

# EASTBOURNE

## LEVELLING UP FUND BID - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Linking Town Centre Regeneration with a Strengthened  
Visitor Economy @Victoria Place and @Towner

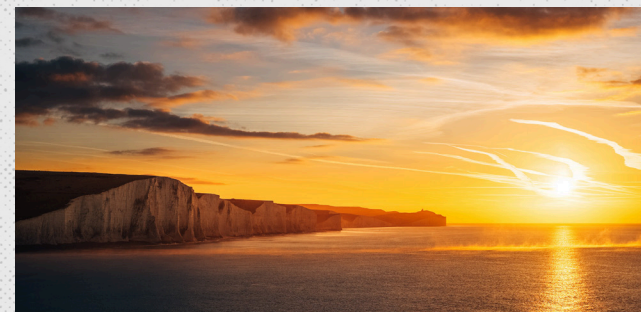


# FOREWORD

“Linking Town Centre Regeneration with a Strengthened Visitor Economy @ Victoria Place and @ Towner” is Eastbourne Borough Council’s bid for £19.8m from the Government’s Levelling Up Fund (LUF). The fund is part of the Government’s ambition to level up the country to ensure that no community is left behind, including coastal communities, and will establish Eastbourne as a visitor destination all year round, providing job stability beyond the traditional holiday season.

This is an exciting opportunity for Eastbourne. If our bid is successful, the funding will cement the Town’s place as a prestigious all year-round seaside tourist destination benefitting local residents and attracting new visitors. Funding will:

- ▶ Transform Victoria Place into a vibrant and pedestrianised cultural district with urban art and al fresco dining protected all year round by sail awnings, heating and lighting, powered with green energy.
- ▶ Create a pedestrianised walkway from the Town Centre to the Seafront.
- ▶ Create a number of legacy public and community created artworks across the town with an arts trail connecting the Seafront, Town Centre and the South Downs National Park, and
- ▶ See the creation of a prestigious cultural and educational centre on the Downland where young people from across the town can develop their skills in subjects as diverse as digital creativity, hospitality, engineering, metal work, retailing and customer service.



The Downs will also be sustainably connected to the town by an improved bus service and with e-bike and e-scooter hire and charging points delivered as part of the wider ambitions for the town.

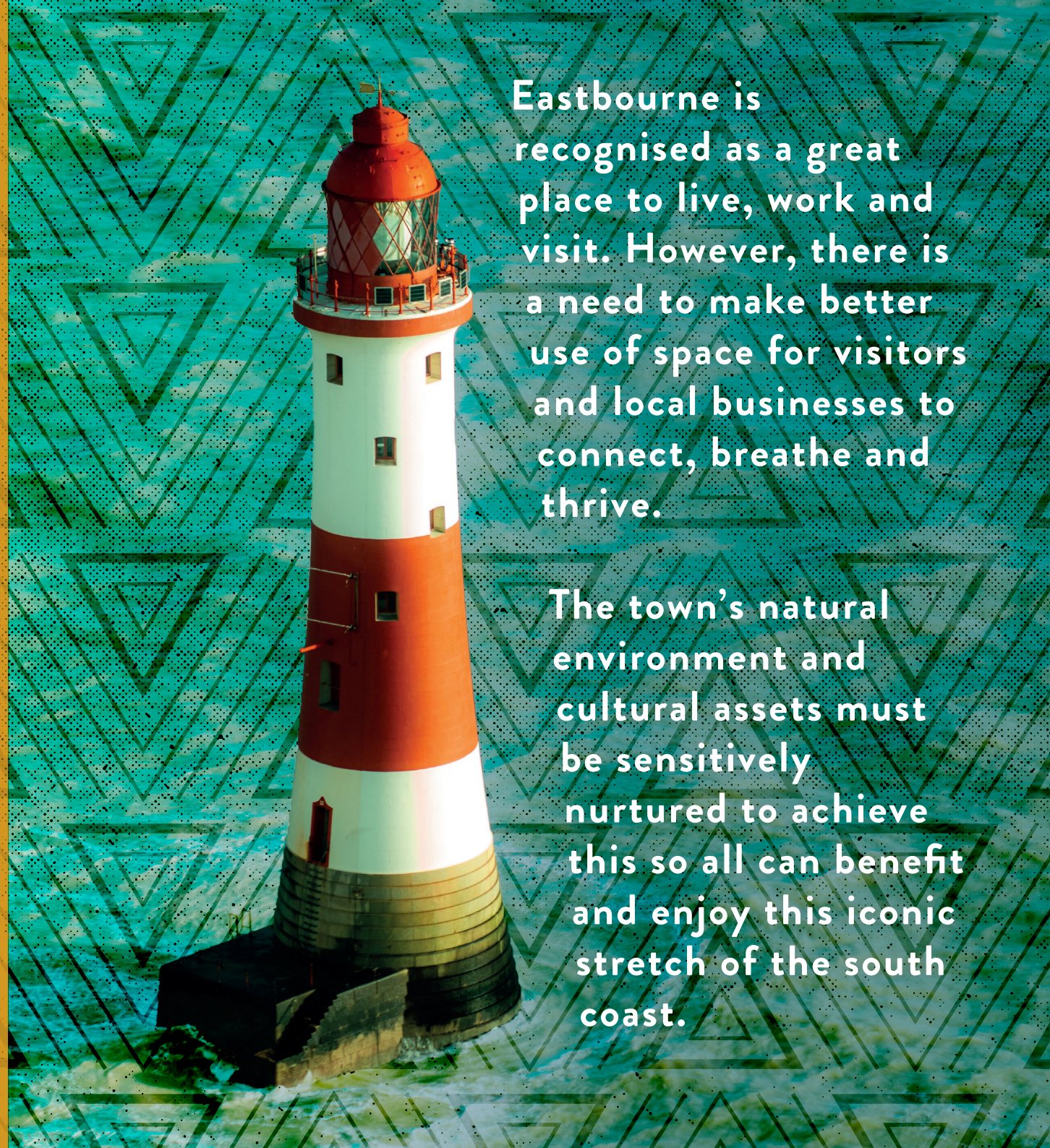
The funding will bring new local jobs, skills, training and creativity to the town, all year round, not just in the summer. The bid aims to link the Town to the Downs, by establishing Eastbourne as the permanent eastern gateway to the South Downs National Park.

*David Tutt, Leader of the Council*  
*Christina Ewbank, Chair of the Eastbourne Stakeholder Group*



# CONTENTS

▶ Challenges and Opportunities	4
■ Investment Summary	5
▶ Benefits of Investment	6
● Victoria Place	7
● Towner	8
■ Black Robin Farm	9
◆ Partner Support	11
● What Happens Next?	12
▲ Credits	13



Eastbourne is recognised as a great place to live, work and visit. However, there is a need to make better use of space for visitors and local businesses to connect, breathe and thrive.

The town's natural environment and cultural assets must be sensitively nurtured to achieve this so all can benefit and enjoy this iconic stretch of the south coast.



**Our bid will link Eastbourne to the Downs  
& establish our town as the Eastern  
Gateway to the South Downs National  
Park ...**

**... connecting key  
commercial areas and enhancing  
livelihoods along the way.**



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Eastbourne has been one of the UK's prime coastal locations since the late 19th century. In 2015, it attracted 6.2 million visitors, contributing £388 million to the local economy. The past 20 years have seen a sharp increase in younger residents and a change in visitor expectations. Iconic landscapes and an ever-growing number of attractions make Eastbourne a great destination in this post-Brexit era.

## SEVERAL CHALLENGES HAMPER THIS DEVELOPMENT:

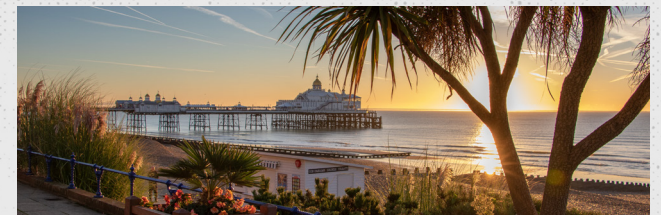
- ▶ The growth of on-line learning threatens the town's position as a favoured location for language students.

- ▶ The restrictions placed on movement in response to COVID-19 have greatly affected places that rely on the visitor economy.
- ▶ Most visitors are short-stay and lower-spend with a strong 'summer season' focus.
- ▶ There are low skills within the town.
- ▶ Town Centre retail performance has been severely disrupted by COVID-19.
- ▶ The connections between the Town Centre, the Seafront and the South Downs National Park (SDNP) are weak.

## LEVELLING UP FUND OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Provide new opportunities for learning, particularly linked to the cultural, creative and hospitality sectors.

- ◆ Create exciting new job opportunities.
- ◆ Improve conditions for walking and cycling, to encourage active lifestyles and improve air quality.
- ◆ Create more attractive Town Centre meeting places.
- ◆ Embed culture and art into the fabric of the town.
- ◆ Encourage independent retail.
- ◆ Develop clear and attractive, pedestrianised links between the Town Centre and the Seafront.
- ◆ Bring the South Downs National Park closer to the town, by providing a new destination that bridges the two.





## INVESTMENT SUMMARY:

**£7.623 million**

... to convert Victoria Place into a vibrant, pedestrianised cultural district, including new green energy infrastructure, with awnings, lighting and heating; with excellent independent cafés and restaurants serving high quality, locally sourced food and drink all year round, also developing a night-time economy.

**£1.037 million**

... investment in the Towner's Centenary project, creating a number of legacy public artworks across the town that will provide an arts trail connecting the Seafront, Town Centre and SDNP, as well as enhancing gallery facilities to support the education and outreach programmes that will engage strongly with some of Eastbourne's most disadvantaged communities.

**£11.186 million**

... to create a world-class culture and education centre at Black Robin Farm, a former dairy farm set on the Downs above the town, connecting the SDNP with the Town Centre and Seafront and providing a new destination for c.100,000 visitors per year, space for new businesses and work placements for young people during both the construction and operational phases.



# BENEFITS OF INVESTMENT

600

residents contributing to public art commissions

38

Apprenticeships

5,155

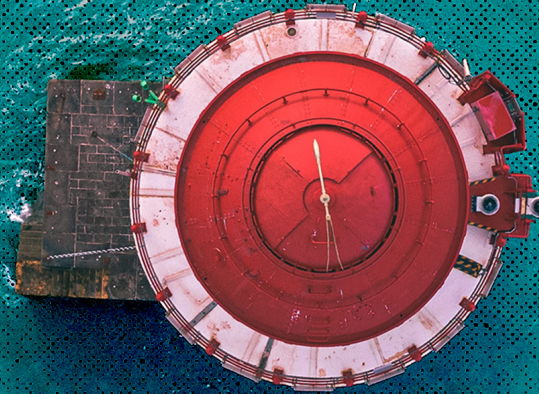
visitor nights from overseas tourists per year

8,615

visitor nights from domestic tourism per year



Improved pedestrian routes



Additional

50

FTE jobs in the wider economy

£2.19

million

tourism spend per year

23,250

day visits per year

216

new FTE jobs

5,800

child and adult learner opportunities per year





## ● VICTORIA PLACE

Regeneration of Victoria Place will crown the last stretch of Terminus Road before it reaches the Seafront. We will transform this part of Terminus Road into a 'Las Ramblas' style pedestrianised route with a highly colourful, 7-metre wide canopy stretching 170 metres down the centre of Victoria Place.

This will include sustainable lighting and outside infra-red heating along with urban art installations to create an outdoor, al fresco dining space and art gallery. The striking awning will feature colourful artist designed panels overhead and will boost the night-time economy of Eastbourne all year round.



- Provide 17 refurbished commercial units for new independent food and drink businesses, providing new jobs and work placement opportunities.
- Provide a clear and inviting route between the Town Centre and Seafront through pedestrianisation and public realm improvements.
- At least 20 apprenticeships per year.
- 100 work experience placements per year, leading to 50 jobs created.
- New green energy infrastructure to support the creation of a year-round destination through provision of green-powered heating and lighting.





## TOWNER

In 2023, Towner is celebrating the 100th anniversary of it being given to the people of Eastbourne. To celebrate this significant event, they will be curating a number of art works to be installed across the town, including a major sculpture on the Seafront. This striking sculpture will be visible from the Downs and will attract visitors from Beachy Head towards the Town Centre and Seafront.

The people of Eastbourne will be invited to work with the artists to design and make these installations which will also be displayed in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This will create world class art delivered by the community, for the community.

The Towner will also benefit from small-scale refurbishment to provide improved educational and visitor facilities.

- ◆ The art trail will provide additional points of interest, drawing people along the route linking the Seafront, Town Centre and the South Downs Way's many walking routes.
- ◆ Improve visitor facilities at the Towner Art Gallery to attract more visitors and retain them in the town for longer – delivering greater economic benefit.



# ■ BLACK ROBIN FARM

The project will create a world-class culture and education centre at Black Robin Farm, a former dairy farm set on the Downs above the town, connecting the South Downs National Park with the Town Centre and Seafront. The development will deliver:

- Much needed creative industry workspace including a specialist sculptural centre.
- A world-class cultural and heritage destination.
- A gallery space to expand the Towner creative programmes.
- A showcasing space for regional talent.



- A learning and education centre prioritising arts, the environment and heritage.
- Catering and event facilities.
- Facilities for walkers and cyclists.
- Provide high quality commercial space for 16 new start-up businesses in the creative and cultural sectors.
- Provide high quality holiday accommodation.
- Provide support for 2,400 child learners and school visits.
- 2,520 adult learners (from commercial courses), a portion of which will be subsidised by East Sussex College Group.





*Beachy Head*, 1939 by Eric Ravilious. The artist's work forms a core part of the Towner's collection.



# EASTBOURNE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

“We fully support Eastbourne Borough Council's bid to the Levelling Up Fund. Recent infrastructure investments have already seen huge improvements reach Eastbourne. Their bid offers an incredible opportunity to further develop a cultural, creative and tourism ecosystem which will break down barriers, raise civic pride and open up opportunities, driving economic and social growth in a deprived coastal town.”



## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

“Together, Your Eastbourne BID represents 624 businesses in the town centre, covering all sectors including retail, hospitality, leisure, manufacturing and the creative arts. Levelling Up Funding will enable us to build upon recent successes, reaching into our disadvantaged communities to create new employment and learning opportunities. It is an exciting proposal – representing a unique opportunity to realise many of our long term visions.”



## EHA

“Funding can cement Eastbourne’s place as a prestigious year-round seaside destination through high quality cultural and social experiences for visitors and residents, delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth in a post-COVID and Brexit environment. We wholeheartedly support the ambition of this bid and look forward to hearing of its successful outcome.”



## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Eastbourne Borough Council is expecting a funding decision from Government before the end of 2021. If Eastbourne's bid is successful, the Towner project would be completed in 2023 with Black Robin Farm and Victoria Place following shortly after in early 2024.

Visit [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/regeneration/levelling-up-fund/](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/regeneration/levelling-up-fund/) for information on the Levelling Fund and to view progress.



# CREDITS

Document designed by Plume Graphics  
in collaboration with the Regeneration  
Team at Eastbourne Borough Council.

All photography featured, unless  
otherwise stated, provided by Visit  
Eastbourne.

Images of Beachy Head Lighthouse  
sourced from Unsplash.

Artists impression of Victoria Place by  
Tim Wells of John D Clarke Architects.

Towner and Black Robin Farm images  
courtesy of Towner Eastbourne.

Eric Ravillious, Beachy Head, 1939 also  
provided by Towner Eastbourne.





# EASTBOURNE

LEVELLING UP FUND BID - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Linking Town Centre Regeneration with a Strengthened  
Visitor Economy @Victoria Place and @Towner



Working in partnership with Eastbourne's Home