE
26TH SEPTEMBER 2018
BY: TOWN CLERK
SUBJECT: Cemetery Land Offer

PURPOSE: To consider an offer made in respect of potential cemetery land.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Council has been approached by legal representatives of a local land owner in respect of land adjacent to St Mary's Cemetery. The owner is offering to sell a small parcel of land behind the existing cemetery.
- 1.2. The current cemetery has approximately 35 years of space left and the proposed additional area would give approximately a further 50 to 60 years of spaces assuming it was classed as a lawn cemetery.
- 1.3. The asking price for the land is commercially confidential for this written report but will be made available to the Committee on exclusion of the press and public. In general terms it is set at a level that reflects the cost per acre of grade 1 agricultural land.

2. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

- 2.1. The main opportunity for the Council is to secure land adjacent to the existing cemetery that might not become available again.
- 2.2. The risks and issues are: -
 - The Council will not need the land for another 30 to 40 years.
 - The land would require vehicular access as it is too far from the car park/church for coffins to be carried.
 - The land would need to be managed until brought into use
 - About 5 years prior to use, the land would need to be prepared and laid out as a cemetery
 - The offer has come at a time when there are other major projects and resources are stretched

3 FINANCES

- 3.1 The Council have previously agreed to use some or all the cemetery reserve to support current business plan activities. There is enough available from within the reserve to make the purchase and associated legal costs, but this would reduce the Council's options within its broader finances during a period of considerable change.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Directions and Strategy Committee to consider the options and recommend to Council how to proceed.

FOR DECISION

For information relating to this report please contact
The Town Clerk, Town Hall
Skegness or email
townclerk@skegness.gov.uk

Background papers None