Dear Minister,

**Re: Assisted Area Status for the period 2014-2020: The case for Tendring**

As you will no doubt be aware, Essex has pockets of deprivation throughout the county, but the coastal district of Tendring in particular compares with the worst in the country. In the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Tendring was placed 86th out of 326 Local Authorities in England. Whilst in the top third in terms of deprivation, this still masks significantly greater deprivation prevalent at a smaller scale.

The Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) covering Jaywick is the most deprived area in the country, (according to the IMD and other measures), its ranking worsening from third most deprived area in the country in 2007. Seven of the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within Tendring are in the top 10 per cent most deprived in the country. The urban centres of Clacton and Jaywick, Harwich and Walton continue to be areas in need of the most intervention.

In straitened economic times, these communities will continue to deteriorate, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and exclusion for generations to come. Tendring District Council and Essex County Council are far from proud of the existence of this degree of poverty in our midst and we are working together to alleviate and improve the situation.

Though we have innovative ideas to address these problems, there is limited access to funding to make a fundamental impact and deliver our ambitious plans which include:

- Small business and enterprise support
- Improving skills, training and lifelong learning opportunities
- Supporting major renewal and revitalisation through harnessing inward investment opportunities such as the offshore wind energy sector at Harwich.

Tendring District Council demonstrated how the designation of 'Intermediate Assisted Area Status', between 1992-1999 successfully enabled businesses to draw down Regional Selective Assistance funds facilitating the creation of 400 new jobs and the safeguarding of 249 existing ones. Through this designation Tendring drew down £2.38 million of funding, awarded 55 grants and levered investment of £14.5 million.

We firmly believe that gaining Assisted Area Status for some of our coastal communities in Tendring will provide the ability to access the funds we need to achieve fundamental ‘grass roots’ change and deliver the many planned initiatives which will underpin long term, sustainable growth.

The importance of this status was demonstrated recently when Tendring was ineligible to apply for port infrastructure finance as we lacked the AAS designation. We therefore seek to address this in order to secure future opportunities in the funding period 2014 – 2020.
Neither Tendring District Council nor Essex County Council were consulted nor involved during the last round of Assisted Area designation. We would like to be involved in the Assisted Area designation process this time as we can demonstrate such high levels of deprivation, particularly in the Jaywick and Clacton areas. Involvement in terms of local understanding is important as we believe that intervention delivers best outcomes when targeted at the unique circumstances of a particular area. Furthermore, the potential removal of Northern Ireland’s automatic inclusion status will allow for greater targeting of aid across the United Kingdom.

To conclude, we are therefore asking the UK Government to fully support our case for Assisted Area Status, and also to reflect this in the BIS discussions with the European Commission regarding the revisions to the Regional Aid Guidelines, so that:

- Through the review of UK Assisted Areas we achieve AAS designation in order to support our improvement agenda for Tendring; and secondly
- The review of Regional Aid Guidelines and ongoing negotiations with the European Commission is positively influenced which will in turn support investment and job creation and promote the expansion and diversification of the economic base; supporting greater resilience to economic upheaval.

We know that this will make the difference to these communities, and we are determined to ensure the best possible opportunities for our residents. Consequently, we consider that this is a prime opportunity for this Government to address the problems facing some of the most deprived areas in England.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Peter Martin
Leader, Essex County Council

Cllr Kevin Bentley
Cabinet Member, Essex County Council
Economic Regeneration

George Kieffer
Chairman, Haven Gateway

Cllr Neil Stock
Leader, Tendring District Council

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