



COLEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Brief for Coleford , UKSPF Community Regeneration Plan and Delivery

1. Introduction and Purpose

Coleford Town Council has been awarded £50,000 funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to develop a community regeneration plan, and deliver some project(s) within it.

The Council needs to appoint professional services over a two-year period to agree feasibility and community engagement and bring together a viable Regeneration Plan. The professional input will lead the Town Council in writing bids to secure funding to deliver identified projects.

We are seeking suitably qualified consultants with experience in:

- **Carrying out community engagement**
- **Preparing a costed community regeneration plan**
- **Bid writing and securing funding**
- **Supporting the delivery of local projects based on the plan.**

The work is to start at once and be completed by the end of March 2025. Interim milestones with outcomes and reporting systems will be agreed.

2. Core Principles

Based on the Council's funding agreement, these include:

- Improved skills, working with SMEs to seek 'upskilling' opportunities through workshops, partnership working
- Enhanced well-being across: improved cycle ways/health-related activities; improved parks/recreation facilities; restored footpaths
- Improve the recreational provision: e.g. provision of facilities and partnership with youth services, possibly using a Hub centre

- Improve the Town Council services through a Hub building to enhance its focus, profile, accessibility, and to better signpost services
- Increase the economic benefits through improved linkages, to increase footfall
- Join up communities through Active Travel-associated projects, activities, e.g. cycle path extensions
- Develop environment/biodiversity through enhancing green spaces, and enabling ownership within communities; through developing voluntary networks, and integrated youth organisations.
- Enhancing the character of the Town, through arts and culturally commissioned projects.

3. Location (see Maps 1 and 2)

Coleford is in the Forest of Dean, West Gloucestershire, only four miles from the Welsh border. The Forest of Dean, or 'The Forest' as it is known locally, has a rich natural and industrial heritage. being within the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB, and in the Dean National Forest Park. The Forest surrounds the town, and many people visit/move here because of the green environment.

The market town lies in a central bowl at the confluence of streams which filter into the R Wye. The surrounding settlements: Five Acres, Mile End, Broadwell, Milkwall are found in a semicircle from north to south as shown on *Map 1*. These originate from coal and iron mining, which has mainly died out, but leaves a spokes and wheel road pattern linking hamlets/villages with distinctive identities.

In 2011 the Parish population was 8359 but had risen by 2021 to 9275, almost 10% in the last ten years.

The Conservation Area in the town centre includes about 20 listings (mainly Georgian buildings/streetscapes) and is focussed in the Market Place. The Clock Tower and Cross indicate where the central octagonal church once stood. The Market House (Town Hall) was pulled down and the centre altered in 1968 for highways improvements. St John Street is one-way, with a cohesive street scene of independent shops/café/pubs.

(see *Map 2*)

4. Context

The Forest as a whole has seen different phases of development, from iron mining using charcoal to steel using local coal and iron, tramways and railways. The industrial heritage in Coleford peaked with the Mushet family and continued well into the twentieth century. The Deputy Gaveler, who is responsible for the remaining Freeminers, is still based at Forestry England midland HQ in Bank St. The Scheduled Monuments at Dark Hill and Whitecliff feature along with Puzzle Wood and Perrygrove Railway as tourist attractions now. Coleford has the only Tourist Information Centre for the whole Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB, funded through this active Town Council.

Coleford takes a strategic approach to regeneration: with a Neighbourhood Plan in place, a number of studies (below) have given data and opportunities for ways forward. Coleford NDP is annually reviewed at Annual Assembly and statistically at Oct Full Council. The Council supports a strong events programme through the year, from the Carnival of Transport at Easter via the July Music Festival to the Christmas Lights. Coleford is also twinned with St Hilaire de Riez (Vendée) exchanging visits with schools, choirs and sports teams as well as making friends.

We are a strong community, with independent small traders, significant tourist attractions, a mining and cultural heritage and distinctive Forest character. Post Covid, and with the current the economic pressures and a significant increase in population, we need to realise the potential for varied employment. The trends would be to increased tourism, better/different local services for people choosing to live here and work from home, and bring the Forest theme into town. Given our concern with climate change and sustainability, we also want to enable local people to walk/cycle from the edges into town and neighbouring settlements. This is a time of rapid change, so even with a resilient base, we need to be clear and effective in our drive to regenerate. Significant opportunities which will not come again must not be missed, but maximised now.

(Key references and links are at the end of this brief.)

The Forest of Dean District Council Local Plan (see below) and FoDDC publishes annual town audits that reflect changes in the town over time.

The People and Places Insight Ltd benchmarking report in 2020 suggested the following areas for improvement:

- footfall
- transport
- Public toilets
- Retail offer
- Business confidence
- Car parking
- Physical appearance
- Leisure facilities

The University of the West of England Masters Architecture and Planning students over the last five years have also carried out a series of studies for the Town Council:

- assessing youth provision and giving options for improvement
- providing a new hub focus
- potential for improving local linkages to support Coleford as a cycle and walking centre for the Forest of Dean Public toilets

5. Policy Background

The Forest of Dean District Council's Allocations Plan was adopted in June 2018 and noted several key issues for Coleford, including:

- Promote sustainable development in Coleford and to retain its role as one of the four towns serving the Forest of Dean, with an emphasis on service provision.
- Improve the attractiveness of the town for tourists and to encourage tourism-based enterprise and employment.
- Improve the range and offer in the town centre, through the development of land identified in the Local Plan and to provide for the continuing needs of the community
- Retain and enhance the character of the town centre, especially the Conservation Area.
- Provide an improved range of community facilities especially in the town centre.
- Provide better road, pedestrian and cycle access both to, and within, Coleford.

FoDDC Local Plan is currently under review with a full draft expected in 2023.

Coleford's Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-26 was made on 1st October 2018 and is posted on the Council's website. It identified seven key themes from the responses by the public:

- Town Centre
- Economy
- Housing
- Community and Community Facilities
- Historic Environment
- Natural Environment
- Infrastructure, Transport and Pedestrian Access

Given that the FoDDC Local Plan is being reworked, it is expected that CNDP will need a material review very soon. In 2017/18, Section 7 in CNDP contains a start in looking ahead. The latest CNDP monitoring report (April 2023) indicates the current status, and suggests that sustainability, climate change, changed economic pressures and increased population will require updating and policies will need revision/application.

6. Scope

Subject to consultants' views, the work is expected to provide advice in the following areas.

- Next steps to address issues affecting both the town centre and the Conservation Area
- An amended vision for the future of the town and its economy that reflects the increased sustainability and carbon-free agenda.
- Produce a strategic plan which realises the Coleford vision, noting what has worked well in similar places elsewhere.
- Development opportunities for key sites.
- Recommendations for using existing or any new partnerships or management models.
- Identify appropriate sources of funding and write bids.

The Council has already identified some potential project priorities:

- Council Premises
- Youth Investment
- Clock Tower
- Active Travel
- Environmental Enhancements

We expect consultants to recommend which should be given higher priority (given their knowledge of the funding scene); set out a regeneration plan and write bids to secure some funding. Should another priority be found, then it would be considered.

7. Deliverables

The funders require the following deliverables:

- One feasibility study in 2023/24
- One project delivered in 2023/24
- Four more projects delivered in 2024/25

As part of the work, consultants will be expected to deliver:

- **Materials and process for effective community engagement leading to greater community involvement, including the business community and key stakeholders.**
- **Staged reporting on the results of community and stakeholder engagement**
- **A community regeneration plan based on the engagement results and other local studies, which includes an amended vision for the future of the town.**
- **Costed project development plans and bids as annexes to the main plan.**

8. Presentation of Findings

The Council requires an electronic copy of each report in both Microsoft Word and PDF formats. In addition, an executive summary containing the key information, is to be presented in a concise and engaging way, with full use of visualisations, mapping and illustrated examples.

The consultants will be expected to present all their findings to Marketing and Regeneration Committee (acting as steering group) and to Full Council as agreed.

9. Information to be submitted with the Quotation

Consultants are expected to submit the following information with their quotation:

- A proposed work programme and timetable for carrying out the work.
- A methodology for how the work will be developed and delivered.
- How their proposal links to national guidance, policy and best practice.
- Provide examples of successful projects and their bids, preferably within the last three years

The quotation should include:

- A detailed breakdown of the cost/days of the work.
- The names and qualifications of the staff who will undertake the work, including an explanation of their previous relevant experience.
- The names, addresses and contact details of two referees, preferably for whom the consultants have carried out similar work.

Shortlisted consultants will be asked to give a presentation as part of their interview.

10. Timeline

Coleford Town Council would like to appoint a consultant at the earliest opportunity. The timetable below sets out the key dates for undertaking the consultancy.

Task	Deadline
Deadline for quotations	<i>Noon on Friday 19th May</i>
Consultant interviews	<i>Tuesday 23rd May</i>
Appointment of consultant	<i>Tuesday 30th May</i>
Inception meeting	<i>Early June 2023</i>
Community engagement activity	<i>June 2023</i>

Draft Community Regeneration Plan	<i>December 2023</i>
Completed Community Regeneration Plan	<i>March 2024</i>
Project delivery commencement	<i>September 2023</i>
Project delivery completion	<i>March 2025</i>

11. Submission Process

The full quotation, including any supporting information, should be submitted via the South-West Procurement Portal. The deadline for quotations is noon on Friday 19th May 2023.

12. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria are:

Value for money 40%

Best fit for purpose 60%

These will be evaluated against:

- Approach and method
- Previous experience and performance
- Staff resourcing
- Sustainability commitment
- Innovation

13. Links and relevant documents

The following are posted on the Town Council website:

- Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan, maps and appendices
- Coleford Town Benchmarking 2020, People and Places Insight Ltd.
- Coleford Town Centre Audit 2021/22, Forest of Dean District Council
- Youth Provision Feasibility Study 2022, UWE Bristol
- Monitoring of CNDP

These additional documents are available by Wettransfer (for commercially sensitive reasons).

- Coleford Linkages Feasibility Report 2020/21, UWE Bristol
- Coleford – Pride of the Forest, UWE Bristol