

Canvey Island Town Centre Shopfront Improvement Scheme

Background

- The quality of commercial stock in Canvey Town Centre is generally poor and dated.
- Poor quality stock is a deterrent to new businesses, poses challenges and additional costs for existing business owners and negatively contributes to perceptions of poor safety and a tired high street by visitors.
- PiP Engagement October 2025 - “Canvey Town Centre” was the third most prioritised element from the “postcards from the future” engagement exercise.
- People told us the town centre felt “tired” and “uninviting”; there was a desire for more diversity in the offer and a wish for a safer town centre.

Project Overview

- The Board proposed the allocation of £80k to Town Centre “Shopfront Improvement Schemes” in the 4 Year Investment Plan submitted to MHCLG. The funding would come from the revenue element of the delivery funding provision.
- Shopfront improvement schemes have been successfully run by many Local Authorities across the UK. They are often perceived as a good value ‘quick win’ activity, whereby residents can see a transformational impact, in a relatively short space of time.
- CPBC delivered a successful programme in Hadleigh utilising UKSPF funding in 2025/26 with grants offered up to £3k per applicant – with business owners contributing 50% of the total works costs.
- In Hadleigh demand was high; 15 applications were approved in 25/26, with £22,373.60 of UKSPF grant funding committed.
- Typically works cover new shop fronts, repairs and re-instatement, repainting of shop fronts, repairs (not roof) and repointing, and pedestrian access to comply with Disability Discrimination Act.

Relationship to Wider Regeneration Activities

- The Castle Point Plan 2026 – 2043 proposes a Master Plan approach to the wider regeneration of Canvey Town Centre
- As well as addressing opportunities to develop the town centre and redefine its purpose, the long-term Master Plan will set out proposals for securing additional improvements to the public realm, accessibility, enhancing existing services and achieving sustained economic growth.
- The Shopfront Grant Programme would complement the aims and objectives of the wider Master Plan approach to regeneration in the town centre.

Hadleigh Shopfront Programme Completed Works

Before



After



Delivery Options

- Options for the delivery provider and management of the scheme include:
 - Option A:** Internal delivery via an appointed CPBC Officer
 - Option B:** External delivery partner
- It is for the Board to decide whether it wishes to obtain quotes and explore the option of an external delivery partner or if it would like CPBC to deliver this project internally via an allocated officer.
- Management tasks might include but are not limited to:

Project Stage	Indicative Tasks	Estimated Officer Time (based on Hadleigh scheme delivery)
Initial programme development	Setting parameters, eligibility requirements, assessment criteria, formalising design guide with external contractor	8 hours
Pre-launch preparation	Creating application forms & guidance documents, grant templates, web content, promotional materials and set up of project tracking and monitoring tools, engagement with local businesses	10 – 12 hours
Application management, assessment and decision making	Co-ordination of launch, , liaison with applicants via email and application support, collation of applications, set up review panel, preparing application for panel review, panel discussions, communicating decisions and feedback to applicants	6 hours a week during application and assessment period
Post approval, monitoring and reporting	Liaising with legal and applicants to issue grant agreements, liaising with applicants on progress, timelines, obstacles, invoicing, reallocations where grants are not proceedable, light touch reporting and record keeping, site visits where necessary	3 – 5 hours a week during grant delivery period

Proposed Timeline for Year 1 delivery

Timeline	Actions
April/May/June 2026	- Decide on a delivery model and formally appoint the delivery provider - Prepare guidance notes (including boundaries, what works can be covered etc) - Agree a design guide (TBC), standardise grant agreements, develop and agree eligibility & selection/scoring criteria & confirm % of contribution from business owner.
Late June 2026	Launch & publicise Round 1 (Year 1) of the scheme – open applications.
End of July 2026	Close applications
Early August 2026	Review, application assessments and selection (via subgroup of Board members and delivery officers)
Mid August 2026	Announce Results & Publicise
August 2026 – March 2027	- Delivery of works - Monitoring of progress and support to businesses - Target completion by end of financial year
February – March 2027	Review delivery and lessons learned to inform years 2-4 delivery plan and timelines.

Expected outputs

- Improved retail, hospitality & office spaces

Potential for at least x24 improved units (a typical small UK high street unit is 185sqm) over 4 years assuming maximum of £3k per grant

There are circa 118 retail units in the Town Centre (including the Knightswick units). Around 60 of which are independent businesses.

- Increased footfall in the Town Centre

Creating new opportunities for growth for current and prospective businesses

Expected outcomes

- Improved public realm
- A diversified retail and hospitality offer
- Generate new job opportunities and attract new businesses
- Increased sense of pride in the town centre

Financial Profile

Funding Allocated in 4 Year Investment Plan – Canvey Town Centre Shopfront Improvements				
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
£20k	£20k	£20k	£20k	£80k

Year 1 Grants (min x6 grants at value of £3k - potentially more if lower grant values)	£18k
Year 1 Management Fee of 10% of allocated budget	£2k
Year 2 Grants (min x6 grants at value of £3k - potentially more if lower grant values)	£18k
Year 2 Management Fee of 10% of allocated budget	£2k
Year 3 Grants (min x6 grants at value of £3k - potentially more if lower grant values)	£18k
Year 3 Management Fee of 10% of allocated budget	£2k
Year 4 Grants (min x6 grants at value of £3k - potentially more if lower grant values)	£18k
Year 4 Management Fee of 10% of allocated budget	£2k
Total	£80k

Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigations
Applicants misunderstand matched financial contribution requirements	Clear guidance notes and application form
Applicants begin works without required planning approvals in place	Include clear information on application page of the type of works that will require planning permission. Close assessment of plans and monitoring of project progress. Introduce a DM advice element to assessment process.
Works carried out across businesses are not cohesive in their design and character	A clear design code which is applied consistently through the assessment of applications and monitoring of awarded grant projects
Delays to grant agreements being completed, leading to a delay in funding being released and works started	A standardised grant agreement will be agreed at the outset of the project and mandatory information required by applicants will be collected prior to the awards of any grants to reduce administrative delays further down the line.
Delays to works being completed	Close monitoring and support by designated officer to overcome obstacles

Options to Consider

Canvey Seafront Shopfront Improvement Scheme

- In years 3 & 4 of the 4 Year Investment Plan £15k per year is allocated to a similar shopfront improvement scheme for Canvey Seafront area
- Option to include this scheme within this project or run the two areas separately.

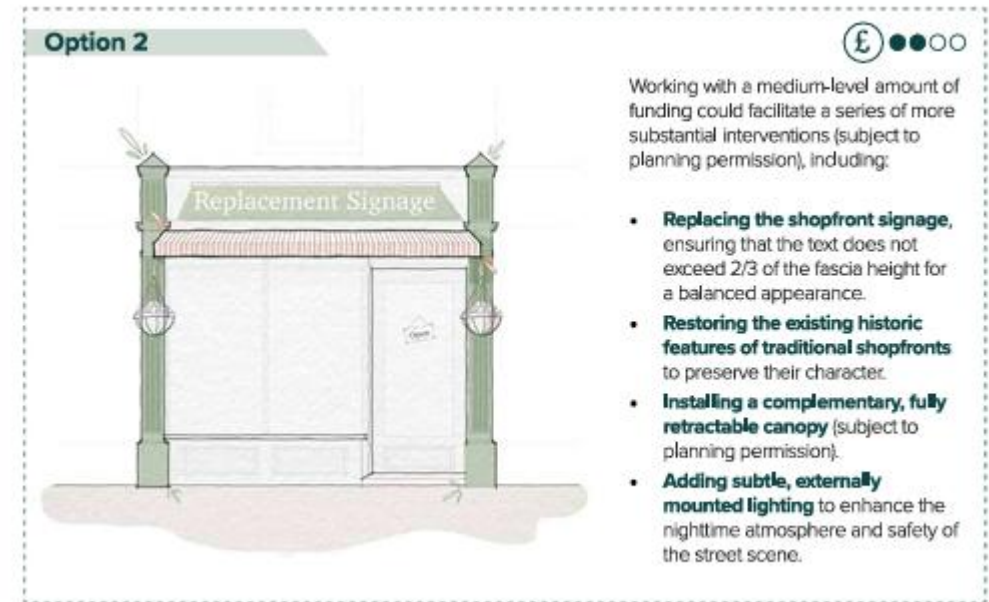
Funding Allocated in 4 Year Investment Plan – Canvey Seafront Shopfront Improvements				
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
x	x	£15k	£15k	£30k



Options to Consider

Shopfront Design Guide

- Option to invest in a Canvey Design Guide to standardise improvements and ensure cohesive design across the projects and works
- Potential for this to build on the Desire Lines ethos of improving the connectedness of the Town Centre and Seafront through shared design principles
- In Hadleigh, a Design Guide was produced by The Urbanists at a cost of £5k. Capacity funding could be utilised to fund this.
- Hadleigh Design Guide ([view here](#))



Next steps

The Board is asked to:

- Note the progress of the development of a Shopfront Improvement Scheme for Canvey Town Centre
- Consider its preferred delivery and management model of the project
- Consider if the Town Centre and Seafront Improvement Schemes should be managed and delivered as one or two separate projects
- Consider if an investment should be made into a Design Code for the scheme(s) from capacity funding
- Depending on the preferences of the Board on the above, advise officers of next steps it wishes to take to continue the momentum of the project.