

Template for additional funding ask for Local Growth Fund (LGF) projects

1. Project title

Southend Town Centre Intervention Project (STCIP)

2. Federated Board

Opportunity South Essex (OSE)

3. Project description

The Southend Town Centre Intervention Project comprises a number of interventions designed to decrease vacancy rates and increase footfall:

- Additional and upgraded CCTV across the town centre to improve community safety.
- Provision of footfall cameras – to provide baseline information to inform future action and support investment enquiries.
- Shop Front Grants – to encourage shop owners in key gateways to the town centre to improve the appearance of their premises.
- 0% loans – to encourage the use of empty town centre premises either as alternative commercial or mixed use.
- Public realm and way finding works – to improve the feel of the town centre and encourage visitors. Wayfinding will encourage people to explore the side streets.
- Activities in empty shop units – working with the BID and other stakeholders to develop a programme of activities for empty units in key locations. This will increase footfall and dwell time as well as encouraging investment in empty units.

4. What was the value of the Benefit Cost Ratio included in the original Business Case approved by SELEP?

The BCR as assessed by the ITE as part of the Gate 2 assessment of the business case was 5:1

5. Summary of project benefits

The project is expected to realise a range of benefits:

Commercial floorspace brought back into use

Reduction in vacancy rates

Improved public realm

Increased footfall

Improved community safety

Additional housing units

19 jobs

The project also complements other town centre activity including the S-CATS project (LGF



funded), Cooltowns, Sunrise and NPIF.

6. Existing LGF allocation

The current LGF allocation is £1.5m. The total project value is £2.500m.

7. LGF spent to date

No spend to date. Orders for public realm work to be placed imminently and negotiations underway for empty shop unit so spend to be incurred Q3 and Q4 20/21.

8. Additional LGF sought

An additional LGF allocation of £125,000 is sought.

9. Why is additional LGF investment required?

The STCIP project seeks to complement a number of other town centre initiatives and create a welcoming environment in which visitors to the town centre feel safe and as a consequence are happy to spend time exploring what it has to offer. To this end a key part of the project is the provision of additional CCTV and an upgrading of the existing equipment.

An area which has experienced a number of recent issues, including a murder, is the Forum Square located between Elmer Approach and the Farringdon Service Road. The site is adjacent to the High Street and sits to the front of the existing Forum building and the Focal Point Gallery. This was also the site for the Forum II project which has recently been withdrawn due to issues directly attributable to the COVID pandemic.

CCTV in this area is not going to be provided through the STCIP project as it was expected that the Forum II project would provide CCTV in addition to other local improvements which would have improved safety in the area. AS the Forum II project is no longer going ahead this leaves a significant gap in CCTV coverage and means that other community safety measures cannot be implemented. These included preventing access to the rear of High Street properties, lighting improvements and gated access to the service road.

The provision of the additional LGF will allow the CCTV and community safety elements of the Forum II project to be implemented ensuring that there is no blindspot in coverage. This will also ensure that the benefits attributed to the STCIP will be achieved.

10. Can the project proceed without the additional LGF allocation?

Yes

11. What are the main project risks impacting the ability of the project to proceed?

The main project risks relate to COVID. Some aspects of the project have already been delayed



as a consequence of the COVID lockdown. Good progress is now being made and the project team has been able to find a way forward working within current Government guidelines. Contractors have also had time to familiarise themselves with the guidance and implement new and compliant working practices. Clearly we will need to respond to any change in the 'Tier status' for Southend or any future lockdown but we are confident that we have the measures in place to achieve this. All materials have now been ordered and will be stored locally so that securing supplies will not be an issue going forward. The only remaining risk relates to the take up of loans and grants by town centre business. Clearly in the current climate there is a possibility that businesses will not have the appetite for investment. Consultations with the BID and informal approaches from agents and potential inward investors suggest that demand will be strong. We have also considered alternative approaches to delivering the project and do have back up plans in place if needed.

12. Have the project benefits changed since the original Business Case was approved by the Accountability Board?

If yes, please state the nature of these changes and the likely impact on the value for money case.

No.

13. How can the project support the economic recovery?

There is a growing body of research to suggest that the emerging role of town centres is to become a 'destination' to encourage residents and visitors to visit and spend more time (and money) in their local urban centre. Investment in good quality public realm and measures to make public space more desirable are critical to the competitiveness of place and key to transforming a town centre into a destination. Evidence of high-quality public realm in flagship locations such as Oxford Street in London estimates an uplift in footfall in the region of 32%, and a 17% increase in retail sales, as a result of good public realm investment. On a smaller scale, Altrincham has reaped the benefits of investing in good public realm, amongst other measures, which has meant 'footfall has increased, and vacancy rates have fallen'. Trafford Council's town Centres Business Growth Programme has levered in over £600,000 of private investment and created 100 jobs. This precedent suggests that investment in the public realm and other related activities generates 'economic benefit streams' that translate into 'economic impact' through a number of mechanisms: attracting investment; increasing land and property values; attracting visitors; increasing tourism; improving productivity; and enhancing image. The STCIP project provides a package of measures which, alongside, other town centre programmes that will generate the benefit streams leading to a positive economic impact for Southend.



14. If additional funding is awarded to the project, are there any remaining barriers to project delivery (for example: outstanding planning approvals, other Governance requirements, other funding sources awaiting confirmation)?

There are no barriers to project delivery. The Forum II project and associated works had planning permission.

Original funding breakdown (as per the original Business Case) (£m)

Funding source	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024 onwards	Total
<i>LGF via SELEP</i>					0.285	1.215					1.500
<i>SBC match funding</i>					0.200	0.800					1.000
Total					0.485	2.015					2.500

Revised funding breakdown (£m)

Funding source	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024 onwards	Total
<i>LGF via SELEP</i>						0.500	1.125				1.625
<i>SBC match funding</i>						0.200	0.800				1.000
Total						0.700	1.925				2.625



Sign off of additional funding ask – required from lead County/Unitary Authority

Dear Colleague,

In submitting this project application for additional LGF, I confirm on behalf of *[Insert name of County or Unitary Authority]* that:

- The information presented in this application is accurate.
- The application states all substantial project risks known at the time of submission.
- The delivery body has considered the public sector equality duty and has had regard to the requirements under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 throughout their decision making process. This should include the development of an Equality Impact Assessment which will remain as a live document through the projects development and delivery stages.
- The delivery body has access to the skills, expertise and resource to support the delivery of the project.
- Adequate revenue budget has been or will be allocated to support the post scheme completion monitoring and benefit realisation reporting.
- The project will be delivered under the conditions in the signed LGF Service Level Agreement with the SELEP Accountable Body and SELEP Ltd.

I note that the information presented in this application will be presented in the public domain as part of the Strategic Board's prioritisation of projects. Any information presented in this application which is considered commercially sensitive and confidential, has been highlighted as such within this application.

Yours Faithfully,

S151 Officer

Name	Joe Chesterton
Signature	
Date	29/10/2020

Senior Responsible Officer

Name	Emma Cooney
Signature	
Date	29/10/2020