

**For immediate distribution:**

**Millom Town Deal**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**International search for design team to transform Millom asset into inspirational attraction**

A GLOBAL search for landscape and architectural designers with big ideas has been launched - as multi-million pound plans to transform a unique beauty spot in a North West town gather pace.

Working with Copeland Borough Council, the Millom Town Deal Board secured an offer of £20.6 million from the Government's £3.6 billion Towns Fund initiative earlier this year for projects it identified as local priorities.

The money has been allocated to four projects that required support of Government that will help ensure the area thrives now and for future generations.

Today, a competition has been launched to find a design partner for one of these projects - The Iron Line - which aims to sensitively transform the coastal lagoon and sea wall into an inspirational and fully inclusive, nationally significant visitor attraction.

The five proposals in the competition that best meet the criteria after the closing date of October 20 will be shortlisted to go through to the second round. These design concepts will be showcased in a local exhibition so that stakeholders and members of the public can feed into the process.

Robert Morris-Eyton, chair of the Millom Town Deal Board, described the competition as a pivotal moment in the life of the project.

“The Iron Line is an ambitious scheme that sets out the potential for this route to become one of the most unique and beautiful visitor attractions in the region,” he said.

“What we want is for the competition to bring forward teams with a vision for The Iron Line and how it could become an area that marries together the important and delicate ecology and heritage of the area with art and inclusivity.

“What’s especially exciting is that the design will be a collaborative process with residents and stakeholders across the area who will be able to help shape the ideas that come forward. This is something we’re very much looking forward to.”

The Iron Line would feature the historic sea wall and include the area covered by RSPB Hodbarrow.

Dave Blackledge, RSPB Hodbarrow Site Manager, said: “The route will cross RSPB Hodbarrow and we look forward to working with the successful design team on this exciting project.

“The challenge will be to create an engaging trail that informs and educates while enhancing the wildlife and flora of this environmentally sensitive site.”

Millom and Haverigg were among 101 towns invited to bid for a share of the Towns Fund in 2019 - part of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda.

It’s proposal includes four projects set out in Millom and Haverigg’s Town Investment Plan. They aim to help maximise inclusive economic growth and better connectivity for the area while developing a welcoming arts, culture and tourism offer, thriving independent businesses and healthy, active people.

The Millom Town Deal board this week confirmed all four projects are set to move forward to the business case stage - a crucial step in the journey towards unlocking the promised cash from Government.

In addition to The Iron Line, the projects include:

- Reactivating heritage buildings - A proposal to significantly enhance Millom Town Centre by bringing derelict, vacant and underused heritage buildings back into active use to increase vitality and footfall.
- Activating community health - The creation of a new, multi-purpose community and leisure hub to provide a range of facilities including a swimming pool and 3G pitch, as well as improvements at Millom and Haverigg parks.
- Connected Millom and Haverigg - Improving Millom's transport network to create a gateway to the town at the railway station, while transforming cycling and walking infrastructure in both Millom and Haverigg.

Colander Associates Ltd has been brought in to run The Iron Line design competition on behalf of the Borough Council and Town Deal Board in order to seek the interest of firms both in the UK and internationally.

The Mayor of Copeland, Mike Starkie, said: "The package of projects that make up Millom's Town Deal will work together to secure a wide range of benefits for residents and businesses, not least through improved health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities and a prosperous, resilient economy.

"The launch of this competition is a big step forward for The IronLine, and I look forward to other projects gaining shape."

*For more information on the Millom Town Deal Board, visit [Towns Fund | Copeland Borough Council](#)*

**ENDS**

#### Notes to Editors

For immediate release.

On July 27, 2019, the Prime Minister announced that the Towns Fund would support an initial 101 places across England to develop Town Deal proposals, to drive economic regeneration and deliver long-term economic and

productivity growth. See further details of the announcement: [PM speech at Manchester Science and Industry Museum - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

A Town Deal is an agreement in principle between government, the Lead Council and the Town Deal Board. It will set out a vision and strategy for the town, and what each party agrees to do to achieve this vision. See the 101 places being supported to develop Town Deals: [list-of-100-places.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Each of the 101 towns selected to work towards a Town Deal also received accelerated funding last year for investment in capital projects that would have an immediate impact and help places “build back better” in the wake of Covid-19. View a list of accelerated funding by place: [towns-fund-accelerated-funding-grants.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

This release was prepared by 32West on behalf of Copeland Borough Council and the Millom Towns Deal Board.



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