

SANDWELL TOWNS FUND

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

Consultation and Engagement Statement

The following statement was agreed by the Towns Fund Superboard:

This stakeholder engagement plan will clearly outline an inclusive stakeholder list and communication strategy as to ensure a transformational, locally driven and community owned submission to the Town Fund for Sandwell's three towns.

Purpose of Consultation and Engagement Strategy

The purpose of the Consultation and Engagement Strategy is to consider how stakeholders will be involved in the development of the Sandwell Town Funds Programme. The stakeholders will be involved in the design and development of a sustainable future for the towns of Rowley Regis, West Bromwich and Smethwick.

Stakeholders are being engaged to seek their involvement and views to shape and deliver the best solutions to meet the needs of local communities.

The Consultation and Engagement Strategy is aimed at a wide range of businesses and stakeholders; the engagement and consultation techniques used will vary depending on which method would be the most effective for each group involved in the process and the stage of the programme.

Town Funds Background

As Sandwell Council embarks on an exciting period of transformation, inward investment and expansion. A significant opportunity has arisen to secure funding from Towns Fund in three of the six towns in Sandwell.

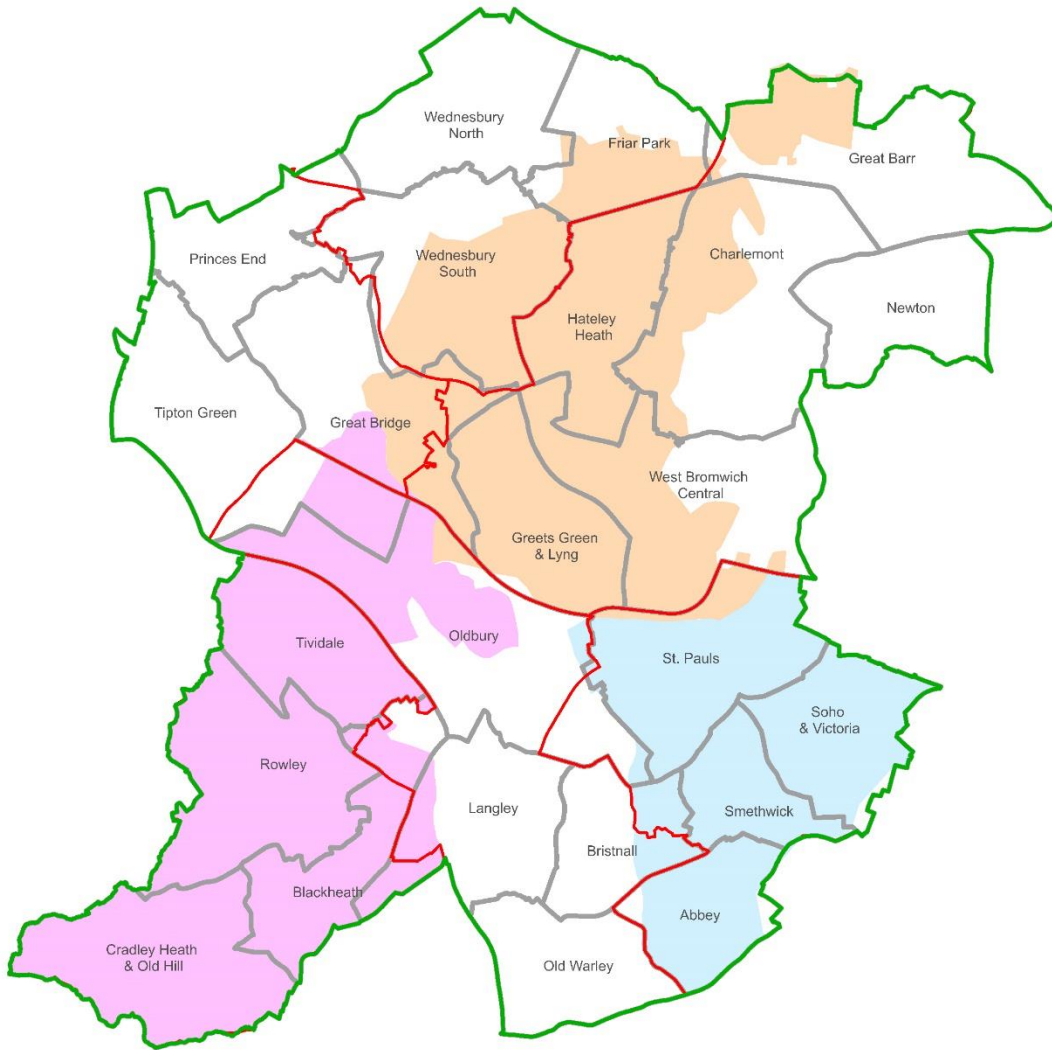
The Government has announced that West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis can bid for up to £25m each of funding to deliver interventions in planning and regeneration, skills and enterprise infrastructure, and connectivity (transport and digital).

The benefits of gaining funding from the Programme will contribute to the Sandwell 2030 Vision and economic growth in the towns through linking to existing integrated regeneration strategies. There are also wider benefits to be realised by the towns achieving stronger heritage, a sense of place and by cultural and civic assets benefiting. Leading to increasing tourism and making places more attractive to live, work, visit and invest in.



Sandwell Towns Fund Boundaries – West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis

Sandwell Towns - West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis



Key

— Borough Boundary

— Ward Boundaries

— Six Towns Boundaries

Towns Fund Boundaries

— West Bromwich

— Smethwick

— Rowley Regis



NORTH

June 2020

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT PRINCIPLES

Co-deliver

- We will work together to deliver services and make the decisions together.

Co-design

- We will work together to define issues and design the best responses.

Engagement Structures

- We will work together through effective and meaningful structures.

Consultation

- We will consult by completing informal and formal consultations to influence decisions.

Information

- We will engage by sharing information and utilising social media.

Compliance

- We will engage in relation to statutory or regulatory requirements

Social distancing

- All consultations and engagements will be completed within government guidance and guidelines.

TOWN FUND PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

Towns Fund is focused around 3 themes:

- **Urban Regeneration, Planning and Land use:** ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work, by: increasing density in town centres; strengthening local economic and cultural assets; site acquisition, remediation, preparation, regeneration and use of planning tools to bring strategic direction and change.
- **Skills and Enterprise Infrastructure:** driving private sector investment and ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development.
- **Connectivity:** local transport schemes complementing regional and national networks, improved digital connectivity (5G and Fibre).



STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The programme will follow the Government's Towns Fund Guidance and ensure that planned interventions are consulted with local people and where possible communities are part of producing originating ideas, setting objectives and the longer-term vision.

One of the key elements of the town funds guidance are that there should be ongoing engagement and genuine partnership arrangements. The town boards (Superboard and Local Boards) have a cross-section of people that reflect a broad range of groups and communities across Sandwell.

Evidence from previous Neighbourhood and Regeneration Programmes in Sandwell has demonstrated that consulting with local communities from the outset is likely to lead to a sense of pride and connectivity to projects following their completion. This then positively impacts upon local communities benefiting more widely from the overall outcomes of the programme.

The stakeholder engagement strategy plan has been revised in light of Covid-19 to reflect that there will be a much greater emphasis on completion of engagement through virtual methods and via social media, but where possible we will try to facilitate face to face engagement.

As there has been increased levels of community action and volunteering since the start of the pandemic across Sandwell, it is anticipated that there will be an opportunity to reflect new and emerging priorities in local Neighbourhoods and in the final Town Investment plans. We will ensure that the community consultation and engagement is completed sensitively and appropriately to facilitate physical and social connectivity and diversity across the three towns.

A stakeholder mapping exercise has been completed to identify stakeholders and select appropriate methods for engagement and consultation.

Key major stakeholders are brought together within the programme governance as participants of the Towns Fund Superboard, or three Local Boards all of which will be chaired by people independent of the Council.

The first phase of the Towns Fund Programme runs from March 2020 – October 2020. This Phase will lead to the creation of a Town Investment Plan (one for each Town). This Phase of the programme is split into two key stages.

Stage 1

Ideas Generation (Evidence base compiled, local priorities for Towns Fund identified and Ideas generated for interventions)

Stage 2

Investment Development (Development of outline business case for Interventions and compilation of Town Investment Plan (TIP))



The nature of consultation and engagement will differ during each of these stages.

Stage 1

During Stage 1, the project team will undertake a broad ranging stakeholder consultation in each of the 3 towns with key identified stakeholders and will listen to local residents and community groups by gaining their views on local priorities and ideas for improvements.

The project team will draw heavily on existing data and consultation (e.g. gathered through Vision 2030 consultation, through the formation of the Inclusive Economy Deal and regular survey work such as the SHAPE survey for young people).

The Government's MyTown website was established at the start of the Towns Fund Programme and many local residents have already engaged with this forum to offer ideas. We will continue to review content on the MyTown website.

Stage 2

During Stage 2, proposed projects will start to become more defined and explored for feasibility and viability. At this stage engagement and consultation will be used in a more targeted way to shape the interventions and test their feasibility and acceptability.

Young People's Engagement

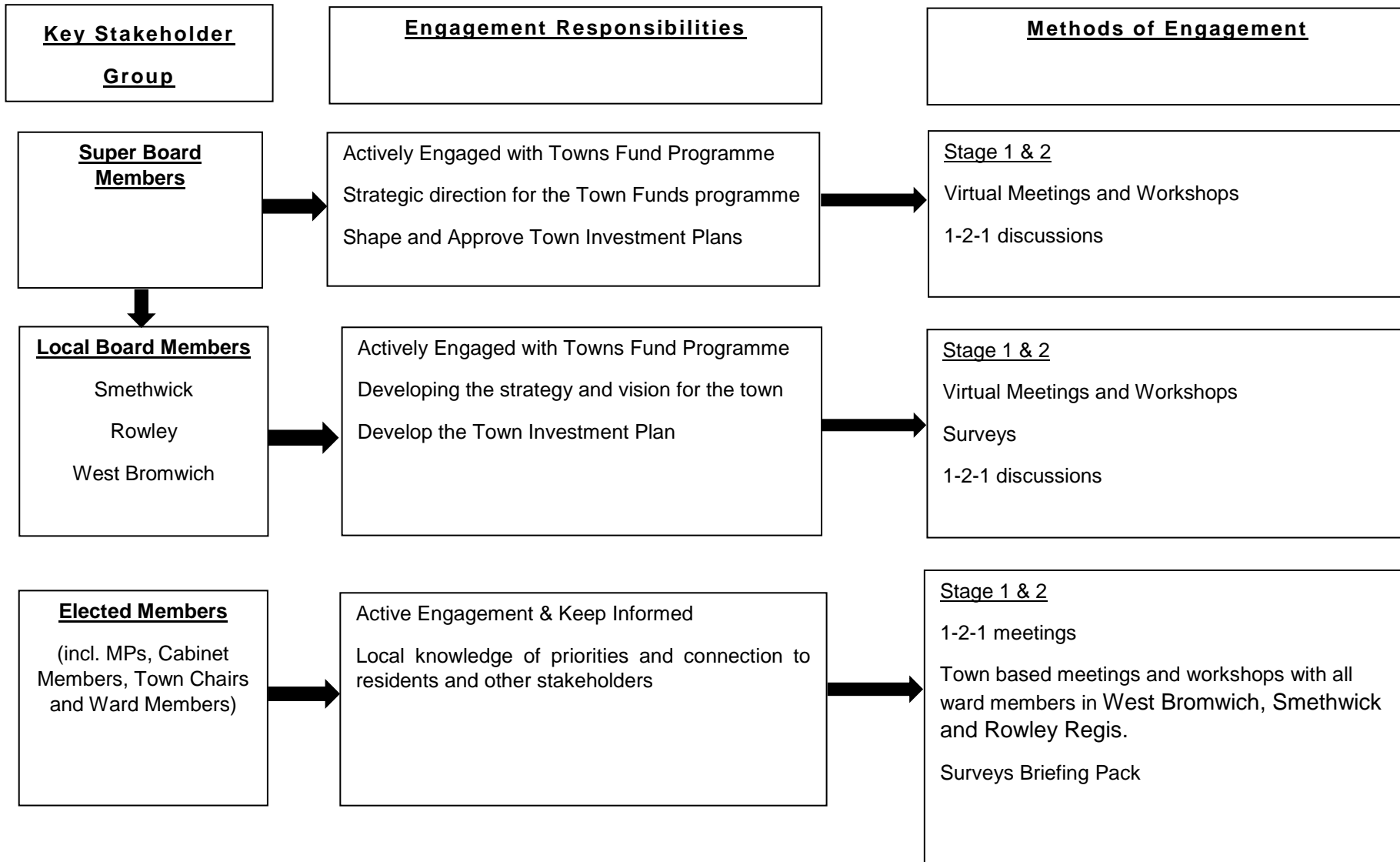
Young people have an important contribution to make in decisions that impact their lives, and their communities. Young People's views will form an integral part of the plans across the three towns. A young people's virtual reference group will be established to conduct engagement with young people and to support the Superboard and Local Boards. In addition, a young person's representative will be supported to participate in the Superboard and Local Board meetings.

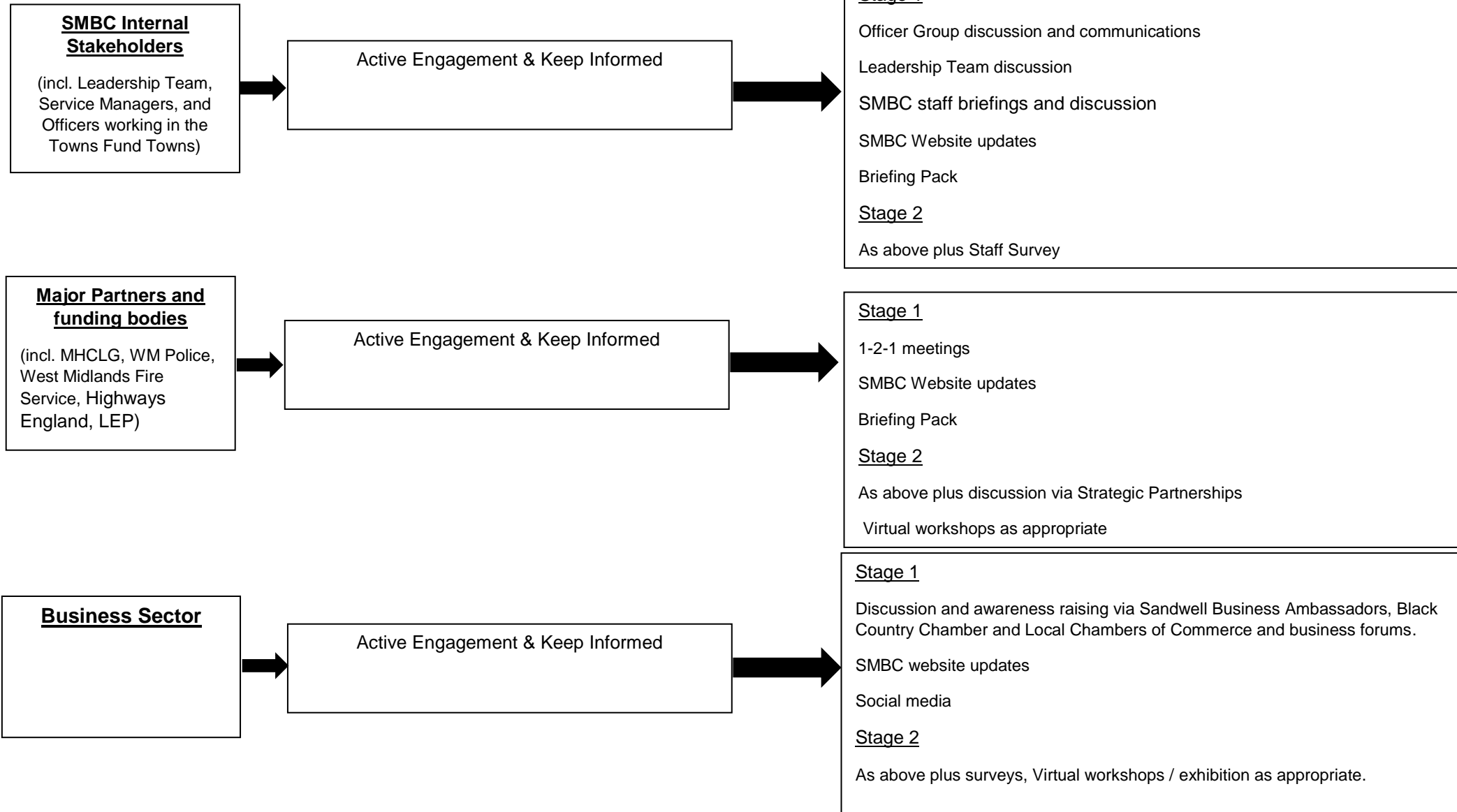
Staff briefings

Virtual staff consultation focus group meetings are to be held in August via Microsoft teams. There will be an opportunity for us to promote the survey at these meetings to engage with SMBC staff around the local priorities that they can identify with through work or by living in West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis. This will build upon feedback gained through the 2030 Vision previously and current work on the Council's Big Plans for a Great Place work stream.



Engagement Plan





Community & Voluntary Sector Groups
(incl. local community groups, SCVO, Sandwell Consortium, Libraries, Religious and Faith Groups) A detailed stakeholder identification exercise has taken place for this group

Active Engagement & Keep Informed

Stage 1
SMBC website and survey questions
My Towns Website & #MyTowns
Press Releases
Social Media
Briefing Pack
Stage 2
As above plus surveys via key contacts eg SCVO and SCIPs. Virtual workshops as appropriate.

Local Residents

Active Engagement & Keep Informed

Stage 1
Publicity Campaign to raise awareness of Towns Fund incl. press release and social media (July)
Consultation survey on priorities (August)
My Towns Website & #MyTowns (ongoing)
SMBC website (ongoing)
Information within Towns & signposting to website (JCDecaux)
Young People's Reference Group engagement
Stage 2
Further publicity campaign
Surveys
Young People's Reference Group engagement



Engagement Timeline

	March - June	July	August	September	October	Nov/ Dec
Superboard and Local Boards Engagement	Ongoing (incl. 1:1s, board meetings and briefings)					
Major Partners Engagement	Ongoing (incl. 1:1s, briefings and workshops)					
Business Sector		Awareness raising via social media	Stage 1 survey dissemination via Business Ambassadors, Chamber and Business Forums	Stage 2 survey dissemination via Business Ambassadors, Chamber and Business Forums		Announce Town Deal
Ward Member Briefings		Initial Briefing	Discussion around Town vision, priorities and long list of interventions	Discussion around short list of interventions		Announce Town Deal
Community and Voluntary Sector		1:1s	Stage 1 survey dissemination via SCVO and SCIPS 1:1s	Stage 2 survey dissemination via SCVO and SCIPS		Announce Town Deal
Young People			Reference Group Established and consider priorities and ideas put forwards	Reference Group input into short listed projects	Input views on Draft TIP	Announce Town Deal
Press Release & Social Media		Towns Fund Awareness Raising	Announce launch of stage 1 survey	Announce launch of stage 2 survey	Announce TIP approval at Superboard	Announce Town Deal



	March - June	July	August	September	October	Nov/ Dec
Website		Launch initial website content	Update with survey information and background pack for each Town	Update with proposed interventions and stage 2 survey	Update with TIP summary	Announce Town Deal and process for Phase 2
Survey			Stage 1 Survey Launched (test priorities and gather ideas)	Stage 2 Survey (input into interventions)		
Presence in Towns			JCDecaux		Sandwell Herald Feature	

