

DR KIERAN MULLAN MP
(BEXHILL & BATTLE)



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Prime Minister &
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

25 July 2024

Our Ref: KM33642

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

We are writing this joint letter to you, from MP for Bexhill-on-Sea, Chair of Town Board, and the Board Members of Bexhill Town Board, to convey to you the urgency we all feel in moving forward with our Town Partnership in light of the recent decision to delay the next stage of the process. We recognise you may have felt this was the right decision - but we hope you will understand why we are anxious to ensure that any period of delay is kept to an absolute minimum.

Our communities and local businesses are hopeful and optimistic about the transformative change that this funding could bring to our town. Indeed, following on from the extensive work we have done across the last 3 months there is already a high level of expectation for funding and delivery.

Our plan speaks directly to the needs identified through this engagement and through mapping of existing strategic priorities for the town. It is a plan premised on strategic use of funding that also promotes pride and ownership of the town. The needs of our town are clear. Whilst we have some affluent areas, health and economic inequalities are wide. Our data shows increasing levels of claimant count unemployed residents, rapidly increasing high street retail property vacancies and poor connectivity from residential areas to the town centre. Our community and business engagement shows a love for the town but also a level of frustration and despair at what is most often seen as its rapid decline. It also highlights that the funding allocated from the Long-Term Plan for Towns has given hope.

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Beyond overseeing the decision making for the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding, the Bexhill Town Board also has the ambition to bring partners and community stakeholders together to promote joint working, and fuse community generated knowledge and ambitions with strategic insight and Local Government powers and responsibilities. This is something that has been lacking for many years, and we believe the encouragement and promotion of this new way of working could bring huge benefits to the residents and businesses of Bexhill.

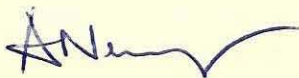
As Board Members, we have been selected for our relevant experience and knowledge, which spans local government, business, health, education, arts and culture and also our communities which are diverse in age and need. We have also been chosen for our constructive approach to joint working and our overarching aspiration for the long-term good of our town, over and above personal or organisational interest.

Bexhill-on-Sea has desperately needed such an investment as this, and a Board such as this that can advocate for the needs of the whole community, sitting above political and organisational interests.

We know you will want to do everything you can to honour the commitments made by the previous Government to our town, which we have worked to (and taken community and business with us) in good faith.


We believe that transformational opportunities under the Long-Term Plans for Towns are unprecedented, not just for Bexhill, and on that basis that we ask for the possibility of a conversation to aid in your review and consideration of the Long-Term Plan for Towns.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Abi Newbury

Chair of Bexhill Town Board



Dr Kieran Mullan MP

Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle