



This publication was withdrawn on March 7 2025

Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# **Long-Term Plan for Towns - Guidance for Local Authorities and Town Boards**

December 2023



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## Foreword from the Prime Minister

In September, we launched our Long-Term Plan for Britain's Towns, a core part of the government's levelling up programme that has so far invested more than £13 billion to support projects in places that for too long have been taken for granted.

Towns are the places most of us call home, where most of us work, and where many of us grew up and want to raise our families. For too long politicians have focused on cities and businesses have been encouraged to invest elsewhere, local communities have been eroded, and too many young people have concluded that the only way to get on, is to get out.

The result, in too many places, has been run-down town centres, empty, boarded-up shops, discarded rubbish, appalling antisocial behaviour and people left angry and frustrated by the neglect. There is nothing inevitable about this. With the right plan, our towns can turn themselves around.

Our plan will complement our existing work and give towns the focus and attention they deserve. We're investing £1.1 billion in 55 of our towns and giving them the tools they need to help build a better future for their local people. We will do so in 3 important ways.

First, we're putting towns back into the hands of local people, so that they can decide on local priorities and what's best for the long-term future of the places where they live. Each town will have a new Town Board made up of local community leaders and employers, who will draw up their town's Long-Term Plan for the next 10 years. This work will be backed by up to £20 million of "endowment-style" funding and support to invest over the next decade.

Second, we're not wasting time. We want towns to set up their Town Boards as soon as possible. So we're providing £50,000 this year, and £200,000 the next – along with a dedicated data pack full of local insights and intelligence – so that towns can build their own local capacity, talk to local people about what they want from their town, and get going on their Long-Term Plans.

Third, we want to make towns places where people and businesses want to invest, creating new jobs and breathing new life into our high streets and town centres. And we believe that the government's local £20 million endowment-style funding and support in each town will be a catalyst for private investment and community capital too.

So, this is our plan to turn around Britain's towns: local people in charge, accelerating change, and bringing in new investment. This guidance sets out the next steps in delivering on that plan, and our support offer to you to ensure that Long-Term Plans are grounded in the best available evidence. In addition, our policy toolkit sets out the range of powers available to local areas.

It's time that we do away with the idea that some communities and some places can never and will never get better. They can – and they will. Our Long-Term Plan for Towns fundamentally changes the way politics works to support local communities – putting them in control. And it sets out a new direction for Britain's towns: one that is right for local people, and right for the future of the country.

## Foreword from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing

Our Long-Term Plan for Towns is levelling-up in action. Communities driving progress so that towns can go further, faster than ever before. Councils allowed to be bolder, so that they can bring bustle and life back to rundown high streets. Residents encouraged to make the most of their can-do spirit so that prosperity returns to towns around the country.

The Long-Term Plan is centred on local stakeholders acting in the interests of local people. Why towns? Well, for the overwhelming majority of Britons, home is a town – the place where they live and an important part of their identity. Yet many towns are struggling.

Since the financial crisis of 2008, jobs growth in towns has been just half that in cities, and a quarter that in London. Whenever I visit one of our many great towns, I come away inspired by the passion and pride of the people. Yet I also share their anger and frustration over shabby high streets lined by empty shops, and their anxieties about antisocial behaviour and crime.

We have made great strides for towns and for cities, too, through the Levelling Up Fund that has so far awarded £4.8 billion to support regeneration. The Long-Term Plan for Towns is something distinct again: a way of doing local politics that draws on our experience with previous Funds and respects local feedback to take a different approach – one that captures and makes the best use of all that councils and communities already do for their area.

It means that Town Boards, the new decision-making bodies, will be run by local people for local people: bringing together residents, business and community leaders to devise and agree a shared vision for the future.

I look forward to working with Town Boards as partners in this new-style politics. I am excited by the prospect of the entrepreneurial, creative and forward-looking initiatives that will flow from the funding. And I know we all want to see the difference in lives and outcomes as we unleash a new era of regeneration, aspiration and pride in place in towns across England, Wales and Scotland.



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## Long-Term Plan for Towns summary

This guidance is relevant to Town Boards in England, Scotland and Wales. We will release dedicated Scottish and Welsh versions of the policy toolkit early in 2024, which will build on existing publications, and a Welsh language version of this guidance will follow.

**Purpose:** Regenerate local towns across England, Scotland and Wales over the next decade.

**Type of fund:** Allocative

**Eligibility:** Preselected local authorities via a methodology set out on GOV.UK.

**Funding available:** Towns will receive funding and support totalling up to £20 million.

**Important dates:**

**Between 18 December 2023 and 1 April 2024:**

- local authorities receive £50,000 of capacity funding
- local authorities receive a data pack for their town, with a local insight profile curated by MHCLG's Spatial Data Unit, to be shared with the Town Board once established
- where relevant, appoint a chair for Town Boards
- local authorities work with the chair to set up the Town Board or repurpose an existing Town Deal Board or equivalent relevant Board in Scotland/Wales
- Town Boards start planning and initiating community engagement

**By 1 April 2024:**

- all Town Boards must be established

**From 1 April 2024 to 1 August 2024:**

On April 1, the department will release the next £200,000 of capacity funding to support the development of the Long-Term Plan, including additional community engagement activity.

Town Boards submit their Long-Term Plans (comprising their 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan) from 1 April and before 1 August. The Plan will set out how funding will be allocated and spent, with the local authority as the body ultimately accountable for funding.

We strongly encourage Town Boards to submit plans as early as possible – the earlier the Town Board is established, and Plan submitted, the quicker funding can be unlocked by MHCLG.

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MHCLG assess plans as they come in, and release 2024 to 2025 capital and revenue funding once plans are approved.

We acknowledge that Scottish councils operate with different recess periods to their English counterparts. We will discuss the implications of this with the local authorities in Scotland.

## Local authorities eligible for funding

<b>ITL1/2 Region</b>	<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Town/Place</b>
East Midlands	Mansfield	Mansfield
East Midlands	Boston	Boston
East Midlands	Bassetlaw	Worksop
East Midlands	East Lindsey	Skegness
East Midlands	Newark and Sherwood	Newark-on-Trent
East Midlands	Chesterfield	Chesterfield
East Midlands	Nottingham	Clifton
East Midlands	South Holland	Spalding
East Midlands	Ashfield	Kirkby-in-Ashfield
East of England	Tendring	Clacton-on-Sea
East of England	Great Yarmouth	Great Yarmouth
North East	Redcar and Cleveland	Eston
North East	South Tyneside	Jarrow
North East	Sunderland	Washington
North East	Northumberland	Blyth
North East	Hartlepool	Hartlepool
North East	County Durham	Spennymoor
North West	Blackburn with Darwen	Darwen
North West	Oldham	Chadderton

North West	Rochdale	Heywood
North West	Tameside	Ashton-under-Lyne
North West	Hyndburn	Accrington
North West	Wigan	Leigh
North West	Bolton	Farnworth
North West	Pendle	Nelson
North West	Knowsley	Kirkby
North West	Burnley	Burnley
South East	Hastings	Hastings
South East	Rother	Bexhill-on-Sea
South East	Isle of Wight	Ryde
South West	Torbay	Torquay
West Midlands	Sandwell	Smethwick
West Midlands	Walsall	Darlaston
West Midlands	Wolverhampton	Bilston
West Midlands	Dudley	Dudley
Yorkshire and The Humber	North East Lincolnshire	Grimsby
Yorkshire and The Humber	Wakefield	Castleford
Yorkshire and The Humber	Doncaster	Doncaster
Yorkshire and The Humber	Rotherham	Rotherham
Yorkshire and The Humber	Barnsley	Barnsley



Yorkshire and The Humber	North Lincolnshire	Scunthorpe
Yorkshire and The Humber	Bradford	Keighley
Yorkshire and The Humber	Kirklees	Dewsbury
Yorkshire and The Humber	North Yorkshire	Scarborough
West Wales and The Valleys	Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil
West Wales and The Valleys	Torfaen	Cwmbrân
East Wales	Wrexham	Wrexham
East Wales	Vale of Glamorgan	Barry
West Central Scotland	Inverclyde	Greenock
Southern Scotland	North Ayrshire	Irvine
Southern Scotland	East Ayrshire	Kilmarnock
West Central Scotland	North Lanarkshire	Coatbridge
West Central Scotland	West Dunbartonshire	Clydebank
Southern Scotland	Dumfries and Galloway	Dumfries
Highlands & Islands	Moray	Elgin

## Funding available

As confirmed in our [Long-Term Plan for Towns guidance document](#), the Long-Term Plan for Towns takes a new endowment-style approach. This means that funding is released over a 7-year period and local authorities have the flexibility to spend it over 10 years, with light touch assurance from MHCLG – the full funding profile will be provided in early 2024.

Towns will receive funding and support totalling up to £20 million, delivered through the powers as set out in Section 50 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020.

### Capacity funding

Lead local authorities in each of the 55 towns will receive £50,000 in capacity funding in the 2023 to 2024 financial year. This is paid as an RDEL grant.

We expect this funding to cover the upfront costs of setting up a Town Board by April 1 at the latest. While we will not ask local authorities to formally report on how this £50,000 is spent, where progress is slower than expected, MHCLG's area teams will offer support and advice.

Local authorities might want to use this money to:

- convene a Town Board
- run community engagement
- support the Town Board in developing Long-Term Plans
- provide technical expertise to the Town Board for project development including feasibility studies and business cases

Once Towns Boards are established we will release approximately £200,000 in RDEL capacity funding at the start of the new financial year 2024 to 2025. Town Boards should advise local authorities on how best to use this money, to support the development of their Long-Term Plan.

## The process

### Establishing a Town Board

While the local authority remains the accountable body for funding and executing plans, Town Boards are responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan, working closely with local people.

The independent chair of Long-Term Plan for Town Boards should be invited by the local authority, considering who is best placed to convene partners and is a respected figure in the community with an obvious passion for the place. The local MP should be engaged as part of the process. Further information on governance is available at Annex A. Consideration should be given to the length of tenure for the chair, given the nature of the Long-Term Plan including a 10-year vision, it may be the case that towns wish to consider succession planning, for example by appointing one or more deputy chairs. If a town already has a Town Deal Board in place, or a similar such structure – for example, an appropriate subset of a Community Planning Partnership in Scotland – we strongly encourage the utilisation of that forum to act as the Town Board, to avoid unnecessary duplication and allow towns to move quickly to draw up their Long-Term Plan. If an existing forum is to be repurposed, it is incumbent on the chair, supported by the local authority, to ensure the right people are around the table to fully reflect the priorities of the town - this may require further appointments, if deemed appropriate.

Town Boards must be chaired by a local community leader or local businessperson. The chair should act as a champion for the town and provide leadership for the Town Board, ensuring it is community-led and embedded within the local area. They can be anyone who holds a prominent role such as:

- a local charitable organisation
- a philanthropist
- the head of a Further Education College
- a director for the NHS Board or Trust
- a director of a football club

Elected representatives, such as MPs, MSPs, MSs or local councillors, must not chair the Town Board.

### Town Board Membership

Having considered whether there is a suitable existing Board that can be utilised, or that it is necessary to establish a new Town Board, the chair should engage with the local authority to consider whether further appointments are necessary to the Town Board. Similarly, the chair may choose to appoint a deputy – although this is not a requirement.

As with appointing the chair, it is worth considering the length of membership when inviting members onto the Board, and whether the Board make-up needs to change over the duration of its lifetime.

The local authority, or an alternative organisation such as a community group if that is agreed between the chair and local authority, should act as secretariat to the Town Board.

Outside of the requirements around the inclusion of certain elected representatives and a senior representative from the police, this guidance is wholly non-prescriptive and membership will vary depending on the local context:

1. Parliamentary representatives

The relevant local MPs, for example, those MPs whose constituencies sit within the boundary of the town must sit on the Town Board. Councils in Scotland and Wales may wish to invite the local MSP or MS.

2. Local councillors

In areas where there are two tiers of local authorities, there should be one councillor from each tier of local government. In unitary authorities, there should be 2 councillors from the authority. Where relevant for the town, the chair may wish to invite parish, town, or community councillors, noting that total numbers of elected representatives should be limited to promote community leadership.

3. A senior representative from the police

Town Boards must have a senior representative from the police. In England and Wales, it is expected that this will be the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), though, subject to the agreement of the chair, a local senior representative from the police can act as an alternative. In Scotland, the chair may wish to invite a senior police officer. Where combined authority mayors exercise PCC functions, it is expected that the Mayor or their Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime should be the representative, though, subject to agreement with the chair, a local senior representative from the police can act as an alternative. Should Town Boards feel that they require further contribution from the police, noting particularly the different skills and input that could be provided by an operational representative, then it is within their discretion to invite whomever they deem appropriate to sit on the Board.

Other membership should be tailored to local context and is at the chair's discretion, but might comprise:

4. Community partners, such as:

- community groups
- faith groups
- local charities
- neighbourhood forums
- youth groups
- the local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or Third Sector Interface (TSI) in Scotland

5. Local businesses and social enterprises, such as:

- the chair or board members for the Business Improvement District (BID) where these exist
- key local employers or investors in the town

Community and smaller businesses have been shown to be able to support regeneration and improve investment at a local level, and property owners have a major stake in how towns are repurposed.

6. Cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations, such as:

- local sports club directors
- local heritage groups

7. Public agencies and anchor institutions, such as:

- local schools, higher education and further education institutions
- relevant government agencies for that area, for example Integrated Care Boards or Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland

Town Boards should consider the size of membership and could convene smaller working groups to facilitate wider engagement in the themes of the Long-Term Plan for Towns. MHCLG will work with Town Boards, supported by local authorities, with contracting and commercial advice to ensure value for money, based on best practice from previous Levelling Up Funds. In the first instance, local authorities should get in touch with their existing area team leads.

Town Boards must be set up by 1 April 2024 at the latest, though we encourage earlier establishment wherever possible, to allow the Town Board to hold its first meeting and start drawing up Long-Term Plan as quickly as possible. The earlier the Board is established and Long-Term Plans are submitted, the sooner the funding can be confirmed by MHCLG.

## **DLUHC's offer**

To enable the Town Boards - supported by the local authority - to develop and deliver their Long-Term Plan, the local area team lead will act as the first line of support across England, Scotland and Wales, drawing in help where appropriate (for example, engaging with the Scotland Towns Partnership in Scotland).

A Towns Unit has been set up within MHCLG to act as a cross-cutting hub that will work with other government departments to help Town Boards work with the local authority to use every lever at their disposal. It will seek to align cross-government activity to ensure that central government, local government and private resources are used most efficiently. Our offer includes:

- a data pack for each town, with a local insight profile curated by MHCLG's Spatial Data Unit
- a policy toolkit, outlining powers available to towns and partners across the town
- a list of policy interventions with an already agreed case for investment
- dedicated support from the respective area team to help guide the Town Boards and local authorities through the process

Additionally, an independent, consultancy-style High Streets and Towns Taskforce will be established in 2024 to support towns after their Long-Term Plan is submitted.

## **Engaging MPs**

MPs play an important role in representing the views of their constituents, working collaboratively with local authorities and other local partners for the good of local places. They should be closely engaged in the design and delivery of the Long-Term Plan.

As well as being a member of the Town Board, MPs should be individually involved in reviewing the Long-Term Plan prior to submission to MHCLG. Each Long-Term Plan must list the MPs involved in the Town Board and whether each are supportive of the final Long-Term Plan submitted to MHCLG for consideration. Town Boards in Scotland and Wales may also wish to share their Long-Term Plan with the local MSP and MS, although there is no requirement to do so.

While one or more MPs not supporting the Long-Term Plan will not prevent MHCLG considering it, the government is keen to see broad local consensus for the interventions put forward. In the absence of such agreement, Ministers reserve the right to defer sign off until broad consensus is secured.

## **Ensuring the Town Board is a community-led institution**

Town Boards should be community-led institutions that build civic capacity in the town, with the local authority, or an alternative organisation such as a community group, providing a secretariat function. The local authority will act as the accountable funding body.

We encourage local authorities to help empower the Town Board in realising this role and driving forward a community-led vision for change. This may include providing advice and support on legal duties like impact assessments, to help leaders with non-public sector backgrounds navigate those requirements they may be less familiar with.

The Town Board (or, if prior to establishment, the Town Board chair) and the local authority should also consider existing community organisations that might want to undertake work on behalf of the Town Board. Capacity funding could be used support this, or the recruitment by a third-party of an individual to lead the development of the Long-Term Plan full-time. Local Trust research shows that employing a single member of full-time staff from the community helps to build local capacity and resilience. If support is required to identify suitable community organisations, local authorities should speak to their respective area team leads in the first instance. Area teams will provide ongoing support for the duration of the programme, including helping local authorities and Town Boards to access the support they need, and acting as a focal point between them and central government, including the Towns Unit and the High Streets and Towns Taskforce.

### ***Case study: The benefits of community driven vision***

After almost fifty years of industrial decline, downtown Whytheville in rural Virginia (population of less than 10,000) sought to change its fortunes and appointed a 'people powered' governance organisation (Downtown Whytheville Inc.) with the explicit aim of revitalising and reenergising their local community.

By adopting a person-and-place-based approach, Whytheville was able to leverage local assets, build regional partnerships, encourage community capacity-building and, ultimately, revitalise its regional economy. It completed a major downtown streetscape renovation, improving sidewalks, lighting and pedestrian crossings on Main Street, creating a more inviting environment. Recognising the need to also address skills concerns, the Downtown Whytheville Inc. sought additional funding from private and public sources to start a small business design competition, building community capacity, delivering long-term investments and creating a self-sustaining entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## Setting a strategy

Town Boards should drive the priorities for investment, identify where the powers set out in the policy toolkit can be maximised to deliver change and steer the long-term vision for their town, in conjunction with the local community.

Town Boards are responsible for developing the Long-Term Plan. This Long-Term Plan should recognise and seek to build on the good work that is underway, or has been undertaken already, in each town. In many places, there are strategies and plans for the town that align with the Long-Term Plan for Towns' objectives, and we hope the Long-Term Plans will build on those.

The programme has been designed to provide long-term certainty and facilitate strategic thinking. We know, however, that towns will want to retain flexibility and the ability to amend plans as they develop, as well as reflect the context and changing priorities of local people. We are therefore asking that Town Boards, supported by the local authority, develop a single Long-Term Plan to be submitted to MHCLG on, or before 1 August 2024. We acknowledge that Scottish councils operate with different recess periods to their English counterparts. We will discuss the implications of this with the local authorities in Scotland. Further detail on how Plans will be submitted will be provided in early 2024. The earlier the long-term plan is submitted, the quicker the funding can be unlocked by MHCLG.

The Long-Term Plan should comprise a 10-year vision, which clearly identifies the longer-term priorities for the town, and a 3-year investment plan as an annex. As with Town Deals previously, the Town Board should also use the Plan to confirm the area that will be covered. As a default, this should use the boundaries defined by the Office for National Statistics. This is important so that local communities and other bodies understand where the area of benefit will be. We expect that the geographical area should be contiguous. Any proposed changes to the ONS boundaries will need to be discussed with government to ensure it includes, as part of the area, the town that was originally selected.

## 10-year vision

The Town Board's 10-year vision should be a long-term, strategic document. It should be backed by insights gained through engagement with local people, to create buy-in with the public. It should include:

1. A 250-word vision statement that articulates, at a high level, the vision for the future of the town and how success will be judged.
2. The strategic case for change, building on the evidence in the pack provided by DLUHC with, where relevant, more granular local data and stories.
3. The outcomes and objectives the town is trying to meet and how these align with the priorities of the local community, including what local people think needs fixing, the opportunities the investment offers over the decade, and priority outcomes for 2034 and beyond.
4. The planned direction of travel for the regeneration of the town, across the 3 investment themes. It should detail the interventions that are available to achieve this:
  - a. The Town Board should seek to draw on the list of interventions and can also consider other, 'off-menu' interventions, provided they sit within the 3 investment themes.

- b. The Long-Term Plan does not need to go into detail on specific investments as part of the 10-year vision. Detail on investment and interventions only need to focus on the first 3 years and should sit within the 3-year investment plan annex.
5. Clear evidence that the Town Board is community led, including through its membership, ways of working and distinction from the local authority, and evidence of buy-in from local businesses, civil society and communities. It should describe how these stakeholders have been engaged to date, and how that engagement will continue going forward.
6. How the Town Board will attract and combine new and existing private, public and philanthropic investment, setting out the existing commitments and ambitions to secure further support going forwards.
7. High level delivery milestones over the 10-year lifespan of the programme, with an overview of potential future interventions and how the powers in the policy toolkit will be used in a way that best suits the town across the 3 investment themes.

The policy toolkit covers England in-full and, regarding the Safety and Security powers, Wales. We will provide additional guidance for towns in Scotland and Wales early in 2024.

The policy toolkit outlines the powers already available to towns to help make improvements. It also includes new powers, which are yet to be implemented, that were introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

### **3-year investment plan annex**

This should set out:

- the interventions and powers the Town Board wishes to use over the 3 years for each investment theme;
- whether the interventions are from the list of interventions or are 'off-menu';
- how the Town Board will use the interventions locally and how much they will cost; and
- how the interventions will address the outcomes set out in the 10-year vision, grounded in evidence and data.

Local authorities will receive the investment from the Long-Term Plan for Towns over the next 3 years to fund the Town Board's 3-year investment plan. We strongly encourage Town Boards to work with the local authority and other partners to consider how additional funding can be attracted from other sources. This could include new private investment, philanthropy or other public funding, particularly where there is scope for partnership working between bodies or agencies.

Local authorities should also be engaged throughout the development of the plan, including discussing the list of interventions and powers to be used from the toolkit. In many cases, the council will need to formally agree through its own structures to deploy powers or interventions where they interact with council responsibilities (for example, planning permission for a new cycle path). Where an intervention would commit the local authority to future expenditure beyond long term plan for towns fund (for example ongoing maintenance of a new leisure facility), Town Boards must engage with local authorities and ensure that this is agreed.

The list of interventions provided at Annex C are those which have already been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio. Should a Town Board wish to pursue one of these interventions, a business case will not be required as part of the assessment process – this is intended to simplify the process as far as possible and reduce



bureaucracy. Any interventions drawn from the list should be costed to a town's local context and the investment plan should describe how they reflect the distinct opportunities and challenges that different towns and communities face.

This list of interventions is not exhaustive - we encourage Town Boards to think creatively about what solutions will deliver the desired outcomes. Should it be agreed that other, 'off-menu' interventions better meet local needs, Town Boards should seek to pursue those. Where an 'off-menu' intervention is pursued, an outline business case will need to be provided, underpinned by insights from local stakeholders, agreement with the local authority where they are required to underwrite the risk, and – where possible – numeric evidence.



## A toolkit for community engagement

Community engagement is at the heart of the Long-Term Plan for Towns, so plans should reflect local priorities and be co-designed with communities, businesses and residents, drawing on available evidence and data. Recognising the many examples of excellent community engagement already underway at a local level, this toolkit sets out further ideas that Town Boards may want to consider.

As set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, there have been numerous attempts at regeneration over a prolonged period. One of the reasons these have not always been consistently successful is a lack of community engagement, failing to build on existing partnerships, consultation and ongoing activity that mobilises local people. The think-tank [Onward](#) has set out why this is so vital:

“First, doing so helps to ensure regeneration is focused on the actual rather than perceived needs of the community. Second, because a community needs to be invested in an initiative for it to be sustained beyond the initial period of intervention. Third, because engagement helps to build the capacity for action that so many communities lack.”

Onward’s research on previous regeneration efforts and the government’s own engagement with local places have shown that upfront investment is essential to ensuring that places can conduct the necessary level of community engagement. This is why capacity funding will be provided from early 2024.

Some community engagement principles Town Boards might wish to consider when developing their Long-Term Plans:

1. Map the assets in the local area to build from existing strengths and work with community groups who have existing relationships and expertise in community development to design engagement and ensure sufficient reach. Consider using allocated development funding to invest in these organisations to support this work.
2. Engage early and identify priorities and ambitions to ensure the plans are co-created with the community from the start.
3. Use local knowledge to understand where engagement has typically been weakest and which groups have been underrepresented. Seek out relationships with community groups to establish how engagement can work better for these groups and overcome barriers such as income, ethnicity, age, disability and language.
4. Go to where the people are and be creative. Hold engagement events in the social spaces where people meet, for example, the local high-street, youth clubs, pubs, schools and community centres. Maximise the opportunity to get the view from as broader set of residents who may not typically attend consultation events.
5. Use participatory tools, such as participatory budgeting. This can act as a hook to engage residents, helping to identify local solutions and bring forward innovative ideas.
6. Identify opportunities for community ownership of plans and delivery. Consider how community partner members of the Town Board, such as community organisations, can have a clear role in the process. This could also include devolving budgets and delivery to community groups for neighbourhood priorities.

7. Commit to ongoing accountability. The Town Board should plan ongoing opportunities for engagement with the community at key milestones within plans. People like to stay informed of developments, share progress and how their input has fed in at regular stages throughout the process; this could be done through email, press release, exhibition or in-person events.
8. Seek opportunities for building the development of community leadership and capacity into delivery plans.
9. Don't over-complicate it.

[Create Streets](#), leaders in research, master-planning, design coding and community co-design, also recommend using:

1. Wide engagement. This typically involves asking simple, high-level questions across a broad range of audiences allowing people to have their say on a specific place, the good or bad, and to make positive suggestions to improve it. This could include:
  - online mapping platforms such as the Create Communities platform
  - 'come to the people' events. For example, setting up a stall at a community event or on the local high street
2. Deep engagement. This involves more in-depth analysis through asking key questions and issues explored through:
  - one to one interviews with key stakeholders
  - site walkarounds with residents and neighbours
  - co-design workshops or charettes (a public meeting with an interdisciplinary group, focused on solving a problem or planning the design of something)

There are several other useful organisations that publish guidance and can support Town Boards to ensure the local community is sufficiently engaged in the development and delivery of the Long-Term Plan, including [Power to Change](#), [Locality](#) and Heritage Action Zones. [The Local Government Association](#) has resources aimed at involving residents and voluntary and community sector organisations in local service delivery and decision-making. In Scotland, there are many examples of strong community engagement and plenty of resources available. Towns in Scotland may want to refer to examples set out through the Scotland Town's Partnership, as well as the national standards set by the [Scottish Development Community Centre](#).

Town Boards should be transparent with local people throughout the programme as to how they are investing money and using their powers, working closely with the local authority. We encourage Town Boards to run themselves in a way that facilitates community-led decisions and the space to think about things differently. Such as:

- having meetings in a community space or setting, instead of council offices or public sector premises
- holding open meetings for local people to observe and inviting those who aren't traditionally involved, including young people
- live streaming open meetings
- recognising routes for the Town Board to become a self-sustaining body over time

***Case study: Chesham Design Code and Neighbourhood Development Orders***

Create Streets worked with Chesham Town Council to develop Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO) in the town and to inform an updated neighbourhood plan. Residents' views were sought through a combination of 'engaging wide' using online tools and 'engaging deep' through interviews with key stakeholders, hosting pop-up consultation sessions at community events and drop-in sessions. Residents were also asked what 'good looks like' for Chesham – and feedback was also requested on draft house types and site masterplans. Over 2,822 responses were received online and many hundreds in person, with the results used to inform the content of the design code and NDO sites.

***Case study: Design Code Pathfinder Programme, Medway Council***

Medway Council are developing a design code for Chatham, to contribute to the urban regeneration of the town centre and ensure the local character is better reflected, whilst also protecting the natural environment. The team carried out extensive engagement and consultation with the local community, key stakeholders, members and officers in the development of their code. A combination of two techniques were used – a digital platform and traditional face-to-face engagement - to ensure that as many people could engage in the design code process as possible. The digital platform focussed on 14 key places and gave users the ability to comment on buildings, streets or open spaces - producing 1,900 individual responses. The in-person events enabled people who were less tech-savvy, or did not have access to the internet, to share their views, with sessions held on weekends in busy locations for maximum reach.

***Case study: Dunbarton, West Dunbartonshire***

West Dunbartonshire Council will use its £19.9 million Levelling Up Fund allocation to help the town of Dunbarton become more attractive for residents and visitors. The successful bid was built on feedback from the community gained through extensive consultation and surveys, demonstrating how the Levelling Up Fund can meet the need of the community. The project includes the restoration of Glencairn House into a state-of-the-art library, museum and community facility, improve connections between the town centre and Dunbarton Central train station. The project improves active travel connections, attracting visitors and residents into the town centre, and making Dunbarton a more attractive destination.

## **Submit your Long-Term Plan to MHCLG**

Town Boards should move as quickly as possible to engage the local community and work up their vision and Long-Term Plan. From 1 April 2024, Town Boards should submit their Long-Term Plan to MHCLG. The final deadline for submitting plans is 1 August 2024. We acknowledge that Scottish councils operate with different recess periods to their English counterparts. We will discuss the implications of this with the local authorities in Scotland. Further details on how to submit will be published in supplementary guidance in early 2024. The closer to 1 April 2024 the Long-Term Plan is submitted, the sooner the funding can be unlocked by MHCLG.

The 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan annex will be subject to a light touch assessment process by MHCLG. This will ensure towns' proposed interventions are aligned with the broader objectives of the Long-Term Plan for Towns and fit within the 3 investment themes. While we may seek clarification on some points, this is not a pass or fail gateway, unless there is substantial deviation from the 3 investment themes, or the requirements set out above.



## **The three investment themes**

Towns across the UK will identify the measures that matter most to local people. By including a policy toolkit, a list of interventions and providing the opportunity for Town Boards to take bespoke, 'off-menu' approaches where such an approach can be justified, we are providing significant flexibility to tailor the Long-Term Plan across the 3 broad investment themes. There is no requirement as to how towns utilise the funding across the 3 themes. But we would expect to see at least one intervention per theme covered in the Long-Term Plan, unless towns justify an alternate approach.



## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a priority for turning around local areas and ensuring business can thrive. It is impossible to level up a town if people do not feel safe to go into the town centre. Towns that feel unsafe:

- drive away shoppers
- deter investors
- undermine the norms and behaviour that underpin a thriving society

The increase in shop vacancy rate and decrease in footfall has resulted in high streets becoming prime locations for anti-social behaviour, diminishing pride in place. The [Anti-Social Behaviour \(ASB\) Action Plan](#) launched this year in England and Wales, to make our streets safer and treat anti-social behaviour with the urgency it deserves. To support this, towns can use the funding provided through the Long-Term Plan for Towns to help reduce crime and improve safety in the local area.

Interventions and the use of powers could include:

- new and improved security infrastructure, such as CCTV and streetlights
- additional hotspot policing
- local authority wardens

Recognising the scope for potential overlap between the role of the Town Board and a Community Safety Partnership (CSP), in England and Wales, who in some instances may already be carrying out interventions such as this, we encourage Town Boards to proactively engage with the relevant CSP in their town to ensure a consistent approach and avoid duplication. [See the Home Office's guidance on CSPs for more information.](#)

### ***Case studies of safety and security interventions***

#### ***Denbighshire - CCTV***

Denbighshire County Council has used the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to purchase and place CCTV cameras in fly-tipping hot spot areas. The local authority has already identified people leaving items at locations and managed to speak with those individuals. The aim is to use the cameras to change people's behaviours as well as prosecuting further down the line. By monitoring and preventing antisocial activities this investment has led to increased confidence in public spaces and improved quality of life for residents.

#### ***Bloxwich and Walsall's Town Deal***

Bloxwich and Walsall each received over £20 million from their respective Town Deals and have been working closely together ever since.

Local people from both towns said they wanted to walk more, but often felt unsafe because of traffic, pollution and fear of crime. The towns are now delivering new footpaths, cycle lanes and safer places to lock bikes, making it much easier to move around and between the two towns and surrounding area. Lighting and other improvements will mean people feel safer and more confident walking around and they will have more choice in how they travel. In the process, the Town Deal Board hopes that both air quality and local people's general health and wellbeing increases as they increasingly choose to leave their cars at home.

## HIGH STREETS, HERITAGE AND REGENERATION

As research from [More in Common](#) and [Power to Change](#) has found, 'for many people, nothing epitomises local neglect more than the state of their local high street'. Since the 1960s, our high streets have centred around retail, however, increasing overhead costs, an oversupply of retail space, the growth of out-of-town shopping centres and online shopping have created a challenging local retail environment.

A hollowing out of high streets and town centres can affect the liveability of a place. This makes it less attractive for, and harder to retain, skilled workers, often resulting in towns having an older population and creating an economic environment that exacerbates these demographic challenges.

To ensure they remain the beating heart of our towns and can offer opportunities to local people, traditional high streets need help to adapt and diversify their offer. Towns can use this funding to enhance their town centres, making them and their buildings more attractive and accessible to residents, businesses, and visitors. Interventions and the use of powers could include:

- preserving and improving heritage sites in the town
- creating and maintaining parks and green spaces
- establishing Business Improvement Districts
- running high street rental auctions.

### ***Case studies of high streets, heritage and regeneration***

#### ***Aberdare***

Administered by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, the Large-Scale Property Improvement Grant Programme – funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund - provides financial support to bring vacant floorspace in key town centres back into economic use offering investment up to a maximum of £250k. The Former Trina's Boutique is a vacant town centre property benefiting from this. The development will include a full internal refurbishment to accommodate a distinctive independent business on the ground floor leading to 151m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space completed, and three high quality residential units on the upper floors. Alongside internal works, a full external refurbishment will be undertaken which will have a positive impact of the street scape in Aberdare.



### ***Lincoln Drill Hall, Lincoln***

Lincoln's iconic Drill Hall has received £1 million from the Towns Fund. Located on the edge of one of the most economically deprived wards in Lincolnshire, the Drill Hall has reopened as a brand-new, multi-purpose, arts and entertainment complex. In the day, the Drill Hall is a leisure venue for local community groups to meet and provide adult training to help people into jobs. In the evenings it has a packed programme of concerts, comedy, plays and pantomimes. In collaboration with other arts venues, the Drill Hall is making the arts more visible within the community and easier to access. In addition, it will offer a mental health drop-in service that will be based in the community cafe. To date the project has created 929 square metres of quality commercial space, and 8 new permanent jobs. The venue is forecast to see an increase in visitor numbers of almost 50,000 visitors.

### ***Farnworth (Bolton)***

Farnworth's £13.3 million Future High Streets Fund grant is helping the town transform its centre, drive growth and ensure it can meet local people's needs far into the future. The market precinct is being redeveloped, transforming into a mixed-use, high-quality development, featuring a new public square. In addition, the funding has supported the expansion of Farnworth Leisure Centre, delivering an extended gym, new dance studio and additional car-parking spaces. The funding is also helping pedestrians, cyclists and people with mobility problems to use Market Street through a number of targeted improvements.

### ***Altrincham***

A 2010 survey by the BBC survey found that Altrincham had England's emptiest high street, with 29% of shops standing empty. Local retailers came together to form the 'Altrincham Partnership', with the aim of turning the high street around, and the town's Neighbourhood Plan Forum drove projects to increase parking; create additional housing in the town centre; and set up a loan scheme for small businesses to renovate unused retail space. In 2016, Altrincham's BID was set up. In combination with business leaders, it created a fund to support local projects and events like the annual Lantern Parade, Christmas Lights Switch-on and Trooping the Corgis. Transport in the town has been improved with new cycle lanes, pedestrianised areas and electric charging points, and leisure facilities made greener and more accessible.

Eight years later, in 2018, Altrincham was crowned Britain's best high street the Great British High Street awards. This accolade helped the town welcome high-profile events, including the final stage of the 'Tour of Britain' cycle championship, and Altrincham became the pilot town for the government's 'National High Street's Perfect Day'. Thanks to the work of the community, supported by local leadership, in 2022, the town was named one of the Sunday Times' best places to live in the UK for the fifth year in a row.

### ***Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire***

This £9.2 million Levelling Up Fund project will enable North Lanarkshire Council to deliver an ambitious vision for establishing Cumbernauld as a 21st century new town which will bring education, employment and homes into the heart of North Lanarkshire's largest town. The project was designed upon extensive community consultation and will see the purchase and demolition of a failing shopping centre and surrounding buildings, to develop a new Town Hub acting as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town centre, unlocking investment and helping to realise Cumbernauld's potential.



## TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

The ease with which residents can access high streets, jobs and local shopping centres is critical if towns are to thrive into the future. This means offering transport options, such as:

- linking different parts of the town with new infrastructure
- providing safe ways for people can walk or cycle into the centre
- ensuring public transport options are viable and accessible.

While improving transport connectivity is a critical component of levelling up, it alone will not turn around the economic fortunes of a place. Investment will need to be used alongside other themes, particularly safety and security, to ensure that transport options are seen as attractive and safe. Used well, this funding could make towns more connected and easier to find good quality and affordable parking - increasing footfall and viability – to high streets and local shopping centres, and accessibility to local employment opportunities.

Interventions and the use of powers could include:

- new infrastructure schemes
- road improvements, such as fixing potholes or improving congested junctions
- new programmes to encourage cycling
- making the town centre more walkable and accessible

### ***Case studies of transport and connectivity***

#### ***Leven, Fife***

Fife Council secured £19.4 million from the Levelling Up Fund to support regeneration in Glenrothes and Leven. Extensive public consultation was conducted through the Levenmouth Connectivity Project which engaged with the local community. The project facilitated public events, online and social media events and collaboration with project partners which formed key part of the project development. This resulted in a successful application which drew on the feedback from community groups and local stakeholders. The funding will help deliver an ambitious long-distance footpath connecting Loch Leven, Kinross and Levenmouth and renovate Riverside Park with the aim to increase tourism and draw more interest to the area.



### ***Porth Transport Hub***

The Porth Transport Hub, which has been supported by over £3.5 million of funding from the government's Levelling Up Fund, will deliver a modern bus and rail interchange for the town, providing seamless travel across the network. This improved public transport provision is designed to give residents greater access to local services, employment and housing functions for residents.

The Porth Transport Hub will serve as a cornerstone for the comprehensive regeneration, development and investment across the town centre and its surrounding area. It will help to create sustainable and thriving communities.

Beyond its primary function of transport, the project is expected to drive an increase in visitor numbers to Porth, making it easier for people to get to the town and explore the local region. This, in turn, attracts greater investment into the local area.

### ***Lincolnshire's A16 Corridor Improvements***

Almost £20 million from the Levelling Up Fund has been used to improve the A16 corridor between Boston and Spalding. The funding will reduce congestion on the road, address connectivity and improve walking and cycling facilities.

As well as benefitting residents and visitors to the area, the investment is expected to open up the area for further investment. In particular, the A16 corridor is a key route for the agri-food sector, which is a prominent economic asset for South Lincolnshire.

## **Support from the High Streets and Towns Taskforce**

In 2024, towns across Britain will also be able to access consultancy-style support through a new High Streets and Towns Taskforce (HSTTF). This support will come after Town Boards have submitted their Long-Term Plan, as the HSTTF is about providing hands-on place making assistance to deliver on those plans. The HSTTF will be available to all 55 towns, building on the success of the existing High Streets Task Force that has, to date, visited over 130 local places in England. It will use lessons learned from the successes of the High Streets Task Force to go further in convening experts skilled in regeneration to identify and disseminate best practice, sharing intelligence with the Towns Unit on the trends and innovations that could support regeneration and have wider potential benefits to the UK economy and society. It will also provide bespoke, hands-on support and training to places, providing access to guidance, tools and guidance, particularly where local authorities are experiencing capacity challenges. Once established, Town Boards should engage directly with the HSTTF, to understand how to best use the powers and flexibilities set out in the policy toolkit.

We will publish further information on the scope and aims of the HSTTF in early 2024.

## How we'll monitor projects

### Evaluation

Alongside future updates on the Long-Term Plan for Towns, we will set out our plans for an evaluation feasibility study and investigate whether evaluation work would be feasible and robust enough.

### Assurance

Long-Term Plan for Towns funding will be assured in line with the requirements set out in the [Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework](#), using 3 lines of defence.

Where the grant is awarded via a non-Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) route, and the recipient is a local authority, the first line of defence is provided by the local authority and is the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151/127/114 in England & Wales, Section 95 Scotland, and Section 54 in Northern Ireland) as they act at an operational management level within the local authority in receipt of the funding.

The Chief Financial Officer will be required to submit a Statement of Grant Usage and an Assurance Letter to MHCLG. The Chief Finance Officer will be required to provide written confirmation that they have undertaken to actively apply all the necessary checks to ensure proper administration of its financial affairs regarding the funding programme, particularly in respect to financial administration and transparency of governance. The first line of defence will also include compliance checks to ensure the governance requirements around the Town Board are being met.

The second line of defence will be undertaken by the Assurance and Compliance Team within MHCLG. MHCLG will undertake a range of checks, on a risk and sample basis. Local authorities will be required to engage with and support this process.

The third line of defence will be carried out by the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) and will take the form of a review of the activity completed by MHCLG for the second line of defence. GIAA will liaise with internal audit teams operating within devolved administrations as appropriate.

### Subsidy Control Act 2022

All public authorities must comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 when giving a subsidy or making a subsidy scheme. Accountable bodies should refer to the Statutory Guidance for the United Kingdom Subsidy Control Regime. For more information, please refer to [Subsidy Control rules: Key requirements for public authorities](#).

If a subsidy is present, then accountable bodies must consider the principles of the subsidy control requirements set out in the subsidy control Statutory Guidance unless the funding can be given as Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA).

Where a subsidy will, or may, exceed the MFA limits (and does not fall within one of the exemptions permitted by the Subsidy Control Act 2022), or is not capable of being provided under a streamlined route (see [Subsidy Control Act 2022: Streamlined routes guidance](#) for more information), accountable bodies or other applicants will need to assess subsidies against the subsidy control principles and other requirements.

### HOW ACCOUNTABLE BODIES SHOULD CONSIDER INFORMATION ON SUBSIDY CONTROL

Accountable bodies must work with all their stakeholders to understand how proposed projects can be delivered in compliance with subsidy control. Accountable bodies should use the assessment framework as well as drawing on their responses in the wider proposal (particularly any deliverability information) in assessing subsidy control.

Where an application presents an unacceptable risk of non-compliant delivery, then an accountable body may choose to either reject it or require adjustments to be made such that funding the project will not contravene subsidy control.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS IF SUBSIDY CONTROL OR STATE AID LAW ARE NOT COMPLIED WITH**

Accountable bodies may need to recover funding from project deliverers where subsidy control or State aid law has not been complied with.

Therefore, accountable bodies should ensure that any project deliverers manage subsidy control or State aid in line with their agreed approach and take steps to monitor this. They should ensure that project agreements are designed to enable the recovery of subsidy / State aid if it has been misused.

It is also recommended that project deliverers ensure that project partners are aware of their obligations and that they can recover funding from them if it is not compliantly managed or is misused.

## Annex A: Town Board governance requirements

### 1. Transparency

In line with the principles of public life, the operations of the Town Board must be transparent.

The Town Board should publish membership and governance arrangements (including minutes of meetings and decision logs) on the lead council's website.

We expect Town Boards to meet quarterly and to publish:

- a documented decision-making process outlining the voting rights of the board
- profiles of board members
- all board papers in advance of the meeting within 5 working days
- draft minutes of meetings following the meeting within 10 working days
- final minutes, once approved by the board within 10 working days
- any conflicts of interest reported, within the published minutes

Town Boards should follow lead council governance and finance arrangements when considering private reports, with the default position being that all papers are open to the public.

### 2. Code of conduct

All Town Board members should sign up to a code of conduct based on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).

There should be clear processes for managing conflicts of interests (both commercial, actual, and potential) in decision making, which apply to all involved with the work of the Town Board.

### 3. Declaration of interests

The lead council should provide guidance on:

- the financial and non-financial interests individuals must declare
- the process Town Board members must follow for declaring interests
- the process for requesting an exemption

Town Board members must then complete a declaration of interests, which the lead council will then hold. This can be in a format the lead council already uses.

Town Board members are responsible for declaring their interests before the Town Board considers any decisions. The lead council must record:

- actions taken in response to any declared interest
- any gifts or hospitality given to the Town Board or individual members

## Annex B: Policy toolkit

The Long-Term Plan for Towns is designed to help local areas make the most of all powers and tools at their disposal.

As part of designing an investment plan, we expect all Town Boards, supported by the local authority, to demonstrate how they are using powers, where they apply.

The policy toolkit extends to England in-full and partially to Wales (regarding the safety and security powers). It does not extend to Scotland. Town Boards in Scotland and Wales should consider the local and national levers available to them to develop their Long-Term Plan. We will provide additional guidance on these measures for towns in Scotland and Wales early in 2024.

### Safety and security powers available

To tackle anti-social behaviour, there are several powers local authorities, the police and other responsible organisations can use in England and Wales.

#### POWERS IN THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014

This is a summary of the powers introduced through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. If local authorities are considering using these powers, [view the Home Office's Statutory Guidance for Frontline Professionals](#).

1. Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) are used to address persistent anti-social behaviour incidents, such as a group being drunk and disorderly or dogs fouling in a public park, by imposing conditions on the use of a certain area, which apply to everyone. Local authorities are responsible for issuing PSPOs, on any public space within their area, but they must do so in consultation with the police and appropriate community representatives.

PSPOs can be issued by the local authority if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the activity or behaviour concerned, carried out, or likely to be carried out, in a public space has:

- had, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality
- is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature
- is, or is likely to be, unreasonable and justifies the restrictions imposed
- PSPOs can last for a duration of up to 3 years

Local authorities could use Town Boards to agree PSPOs and involve them in public consultation. Alongside the required consultation set out in the legislation and the relevant bodies.

2. Civil injunctions are a tool that can stop individuals engaging in anti-social behaviour quickly. A civil injunction can also include positive requirements, such as requiring an individual to attend a drug rehabilitation course.

They are issued by a civil court following an application from agencies including - but not limited to:

- the police

- local authorities
- housing providers

The court must be satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the respondent engaged or threatened to engage in anti-social behaviour and that it is just and convenient to grant the injunction for the purpose of preventing the respondent from engaging in anti-social behaviour.

3. Community Protection Notice (CPNs) are designed to stop individuals, businesses, or organisations from committing anti-social behaviour. They are used to deal with ongoing problems or nuisances, which are having a detrimental effect on the community's quality of life by targeting those responsible. CPNs can be applied by police, local authorities and registered housing providers.

A CPN can only be issued if the offender has been given a written warning, in addition to being given enough time to make necessary changes. Failure to comply with a CPN can lead to a court summons and, on conviction, can result in a fine of up to Level 4, currently £2,500 for individuals, or £20,000 for businesses. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may also be issued for this behaviour.

4. Closure powers can prohibit access to licensed and non-licensed premises for a specified period. They are used to temporarily close premises where there is, or is likely to be, incidents of anti-social behaviour. The power is used in two stages; the first stage is the Closure Notice and the second is the Closure Order.

The Closure Notice can be used by the local authority or the police out of court and can be issued, in the first instance, for 48 hours or extended from 24 hours up to a maximum of 48 hours by the local authority's chief executive officer (head of paid service) or designate thereof, or by a police superintendent. Following the issuing of a Closure Notice, an application must be made to the magistrates' court for a Closure Order, unless the closure notice has been cancelled. The Closure Order, if granted by the Court, can last up to 6 months.

5. Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) are orders made in the criminal court. They are aimed at preventing a person who has been convicted of another criminal offence, from committing anti-social behaviour (including threatening others in the community, persistently being drunk and aggressive in public). CBO prosecutions can occur following a request from the police or local authority. To issue a CBO, the court must be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the offender has engaged in behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person. The court must also consider that making the order will help prevent the offender from engaging in such behaviour.

The terms of the CBO must include the duration of the order. For adults this is a minimum of two years, up to an indefinite period. For under 18s, the order must be between one and 3 years.

6. The Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review is an important statutory safety net for victims of anti-social behaviour, who believe they have not had a satisfactory response to their complaints about anti-social behaviour. Victims have the right to request an anti-social behaviour case review, where a local threshold is met. The review must involve all relevant parties including local authorities, police, integrated care boards, and registered providers to review a victim's case. The purpose is to bring agencies together to take a joined up, problem-solving approach

to find a solution for the victim. Town Boards could be involved in representing victims of their communities.

**Case study: Sandwell Council**

Sandwell Council worked with ASB Help to review its Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review process. The council consulted with its statutory partners, other stakeholders and the community during its review. They developed a revised policy which aims to improve the service for victims, including a 'triple package' offer of support, advocacy and representation at the case review for any victim where the threshold is met, as well as a new threshold allowing cases that don't meet the primary criteria to be referred to a case review by a senior manager from one of the statutory partners. They also created a suite of documents to provide greater clarity to victims and assist staff decision making.

7. A Community Remedy gives victims a say in the out-of-court punishment of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour when a community resolution, conditional caution or youth conditional caution is chosen as the most appropriate response. A "Community Remedy Document", produced by the Police and Crime Commissioner (in agreement with the local chief constable and after consultation with members of the public and community groups), includes a list of actions which may be chosen by the victim for the perpetrator to undertake.

## **POWERS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990**

8. Local authorities can issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to take appropriate enforcement action against fly-tipping, illegal dumping and illegal waste. FPNs can range from £150 to £1,000, if settled out of court or an unlimited amount if taken to court.

## **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACTION PLAN**

9. Building on existing powers, on 27 March 2023, the government published the [Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan](#). The Action Plan sets out an ambitious new approach to working with local agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour in England and Wales.

As part of the Action Plan, we announced Hotspot Response and Immediate Justice trailblazers. For some towns on the Programme, Police and Crime Commissioners on their Town Board will hold responsibilities for these pilots. Town Boards could be used as a forum for discussion of how Hotspot Policing and Immediate Justice is deployed in a Town. Considering specifically Hotspot Policing, this should be based on data and analysis conducted by the Police, which may result in no hotspot being identified or prioritised. The deployment of Officers will remain at the direction of the local Force. Considerations may include (but are not limited to):

- how to deploy Hotspot Response funding for additional local authority wardens through Community Safety Partnerships
- if multiple hotspots are identified, the locations could be discussed and review in conjunction with the Police
- how anti-social behaviour offences and breaches of orders are referred into Immediate Justice or similar programmes of work, such as Youth Diversion.



## PROPOSALS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN EXISTING POWERS

On 14 November 2023, the government introduced the Criminal Justice Bill in Parliament. Through this bill, we are committed to strengthening and improving existing powers to reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour.

### High streets, heritage and regeneration powers available

#### HIGH STREETS AND TOWN CENTRES

1. High Street Rental Auctions (HSRA) are a new power for local authorities in England, introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA). The government will prepare the necessary secondary legislation to implement HSRAs over the next year and will provide a separate toolkit for local authorities to support delivery. When implemented, landlords must rent out commercial property that has been vacant for over a year in a 24-month period in town centres on one-to-five-year leases that are auctioned through the local authority.

HSRAs will provide local authorities with a route to reduce vacancy rates, promote minimum letting standards for commercial units and flexible rent arrangements, and improve the use and perception of local high streets. They will also seek to increase cooperation between landlords and local authorities, and to make town centre tenancies more accessible and affordable for tenants, including small businesses and community groups.

2. In England, local authorities and Town Boards can encourage businesses to apply for pavement licences. These allow furniture to be placed outside the premises, creating outdoor dining spaces. A new application process will be introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. [Read the current guidance about pavement licences.](#)
3. A Business Improvement District (BID) is an area in which local businesses have voted to invest together to improve their environment. In BIDs, eligible business rate payers are charged a levy on top of the business rates bill, to deliver projects and services to their collective benefit.

There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a BID, but it must be additional to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include extra safety and security, cleansing and environmental measures. There are reported to be over 300 BIDS operating across the UK.

#### **Case study: Ambassadors**

BIDs can employ city ambassadors to act as a visible and welcoming presence in the area. Ambassadors can undertake a range of tasks as they patrol the area, including providing members of the public with directions to attractions and facilities and helping businesses to address and report incidents of anti-social behaviour.

As well as day-time ambassadors, Wolverhampton BID provide Night Guardians. These night-time ambassadors help to keep the city centre safe by providing a visible, reassuring presence in the area. According to Wolverhampton BIDs 2022 annual report, their Night Guardians now operate a 60-night service throughout the year, with the BID purchasing body-worn cameras to improve the level of information gathered from their patrols. The Night Guardian's patrols complement the Late Night Safe Haven and Late Night First Aid provision, supporting people to enjoy the nighttime economy.

## REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

4. Permitted development rights (PDRs) are a national grant of planning permission by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that allow certain building works and changes of use to take place without having to submit a planning application. In England, PDRs can:
    - provide for the change of use of existing buildings such as offices, shops, and restaurants found in Town Centres to residential use
    - support businesses to grow by granting permission to extend their existing premises
    - allow local authorities to hold outdoor markets for unlimited time to support local communities and businesses and provide a boost to high streets
    - allow the temporary use of land for any purpose for up to 28 days per calendar year, of which 14 days can be used for markets. In July 2023, the department launched a consultation on proposals to increase the number of days that markets can operate under this PDR. The consultation closed in September 2023, and we are currently analysing responses to inform next steps. Further announcements will be made in due course. [Read more about the consultation.](#)
  5. Local Development Orders (LDOs) are locally focused planning tools that local planning authorities can use to grant planning permission for specific types of development within a defined geographical area. LDOs can play an important role in incentivising development by simplifying the planning process and making investment more attractive. Local authorities could use LDOs for many reasons, including to regenerate high streets, incentivise development on stalled sites, deliver housing. The Planning Advisory Service has published [guidance for local authorities on LDO preparation](#), as well as [good practice case studies](#).
- Case study: Local Development Order, Grimsby**

A LDO has brought forward new housing development in Grimsby. North East Lincolnshire Council developed the Local Development Order for the site in 2016. The 4-hectare urban site had been vacant since 2005 and had become an eyesore. The council aimed to increase the likelihood that the site could be developed for a residential-led, mixed-use development. The reserved matters planning application for a mixed-use development comprising 184 houses, 76 apartments and 1000 metre squared of commercial floor space obtained consent in 2017. Local people are now benefitting from the homes delivered.
6. To bring forward quality residential development and regenerate commercial sites, Town Boards can work with the local planning authority to deliver local plan policies and LDOs. New-style Supplementary Plans (once introduced through the LURA 2023) will provide a more flexible way for planning authorities to react and respond to unanticipated changes in their area, separate from the local plan preparation process.
  7. Parish councils and neighbourhood forums, as “qualifying bodies”, can prepare a neighbourhood development plan or a neighbourhood development order.
    - Neighbourhood development plans can be used, for example, to allocate development sites, designate protected green space and set policies on design and to protect local

heritage. Once made, they form part of the local development plan, against which planning decisions are made by the local planning authority.

- Neighbourhood development orders grant planning permission for development in a neighbourhood area, for example, for housing development on allocated sites or for specified changes of use to support the regeneration of high streets. Where qualifying bodies are preparing or updating their neighbourhood development plans, they are encouraged to consider how policies in their plan can be aligned with the priorities set out in the Long-Term Plan.

8. Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is a compulsory purchase power which enables local authorities to assemble land or acquire properties to deliver regeneration schemes, providing there is a compelling case in the public interest for use of the power. It can be used to acquire vacant or derelict land and properties in a high street (which are an eye sore and attract anti-social behaviour), to improve the well-being of the area and encourage greater economic activity.

The LURA 2023 contains a measure that clarifies that the section 226 planning compulsory purchase power can be used by local authorities to deliver regeneration in their areas. This will give local authorities more confidence to use their section 226 compulsory purchase order planning power for regeneration purposes. This measure is expected to come into force, and be usable by local authorities, in early 2024.

***Case study: Compulsory Purchase, Sheffield***

Sheffield City Council used their section 226 compulsory purchase order powers to acquire land on the northern edge of Sheffield city centre. Most of the land comprised vacant and derelict buildings from different eras, which resulted in the land having a run-down appearance. The compulsory purchase order meant they could acquire the land, so they could deliver a comprehensive redevelopment and regeneration scheme. The scheme comprised mixed use development including office, residential, hotel, retail and leisure uses.

9. Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 is a compulsory purchase power that empowers local housing authorities (in England and Wales) to acquire land, houses or other properties for the provision of housing accommodation (providing there is compelling case in the public interest for use of the power). The acquisition must achieve a quantitative or qualitative housing gain.

***Case study: High Street renewal, Shropshire***

Shropshire Council recently purchased the White Lion Public House in Wem. This Grade II listed coaching inn occupies a prominent location in the town and had stood empty for 20 years. Purchasing the building for £92,000, the Council can now ensure it is restored in a sensitive manner, but will also be able to ensure it is brought into uses (potentially a mixture of homes and commercial uses that will draw footfall to this part of the high street) that will benefit the town.

10. Through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a local planning authority can serve a Section 215 Notice to require an owner to take steps to clean up land or buildings, when their condition adversely affects the amenity of an area. This notice must detail the steps to be taken and the associated timescales. Local planning authorities should consider how proactive use of this power could support local regeneration aims, identifying opportunities with their Town Board. Positive examples can be found in [the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 215: best practice guidance](#).
11. The Housing Act 2004 introduced a power for local housing authorities to take over management control of a qualifying residential property, known as Empty Dwelling Management Orders.
12. The Law of Property Act 1925 allows a local authority with a debt on a vacant property to register the debt as a charge, registered in Part 2 of the Local Land Charges Register. The local authority has all the powers and remedies available to a mortgagee under the Law of Property Act 1925, which would include a power to force the sale of the property to recover the debt.

## PROTECTING HERITAGE

13. Design guidance and design codes in England provide property owners, developers and investors with certainty about the requirements new developments will need to fulfil. These are key to securing investment and avoiding delay and provide local people with the reassurance that new developments will meet a known standard and character will be preserved. Once implemented through the LURA 2023, authorities will be able to adopt design codes as supplementary plans, which will have considerable weight in decisions. Design guides and codes do not have to cover every aspect of design but can be focused on aspects that are considered necessary to achieve acceptability and where a parameter can be established. See the [Newport and Ryde Commercial Frontage Design Guide \(Isle of Wight\)](#), as an example.

[View the national design guide.](#)

### **Case study: Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire**

This £20 million Levelling Up Fund investment into Kilmarnock will create a theatre and concert hall that will attract high profile performers and make performing arts more accessible to local people. The project was scoped and defined following extensive stakeholder engagement through the development of the Kilmarnock Urban Integrated Development Plan and the Celebrate Kilmarnock Town Centre Community Action Plan, which identified the requirement for investing in the Palace Theatre and Grand Hall. It will transform the historic building into a visitor attraction, celebrating the unique heritage of the area. The project will deliver improved accessibility in customer and performance areas, create a new cafe and bar, allow the theatre to establish a new youth theatre company.

[View the National Model Design Code guidance.](#)

14. Local planning authorities have a duty to prepare proposals to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of their conservation areas from time to time, and to present these proposals through a public meeting within the area. These are called conservation area

management proposals, which can constitute a strategy or action plan that includes both planning and wider place investment and management measures, agreed by local stakeholders in partnership with the local planning authority. An example of this is Dudley Borough Council, who are working with the local community to improve the Brierley Hill Town Centre Conservation Area in the West Midlands, following the steps laid out in their management plan.

[See Historic England's advice on Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management.](#)

15. Local Listed Building Consent Orders allow local authorities to grant listed building consent as a proactive blanket permission across all or part of their areas, for the alteration or extension of groups of listed buildings of a particular description. This can be used, for example, to grant permission for energy efficiency measures such as solar panels on listed buildings. [Read Historic England's guidance on Local Listed Building Consent Orders.](#)
16. Local planning authorities can prepare local lists to give locally important heritage assets some protection under the planning system. Where an asset is locally listed, it should be afforded weight within planning decisions. Local planning authorities should think about the role listing assets could play in protecting heritage, working with Town Boards to do so. Further guidance on this process is available from [Historic England: Local Listing Historic England](#).
17. Historic buildings that have fallen into disrepair can fuel a sense of decline, even where their condition is the responsibility of a single negligent owner. Section 48 of the Listed Buildings Act 1990 enables local planning authorities to serve a Repairs Notice on the owner of a listed building, specifying those works it considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building.
18. Section 78 of the Building Act 1984 relates to emergency measures. Before exercising their powers, however, the local authority must give notice of their intention to the owner and the occupier of the building. [Read about the guide to enforcement action to save historic buildings.](#)

## COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

19. Under the Assets of Community Value Scheme (ACV), under the Localism Act 2011, a building or piece of land can be registered as an "Asset of Community Value" if its principal use furthers a community's social wellbeing or social interests and is likely to do so in future. Community groups and parish councils can submit nominations for Assets of Community Value, which local authorities will then consider. If an Asset of Community Value comes up for sale, communities have a window of opportunity to raise finance for a bid to buy it, to protect it for community use (known as the Community Right to Bid). Local authorities could work with Town Boards to consider the role this process can play in identifying and protecting local assets.
20. Community Asset Transfer (General Disposal of Consent) allows local authorities to sell land and buildings at lower than market value when a local social, economic or environmental benefit can be realised. While this is a complex process, local authorities and Town Boards could consider whether this is an appropriate tool for supporting community ownership and protecting their town's heritage.

***Case study: Community Ownership Fund, Harborough***

The Hub was previously a derelict brick pavilion building owned by Harborough District Council. Over the years the building gradually fell into disrepair and with the high cost of maintenance and disrepair it had become economically non-viable to maintain and was at risk of being demolished. Through the agreement of a 125-year peppercorn lease to The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Luke and with £250,000 of grant funding from the Community Ownership Fund, the building will be refurbished to create a 'Community Centre and Café', serving as a meeting hub and helping to provide support services and other benefits to the local community.

## **Transport and connectivity powers available**

### **STREET DESIGN AND ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

1. Local traffic authorities are responsible for managing their road network for the benefit of all traffic, including people walking and wheeling. Street design should aim to create a pleasant and attractive environment. Creating this sort of environment, which encourages people to linger and spend time, has been shown to create economic benefits, contributing to growth.

Measures that local traffic authorities can take include, but are not limited to:

- making sure footways are wide enough to enable access for everyone, particularly disabled people, and to cater for the expected demand.
- providing crossing places of the right type and at suitable intervals, with accessibility features such as dropped kerbs and tactile paving
- creating an attractive pedestrian environment, for example through planting, street art and use of sympathetic materials
- providing enough seating, shelter and other measures to ensure people can rest and enjoy the space as well as move around safely and accessibly
- ensuring fixed street furniture such as litter bins and electric vehicle charge points are placed appropriately and do not cause obstructions by narrowing the footway below the recommended minimum
- ensuring moveable street furniture such as advertising A boards and café furniture is placed thoughtfully and action is taken where it is not
- maintaining footways to make sure the surface is level, free of trip hazards, cleared of litter and gritted in cold weather

Local authorities have powers to make changes to road layouts, including footways, through various pieces of legislation including the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

A range of good practice advice available to support local authorities. [Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2](#) set out principles of street design that aim to put consideration of the needs of people walking and wheeling first. [Inclusive Mobility](#) sets recommendations on minimum footways widths. Local authorities are also responsible for ensuring changes to their

roads are delivered in a way that enables them to comply with equalities legislation, particularly the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Local authorities are reminded that the pause on shared space that incorporates a level surface, announced in the Inclusive Transport Strategy, is still in place. Level surfaces remove the kerb distinction between the footway and the carriageway, and groups representing visually impaired people in particular have made clear that this can make it difficult for them to navigate independently and safely.

## LOCAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

2. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure to support the development on an area. This could include transport, schools, hospitals and green spaces.

Where all or part of a chargeable development is within the area of a parish council, the charging authority must pass a proportion of the CIL receipts from the development to the parish council. This is known as the neighbourhood portion. Communities without a parish council can still benefit from the neighbourhood portion. If there is no parish council, the charging authority will retain the CIL receipts but should engage with the communities where development has taken place and agree with them how best to spend the neighbourhood funding. [Read the guidance about CIL.](#)

We will update guidance to make clear that local authorities, and parish council where they exist, should engage Town Boards to determine priorities for how the neighbourhood portion is spent.

### ***Case studies: Chalfont St Giles Parish Council and Bristol***

Chalfont St Giles Parish Council used its allocation from the CIL to spend £8,650 on accessible paths within Chalfont St Giles Recreation Ground.

Bristol, an unparished area, used £25,000 of the neighbourhood portion of their CIL receipts to help fund a youth club and £17,000 for provision of improvements to the Blaise Nursery Glasshouses, which provides businesses and councils with high-quality plants and supplies throughout the year.

3. The LURA 2023 includes powers to introduce a new Infrastructure Levy, which will eventually replace the Community Infrastructure Levy in England (excluding Mayoral CIL which is charged by the Mayor of London). Under the Infrastructure Levy, local planning authorities will be required to prepare Infrastructure Delivery Strategies, setting out a strategy for how they intend to spend Levy proceeds. Through guidance, we will make clear that local authorities are expected to involve Town Boards in identifying investment priorities, including those for transport and connectivity, when development takes place in a town.



## Annex C: List of policy interventions

We encourage Town Boards to engage communities and review the interventions below. They should submit the most appropriate interventions as part of their Long-Term Plan, following the above guidance. The case for support for the interventions has already been agreed, simplifying the Long-Term Plan process.

The interventions are flexible so places can focus on what best meets their local needs. Town Boards should consider how they can implement interventions to suit local characteristics, reflecting the opportunities and challenges that their communities face.

Town Boards can also take forward interventions outside of this list if they submit an outline business case to MHCLG as part of their Long-Term Plan. This should be based on numeric evidence where possible.

### Safety and security interventions

S1: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'. This might include:

- promoting the active use of streets and public spaces throughout the daytime and evening
- improvements to streetlighting
- installation of new CCTV

S2: Engage with Police Force and together consider interventions to focus on visible crime prevention in defined areas places. Interventions could include:

- hotspot policing
- problem-oriented policing

S3: Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime and reduce reoffending. These might include:

- sports programmes designed to prevent crime and reduce reoffending
- mentoring
- police-led pre-charge diversion models for young offenders
- focused deterrence strategies
- halfway house programmes

S4: Measures to reduce repeat burglary. These might include:

- Neighbourhood Watch
- provision of crime prevention advice
- property marking
- target hardening (increasing the security of a property)
- cocoon watch (provision of crime prevention advice, support and guidance to neighbours and surrounding addresses of burgled properties)
- alley gating



## High streets, heritage and regeneration interventions

H1: Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements, which could include better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs. This might include:

- regenerating a town square or high street
- public realm improvements, for example street furniture or other decorative improvements
- the delivery of outreach, engagement and participatory programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries

H2: Funding for new or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects and assets including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding, and support for decarbonisation of facilities, energy efficiency audits, and installation of energy efficiency and renewable measures in community buildings (including capital spend and running costs). This might include:

- building new or updating existing defences to increase communities' resilience to natural hazards like flooding or coastal erosion

H3: Creation of and improvement to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments. Improvements to the natural environment and the incorporation of more of these natural features into wider public spaces. This might include:

- development of a new park, particularly in areas with the least access to greenspace
- development of a new park or community garden
- improvements to a canal towpath, particularly in more deprived neighbourhoods
- urban or riparian tree planting
- changes to management of green spaces and verges
- regeneration of existing parks or community gardens, particularly in areas with poor quality parks and gardens
- improving access to existing parks

H4: Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer. This might include:

- the delivery of events programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries
- the development, restoration or refurbishment of local natural, cultural and heritage assets and sites

H5: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. This might include:

- funding for maker spaces
- funding for local art galleries, museums, libraries for exhibitions
- support for displays for artists to showcase work
- locally led music and theatre performances, tours, author events and film screenings
- funding for cultural, heritage and creative events

H6: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area. This might include:

- campaigns promoting the local area and its culture, heritage, leisure and visitor offer to residents and visitors
- campaigns to encourage visitors from further afield to visit and stay in the region, collaborating with other places where appropriate

H7: Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. This might include:

- funding for local volunteering groups, such as youth charities and carer's groups
- support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally

H8: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together. This might include:

- renovation and maintenance of existing sports facilities
- support for community sports leagues
- regeneration of an unused area to build sports facilities
- creation of new 3G sports pitches and other sports facilities

H9: Investment in capacity building, resilience (which could include climate change resilience) and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. This might include:

- funding for community spaces, such as village halls, libraries or community centres for local civil society and community groups to use
- support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally

H10: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.

H11: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses. This might include:

- funding to support the establishment and ongoing running of a new open air market
- business support activity for entrepreneurs

H12: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally. This might include:

- development of local visitor trails and tours
- grants for the development, promotion and upkeep of local tourist attractions
- development of other local visitor experiences based around the local offer

H13: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors. This might include:

- grants to bid for, secure and hold a conference for a leading sector locally.

## **Transport and connectivity interventions**

T1: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area. This might include:

- creation of new foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need or social inequalities
- upgrading of existing foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need or social inequalities

T2: Funding for bus infrastructure and connections to speed up journeys. This might include:

- traffic signalling improvements
- bus lanes and corridors
- improved passenger information

T3: England and Scotland Only: Additional revenue funding added to the Bus Service Improvement Programme Plus (BSIP+) funding model from June 2024 - that would award funding to LTAs based on a connectivity scoring so they could undertake activities that would boost economic growth.

T4: Funding for new, or improvements to road networks to improve access within and to the town. This might include:

- traffic management improvements to relieve congestion
- road safety
- highway maintenance (including potholes)

T5: Funding to improve rail connectivity and access. This might include:

- adding stations along existing lines
- improved accessibility and journey quality at and around stations
- improved passenger information

T6: Reducing vehicle emissions. This might include:

- EV charging facilities
- procuring zero emission buses

T7: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.