

Agenda

Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

Thursday, 7 March 2024 at 6.00 pm
At Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 Minutes 5 - 10

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2024 as a correct record.

4 Additional Items of Business

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 Long Term Plan for Towns - Smethwick 11 - 112

To consider and comment upon the Long-Term Plan for Towns – Smethwick.



6 **Tracking and Monitoring of Scrutiny
Recommendations** 113 - 116

Standing item to consider and review the progress on the implementation of actions and recommendations.

7 **Cabinet Forward Plan and Board Work
Programme** 117 - 132

Standing item to consider the Cabinet Forward Plan and the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023-24.

Shokat Lal
Chief Executive
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution
Councillor Taylor (Chair)
Councillors Owen, Akpoteni, Ashraf, Dhatt, Hemingway, A Hussain, Kordala,
Rahman, J Singh and Davies

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Minutes of Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

**8 February 2024 at 6.01pm
in the Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Taylor (Chair);
Councillors Akpoteni, Ashraf, Davies, Dhatt,
Hemingway, Rahman and J Singh.

Officers: Rina Rahim (Town Fund Programme Manager);
Alexander Oxley (Capital Projects Manager); Alex
Goddard (Scrutiny Lead Officer) and Anthony Lloyd
(Democratic Services Officer).

1/24 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
Hussain, Kordala and Owen.

2/24 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

3/24 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 8
November 2023 are confirmed as a correct record.

4/24 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business to consider.

5/23 **Tracking and Monitoring of Scrutiny Recommendations**

The Board noted the status of actions and recommendations it had made. Further updates would be reported to future meetings of the Board.

6/24 **Cabinet Forward Plan and Board Work Programme**

The Board received the Cabinet Forward Plan and Board Work Programme.

Members requested that a revisit of bin collection data and any related concerns be added to the Board's work programme.

The Council's approach to consultation was also a topic of interest for Board members and, noting that it was within the terms of reference for the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, members requested that this be considered by that Board.

Resolved that the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board consider is requested to consider adding a review into the Council's consultation process onto its work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

7/24 **Towns Fund Programme Update**

Further to its meeting on 3 October 2023 (minute no. 32/23 refers), the Board received a further update on the Towns Fund Programme.

Members were reassured that no slippage exceeding the 40% threshold had occurred and therefore, no audit reviews from central government were required.

West Bromwich Town Fund Update

The Towns Fund Programme for West Bromwich aimed to deliver a number of outcomes including the renovation of heritage buildings, provision of new green spaces, improved floor space and rehabilitated land, the introduction of new cycle ways, pedestrian paths, improved roads and multiple full-time and temporary jobs.

The digital den project had been completed and was delivering outputs by supporting learners. Additionally, capital elements in relation to the Urban Greening project had been completed with pocket parks, seating, and the upgrading of the High Street now finalised.

Phase 3 of the West Bromwich Connected Scheme was due to start however, mixed responses had been received from the consultation process. Spend was on target and progress was being made.

Delays had been experienced in relation to the Town Hall Quarter project due to the need of a detailed review of the final cost plan. Works had begun on site with the aim for completion in November 2024.

Smethwick Town Fund Update

In relation to the Midland Met Learning Campus, cost inflation pressures had been experienced due to the aim of delivering zero carbon building. As a result, the project had applied for additional match-funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). Delays were also in place due to issues with obtaining planning permission. If match funding was agreed, works were expected to take place in May 2024.

In relation to the Grove Lane Regeneration project, Significant delays had been encountered regarding delivery and spend due to the delay in acquiring the site required within the 2023-2024 financial year. Despite this, Cabinet had approved the Council to explore the use of compulsory purchase orders (CPO) to obtain the site.

Smethwick Connected project aimed to create cycle and pedestrian links from two railway stations to the town centre and local hospital to achieve uplift in the number of people using active travel modes within Smethwick, the wider borough and region to assist in reducing congestion, poor air quality and other health inequalities. This project was on target and being delivered as planned.

The Ron Davis Centre expansion had been completed and the IT infrastructure had been installed.

The date for the Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration project to commence had been moved back in order for further financial matters to be considered. Additionally, an objection had been received from Historic England following the planning application. Negotiations were taking place with Historic England to discuss the issues.

Rowley Regis Town Fund

A tendering process for both the planned changing rooms and Skate Park at Britannia Park Greenspace and Community Hub had been completed however, several planned aspects of the project had been delayed into the next financial year.

90% of the works to the Old Mainline within the Canal Network Connectivity project had been completed and further works were due to take place in the summer months.

Following public consultation and feedback, a redesign of the Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm scheme was planned to take place.

Works on the Rowley Regis Connected project were on target and making good progress.

Following questions from members, the following clarifications and points were made:-

- Slippage on projects was much higher in Smethwick due to the vast scale of some of the schemes, legal processes and the delays around match funding;

- a redesign of the Blackheath Bus Exchange was making progress and an additional consultation was scheduled for March 2024 so that plans could be finalised;
- it was confirmed that a “descope” was the process of reducing or re-designing a project to fit financial constraints.

7/24(a) **Exclusion of Public and Press**

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting. This is to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, relating to the financial or business affairs of any person, including the authority holding that information.

7/24(b) **Towns Fund Programme Update**

Further to minute no. 7/24, the Board received a detailed update on the financial aspects of some of the planned Town Fund Programme projects.

Members were minded that in relation to the poor ground conditions that could be found across the borough, site investigations were taking place to ensure that projects were constantly monitored and that appropriate actions could take place if needed.

The project team working on the re-location of the West Bromwich Indoor Market had created a revised plan that officers were hopeful could be delivered with the support of the Council.

The following points were also highlighted to the Board:-

- Any underspend would be utilised to implement front ramp access to the West Bromwich Town Hall after the initial internal refurbishment was completed;
- if projects were to experience long delays or become no longer viable, the Department for Housing, Levelling

Up and Communities would allow projects to be changed or amended as long as similar and effective outputs were delivered;

- some initial budgets were not sufficient as they were arranged before the sharp increase in inflation which had impacted construction costs;
- Cradley Heath Skill Centre was being delivered within the financial scope with no concerns as of February 2024.
- all projects contained at least a 10-15% costing contingency. Costs were reviewed on a regular basis.

Officers were thanked for the update.

Resolved that future updates to the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board on the Towns Fund Programme include further detail on consultation and input from stakeholders, especially young people.

Meeting ended at 7.11pm following an adjournment between 6.17pm to 6.18pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

7 March 2024

Subject:	Long Term Plan for Towns – Smethwick
Director:	Assistant Director Growth & Spatial Planning, Tammy Stokes
Contact Officer:	Regeneration Manager, Jenna Langford jenna_langford@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the Long-Term Plan for Towns – Smethwick arrangements, as prescribed by Government guidance.
- 1.2 That the Board considers and comments upon the list of interventions as prescribed by Government.
- 1.3 That the Board considers and comments upon the proposed revised investment boundary.

2 Reasons for Recommendations



- 2.1 The Long-Term Plan for Towns was announced by Government in October 2023, and Government Guidance was issued on the 18 December 2023. A board to lead, develop, and deliver the Long-Term Plan is to be established by the council for the 1 April 2024, with the Long-Term Plan for Smethwick to be submitted to Government no later than the



1 August 2024. A Cabinet Report has been submitted for consideration on the 13 March 2024.

- 2.2 Government have provided a list of interventions which have already been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio by Government (see appendix 2, pages 40-43).
- 2.3 The Government have based the investment boundary on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 'Built Up Areas' (see appendix 3) and as such the boundary excludes investment in key open spaces such as Black Patch and Warley Woods. The boundary does not conform to the ward boundaries of Smethwick Town and includes part of Oldbury (Bristnall) within the boundary, and by Government's own guidance the investment boundary must represent the town as intended. The proposed revised investment boundary aligns to the Smethwick Town boundary, encompassing Abbey; Smethwick; Soho and Victoria; and St Pauls wards in their entirety. Open Spaces are also included. Subject to Cabinet endorsement and Board approval the intention is to submit representation to DLUHC by the 1 April 2024 to amend the investment boundary accordingly (see appendix 4).

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Strong Resilient Communities Safety and Security is an investment theme of the Long-Term Plan funding programme which will support strong and resilient communities.</p>
	<p>A Strong and Inclusive Economy High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration is an investment theme of the Long-Term Plan funding programme which will support a strong and inclusive economy.</p>





A Connected and Accessible Sandwell

Transport and Connectivity is an investment theme of the Long-Term Plan funding programme which will support a connected & accessible Sandwell.

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 In October 2023 the Government Department for Local Communities and Housing (DLUHC) announced their *'Long-Term Plan for Towns'* an investment programme of £1.1 billion into 55 towns for local people's priorities. The announcement was accompanied by the publication of *'Our Long-Term Plan for Towns'* prospectus (appendix 1).
- 4.2 Each town selected will receive £20m 'endowment-style' funding to invest over the next 10 years. Town selection for funding allocation was undertaken by Government according to the Levelling Up Needs Index which considers metrics covering skills, pay, productivity, and health, as well as the Index of Multiple Deprivation. For Sandwell, Government have selected Smethwick to receive Long-Term Plan for Towns funding. Other Black Country towns allocated funding are Darlaston (Walsall), Dudley (Dudley), and Bilston (Wolverhampton).
- 4.3 The Government intention is for the £20m endowment style funding (25% revenue / 75% capital) over a 10-year period will provide long-term certainty to deliver a range of interventions within three broad investment themes to be driven by the needs and wishes of local communities:
1. Safety and Security
 2. High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration
 3. Transport and Connectivity



- 4.4 The view of Government is that this flexibility means Towns such as Smethwick are more able to capitalise on private and philanthropic investment, aligning timings with businesses and investors to maximise the benefits for local people.
- 4.5 The funding will be devolved directly to Sandwell Council and will be able to roll over funding into future years. As the Local Authority, Sandwell will be the accountable body and will remain responsible for ensuring good use of public funds through the existing duties of the Section 151 officer.
- 4.6 To access the £20m endowment-style funding Sandwell will need to produce a Long-Term Plan for Smethwick, based on the priorities of local people, and put to local people for consultation. A Town Deal Board for Smethwick for the purposes of the Long-Term Plan will need to be established that brings community leaders and representatives together to produce, oversee, and deliver the Long-Term Plan.
- 4.7 The terms of reference for the Board will be based on learning from the Towns Fund Programme Governance model, adapting arrangements from the existing Town Deal Board for Smethwick. The new Board once constituted will review and finalise the terms of reference at its first meeting. The proposed terms of reference will then be submitted for approval by the Assistant Director of Legal & Assurance in consultation with the Assistant Director for Growth & Spatial Planning, and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & West Midlands Combined Authority. The terms of reference will comprise the following components:

- Governance Model
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Board Positions
- Code of Conduct
- Decision Making
- Scrutiny
- Transparency and Accountability
- Board Member profiles
- Conflicts of Interest



- Scheme of Delegation

4.8 It is proposed that the existing positions and members of the Smethwick Town Deal Board be retained for the Long-Term Plan Board:

- Chair of Smethwick Town Deal Board
- Deputy Chair of Smethwick Town Deal Board
- Cabinet Member Regeneration & West Midlands Combined Authority
- SMBC Smethwick Town Lead

The other existing positions will also be retained, though the process of repurposing the Town Deal Board for the Long-Term Plan will provide an opportunity to review these positions in the revised context. Where additional representation is required it is proposed to advertise the board positions, requesting that expressions of interest be submitted for the retained Board members to consider and appoint by panel.

4.9 The Long-Term Plan is to comprise the 10-year vision for Smethwick and a 3-year investment plan, setting out how the funding will be allocated and spent, with the local authority as the body ultimately accountable for funding. The endowment approach 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 DLUHC. The full funding profile will be available in early 2024. The funding is delivered through the powers are set out in Section 50 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020.

4.10 Government have stated that where a Town Deal Board is already in place (Smethwick Town Deal Board), this can be re-purposed to meet the needs of the Long-Term Plan for Smethwick. As with Town Deal Boards, Government expect the Town Board to be chaired by a businessperson or a local community leader. On the 15 November 2023 the Smethwick Town Deal Board were advised of the Long-Term Plan announcement from DLUHC and the option to re-purpose the Smethwick Town Deal Board to align with the requirements of the Long-Term Plan programme.



Smethwick Town Deal Board members present were supportive of being involved with the Long-Term Plan for Smethwick.

- 4.11 On the 18 December 2023 DLUHC released further guidance (see appendix 2) confirming that £250k capacity funding (RDEL Grant) is to be issued to Local Authorities to cover the costs of establishing the Town Deal Board and preparing the Long-Term Plan for submission. The capacity funding will comprise £50k, which has been received by the council, to establish the Town Deal Board. Once established the remaining £200k of capacity funding will be released to develop the plan which is to be submitted by the 1 August 2024. Government expect this funding to be utilised for convening a Town Deal Board, community engagement, support to the Town Deal Board to develop the Long-Term Plan, and technical expertise for project development including feasibility studies and business cases. The £250k capacity funding is deducted from the £20m funding allocation.
- 4.12 The plan is to set out a 10-year vision that is long-term, strategic, and backed by insights gained through engagement with local people. The plan is to comprise a vision statement, a strategic case for the future of the town, the priority outcomes for 2034, planned interventions across the three investment themes, evidence the plan is community led, how the board will attract additional investment, and high-level milestones.
- 4.13 The Government have based the investment boundary on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 'Built Up Areas' (see appendix 3) and as such the boundary excludes investment in key open spaces such as Black Patch and Warley Woods. The boundary does not conform to the ward boundaries of Smethwick Town and includes part of Oldbury (Bristnall) within the boundary, and by Government's own guidance the investment boundary must represent the town as intended.
- 4.14 Government advised there is scope to make representations to the department to alter the Long-Term Plan investment boundary, where an amendment remains within the spirit of the programme and includes, as part of the revised area, the town that was originally selected and must



remain contiguous. Any representation to amend the investment boundary need to be confirmed by 1 April 2024 and must have been agreed by the Town Board. Having reviewed the Long-Term Plan investment boundary as provided by Government it has been necessary to consider amendments.

- 4.15 The proposed revised investment boundary aligns to the Smethwick Town boundary, encompassing Abbey; Smethwick; Soho and Victoria; and St Pauls wards in their entirety. Open Spaces are also included. Subject to Cabinet endorsement and Board approval the intention is to submit representation to DLUHC by the 1 April 2024 to amend the investment boundary accordingly (see appendix 4).
- 4.16 A data pack for Smethwick, produced by the Department for Levelling Up's Spatial Data Unit and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been provided to the council (see appendix 3). The pack includes a raft of local data across the three themes for investment: safety and security; transport and connectivity; and heritage and high streets. The data sources in the pack are the latest available as of 30 November 2023.
- 4.17 Government have provided a list of interventions which have already been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio by Government (see appendix 2, pages 40-43). Should the Board pursue these interventions, a business case will not be required as part of the assessment process. However, should the board wish to pursue bespoke or 'off-menu' interventions an outline business will be required.
- 4.18 The timescales for the Long-Term Plan development and submission set by Government are incredibly ambitious and for Sandwell much of the time will be during purdah. Legal advice has been sought and establishing the board is business as usual and therefore does not contravene purdah regulations. In-terms of plan development, the council will appoint consultancy services to provide the necessary expertise and support to the Board to develop the plan. During purdah this activity will comprise data collection, analysis, and meeting with local communities to harness



their local priorities. No public consultation will take place until the purdah period has concluded.

5 Implications

Resources:	Resources will need to be funded from the Long-Term Plan fund to ensure the council's cost of programme management and accountable body responsibilities are funded, this will include finance officer resource. This will also include capacity to review and update the investment plan after the 3-year period.
Legal and Governance:	Should the plan submission be accepted, the council will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Government. Governance arrangements for the board will be established and approved by the Assistant Director of Legal & Assurance and will be reviewed annually.
Risk:	We are yet to have sight of the funding agreement with Government, so it is not possible to assess risks at this stage.
Equality:	The Long-Term Plan is yet to be developed.
Health and Wellbeing:	The Long-Term Plan is yet to be developed.
Social Value:	The Long-Term Plan is yet to be developed.
Climate Change:	The Long-Term Plan is yet to be developed.
Corporate Parenting:	The Long-Term Plan is yet to be developed.



6 Appendices

- 1) Prospectus
- 2) Guidance
- 3) Data Pack & Government Investment Boundary
- 4) Proposed Investment Boundary

7. Background Papers

None



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HM Government



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

OUR LONG-TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS

OCTOBER 2023



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October 2023

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Foreword by the Prime Minister



Whenever I visit one of Britain's many great towns, I am inspired by the passion with which local people talk about the places they call home. But I also share their anger and frustration at high streets lined with empty shops and neighbourhoods scarred by crime and anti-social behaviour.

It has made me more determined than ever to change the direction of this country.

In part, this is about priorities. Towns are the place most of us call home and where most of us go to work. But politicians have focused on cities and always taken towns for granted. Businesses have not had the incentives to invest.

Generations of young people have grown up thinking that the only way to get on, is to get out. As a result, since the financial crisis, jobs growth in towns has been half of that in cities, and a quarter of that in London.

But the change we need is deeper and more profound. On the occasions over the years when governments have tried to help towns, the story has always been the same. Short-term funding pots, often put in the control of councils that are already failing, with little or no consultation with the people that really matter – local people. It's time to invest directly in the places that need it most, not politicians that squander the most.

So today we are not just investing £1.1 billion into 55 of our great towns – we are fundamentally changing the way politics works to support them. Each town will have a Long-Term Plan drawn up by a new Towns Board, made up of local community leaders and employers – putting local people, not politicians, in charge of their own town's future. And each town will have a £20 million endowment-style fund to invest over the next decade, empowering them to develop a plan for the long-term, not a plan to the end of the financial year.

I am also establishing a new Towns Taskforce, reporting directly to me, which will support towns on their Long-Term Plans and help them unlock investment and public support. As part of this, we will also make it easier for towns to repurpose empty high street shops by reforming licensing rules and supporting more housing in town centres.

Change will not happen overnight. The problems facing our towns are long-term and our approach must be too. But by changing the way we do politics and focusing on what matters to communities, not to Westminster, we will actually achieve our goal of levelling up.

That is the right thing for our towns, and the right thing for our country.

Rishi Sunak

Introduction



Towns matter. Their streets expose our shared history, from Roman ruins and dominating castles to the smoke-blackened bricks of the industrial revolution and the piers and ballrooms of the more recent past. They are engines of our economy, exporting goods to all corners of the world. And town halls and neighbourhoods are fundamental to our politics – the heart of our communities.

We are proud of our towns. But in the last thirty years, too often the focus has been on growing cities without setting out how towns can grow and flourish alongside. This narrow focus has often failed, or simply led to short-term policies that fail to address the headwinds that towns face. It has left too many behind in an economy characterised by deep economic imbalances.

The result is visible in towns across the United Kingdom – diminished high streets, run-down town centres, anti-social behaviour, and a lack of good jobs. Unsurprisingly, many people living in towns can feel like they are forgotten by Westminster, sometimes businesses do not want to invest, and young people grow up feeling that they have to leave their hometown to get on in life.

The Government has taken a series of actions in recent years to support towns, but we also recognise that there is more to be done. We need a new plan for towns to level up and deliver growth, as part of our wider ambitions to change the economic geography of the UK.

The Government has developed bold interventions to grow our cities: devolving greater funding and empowering strong local leadership; investing in science and enterprise; creating virtuous cycles of investment and development through new transport infrastructure and funding for brownfield and affordable housing. Now, to change the economic geography of the UK we need to apply the same ambition to towns.

This prospectus sets out a new plan to put local people at the centre of their town's success and give them the long-term funding to change its future. We have identified 55 towns to benefit from Long-Term Plans, backed by £1.1 billion overall, to drive ambitious plans to regenerate local towns across the UK over the next decade. Each town will:

- Develop a Long-Term Plan to invest in and regenerate their town, based on the priorities of local people, and put to local people for consultation.
- Receive £20 million in endowment-style funding and support over ten years to support the Town Plan, to be spent on issues that matter to local people, including regenerating high streets and securing public safety. This plan will be put to local people.
- Establish a Town Board to bring together community leaders, employers, local authorities, and the local MP to oversee and deliver the Long-Term Plan.
- Use a toolkit of powers, from tackling anti-social behaviour to auctioning empty high street shops, reforming licensing rules on shops and restaurants and supporting more housing in town centres.

To ensure towns achieve their potential, we are establishing a Towns Taskforce, reporting directly to the Prime Minister and Levelling Up Secretary. Working with the Levelling Up Inter-Ministerial Group, the Taskforce will help Town Boards to develop their Town Plans, and advise them on how best to take advantage of government policies, unlock private and philanthropic investment and engage their communities.

Why towns matter

Towns are home to 56% of our people¹ and 52% of our jobs,² making a sizeable contribution to economic and civic life. Towns contain 65% of high-technology manufacturing and keep up with cities in producing knowledge intensive market services (46% compared to 44% for cities),³ showing the contribution towns are making to driving growth in high-tech sectors.

In Barrow-on-Furness, for example, BAE systems is building the next generation of submarines for the Royal Navy, rejuvenating manufacturing, and creating an additional 6,000 jobs in the town,⁴ while over £100 million of philanthropic investment in Bishop Auckland by Jonathan Ruffer has supported new attractions and facilities, complementing public sector investment in the town.⁵

Towns are part of the tapestry of our lives, and people across the country are rightly proud of the towns to which they belong, heavily influenced by the economic prosperity and cultural vibrancy of their past. There are often strong levels of pride in the heritage of a place and specifically 'industrial heritage'. For example, 29% of people in the North East named 'industrial heritage' as one of the top three things that helps foster pride in their local area compared to 13% nationwide.⁶

¹ ONS. [Understanding towns in England and Wales: an introduction](#). 2019.

² ONS. [Employment trends outside cities and towns, England and Wales: 2009 to 2021](#). 2023.

³ ONS. [Understanding towns: industry analysis](#). 2021.

⁴ [Westmorland & Furness Council. Top civil servants in Barrow to discuss vision for town's transformation](#). 2023.

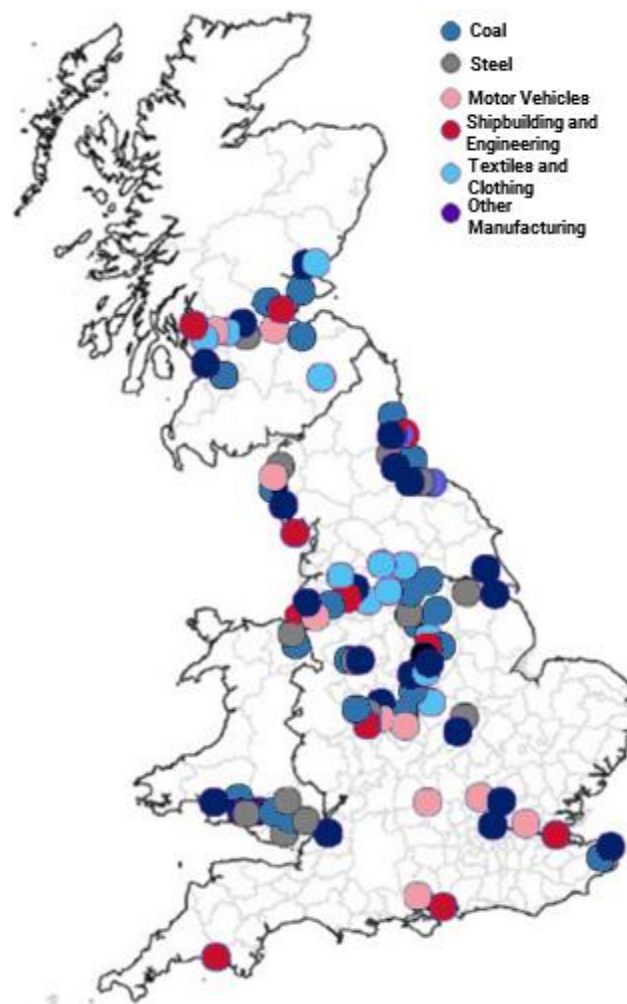
⁵ The Times. [Investing in Bishop Auckland](#). 2023.

⁶ PublicFirst. [Heritage and civic pride: voices from levelling up country](#). 2022.

We are proud of the successes of our towns, but we should be open eyed about their challenges too.

Since the 1970s, the UK has seen a fast and broad deindustrialisation compared to other developed countries, with a lasting impact in the North, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the Midlands in particular.⁷ Globalisation has played a role in offshoring activities to other parts of the world, with evolving consumption patterns changing consumer demand for goods. And in coastal towns and others reliant on tourism, the fall in the cost of air travel and rises in living standards have led to an increase in consumers looking abroad for their next holiday destination.⁸ Figure 1 illustrates the geography of industrial job loss, highlighting the most significant losses in places where major industries have been reduced to a fraction of their former size or disappeared entirely.

Figure 1: Major industrial job losses⁹ across Britain since the early 1980s.¹⁰



Source: Sheffield Hallam University

⁷ Stansbury, A., Turner, D. and Balls, E.. [Tackling the UK's regional economic inequality: Binding constraints and avenues for policy intervention](#). 2023.

⁸ HM Government. [Levelling Up the United Kingdom](#). 2022.

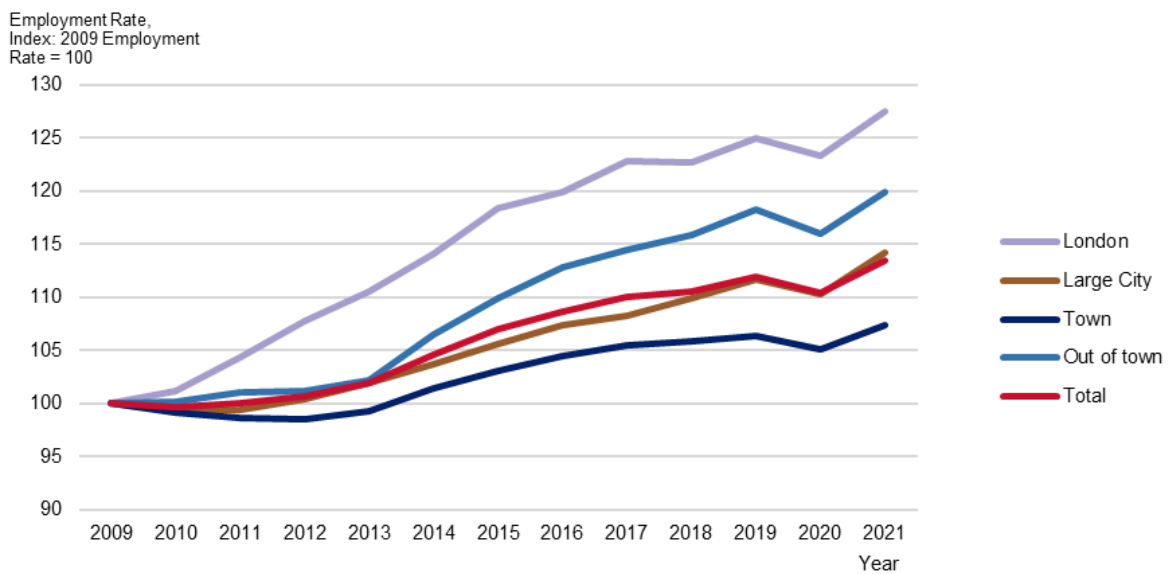
⁹ Figure 1 illustrates the geography of job losses. It flags the biggest or most significant job losses, where major companies or industries have shrunk to a fraction of their former scale or disappeared entirely.

¹⁰ Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S.. [The impact on welfare and public finances of job loss in industrial Britain](#). 2017.

These changes have had a profound effect on many towns, leading some to stagnate and fall behind more prosperous places.

Since the 2008 Financial Crisis, employment growth in towns has been much slower than elsewhere. Between 2009 and 2021, employment in towns grew by 7%, half the rate of cities outside of London (14%) and around a third of that of out-of-town areas (20%) (Figure 2).¹¹ While most industries grew slower than the England and Wales average, employment declined most notably in manufacturing, retail and the arts and entertainment industries.¹²

Figure 2: Employment growth has been lower in towns than other area types¹³
Employment growth rate, area types, England and Wales, 2009 = 100



Source: ONS

This has led to a reduction in the economic opportunities in our towns, with the economic impact amplified depending on how well connected a town is to other economic centres like nearby cities.

And as Figure 3 shows, younger people in small towns or villages are also more likely to be workless because they are unwell (3.4%), compared to younger workers in core cities such as Cardiff, Glasgow, or Liverpool (2%).¹⁴ Towns also tend to be less attractive prospects to many graduates, who made up 26% of young people in core cities in 2020-2022, compared to less than one-in-six (15%) young people in small towns and villages.¹⁵

¹¹ ONS. [Employment trends outside cities and towns, England and Wales: 2009 to 2021](#). 2023.

¹² ONS. [Employment trends outside cities and towns, England and Wales: 2009 to 2021](#). 2023.

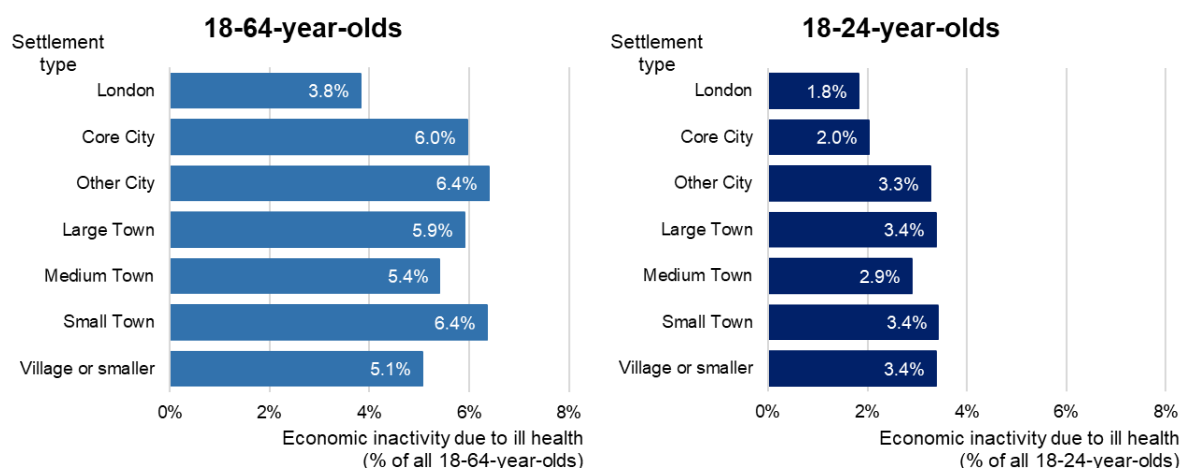
¹³ ONS. [Employment trends outside cities and towns, England and Wales: 2009 to 2021](#). 2023.

¹⁴ Murphy, L., Resolution Foundation. [Left behind](#). 2023.

¹⁵ Murphy, L., Resolution Foundation. [Left behind](#). 2023.

Figure 3: Small and large towns tend to have a higher proportion of young people who are economically inactive due to ill health.¹⁶

Proportion of 18-64-year-olds (left-hand panel) and 18-24-year-olds (right-hand panel) who are economically inactive due to ill health, by settlement type, GB, 2020-2022.



Source: Resolution Foundation

In terms of connectivity, smaller towns are less likely to be well connected to denser population centres,¹⁷ preventing towns from contributing to larger economic centres and receiving agglomeration benefits.¹⁸ The opportunity for new local businesses or thriving existing businesses to locate within towns is often more limited,¹⁹ either due to a smaller pool of workers who have the necessary skills and incomes to sustain business supply and demand,²⁰ respectively, or because of limited transport links to wider economic centres.²¹ Poor local connectivity can make towns feel cut off, and can make it harder to get into, and around the town centre.²²

These economic factors are compounded by wider social problems that, whilst affecting all places, are disproportionately felt in towns.

High street vacancy tends to be much higher in towns than cities: in Rotherham, nearly a third of shops are empty. In Bolton, Grimsby and Stoke, more than one in seven has been empty for three years.²³ Meanwhile, coastal towns typically suffer disproportionately from crime – which is 12% higher on the coast²⁴ – and public health challenges.²⁵

¹⁶ Murphy, L., Resolution Foundation. [Left behind](#). 2023.

¹⁷ NIC. [Transport Connectivity Discussion Paper](#). 2019.

¹⁸ Centre for Cities. [Does 'trickle out' work?](#) 2023.

¹⁹ Centre for Cities. [At the frontier: The geography of the UK's new economy](#). 2022

²⁰ Swinney, P. Centre for Cities. [Talk of the Town](#). 2018

²¹ Centre for Cities. [Does 'trickle out' work?](#) 2023.

²² Left Behind Neighbourhoods APPG. [Connecting communities: improving transport to get 'left behind' neighbourhoods back on track](#). 2021

²³ Onward. [Street Bids](#). 2022.

²⁴ Onward. [Troubled waters: tackling the crisis on England's coast](#). 2023.

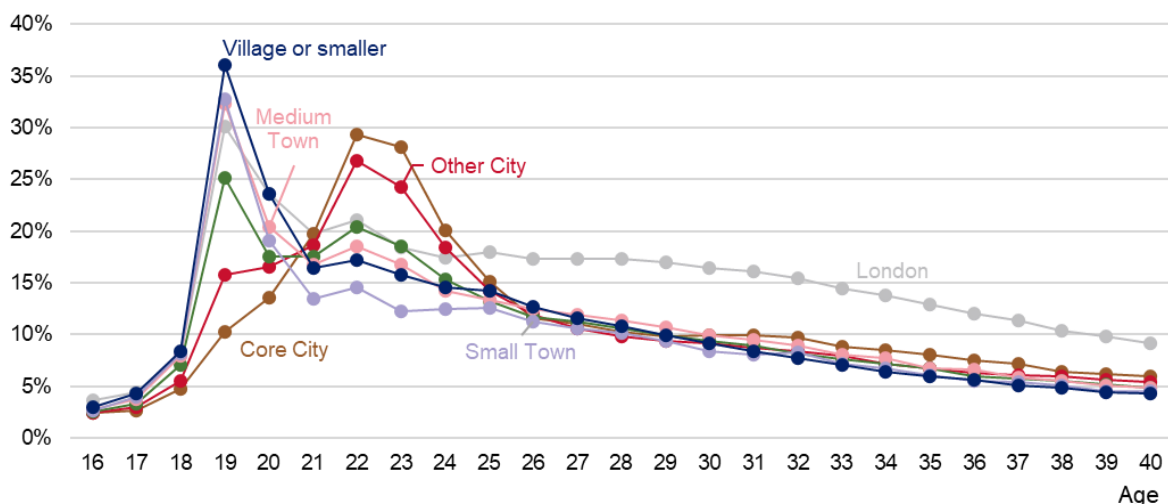
²⁵ DHSC. [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2021: health in coastal communities](#). 2021.

The result is a widening economic and social gap between towns and the rest of the country, particularly cities. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, average wages in London in 2019 were 60% higher than those in Scarborough and Grimsby – with the top 10% of earners in London earning nearly twice as much per hour. Half of working-age adults in London and Brighton have university degrees compared with less than a fifth in places such as Doncaster or Mansfield.²⁶

While smaller towns and villages have better educational outcomes than those achieved in larger towns and cities (excluding London), this diminishes for older students,²⁷ as access to higher and further education becomes more challenging in smaller towns. The dearth of local higher and further education opportunities encourages those aged 18-20 to migrate to larger towns and cities,²⁸ with Figure 4 showing an outward migration rate of over 30% for 19-year-olds from small and medium sized towns.²⁹ There are also worse health outcomes in more deprived towns, regardless of the location or wider geography of the town.³⁰

Figure 4: Young people from towns and villages are most likely to move place, with similar migration rates from settlement types outside London for those aged 26-40.³¹

Average outward migration rate from local authorities, by settlement type and single year of age, England, 2019



Source: Resolution Foundation

But we do not believe that these challenges are immutable. In recent decades, we have seen various towns around the UK transform their fortunes through a long-term plan and locally-driven change. Prominent examples include Salford Quays, beginning in the 1980s with the Manchester Metrolink and continuing to Media City today, and Stevenage, whose 20-year regeneration plan leverages public funding to draw in private investment to transform the town centre. In the last few years, the Government has taken a series of actions to support towns, but we also recognise that more must

²⁶ Overman, G. and Xu, X.. IFS. [Spatial disparities across labour markets](#). 2022.
²⁷ ONS. [Why do children and young people in smaller towns do better academically than those in larger towns?](#). 2023.
²⁸ Swinney, P, and Williams, M. [Centre for Cities](#). 2016.
²⁹ Resolution Foundation. [Left behind](#). 2023.
³⁰ Bennett Institute for Public Policy. [Townscapes 4. England's health inequalities](#). 2020.
³¹ Resolution Foundation. [Left behind](#). 2023.

be done. We need a Long-Term Plan for towns to level up growth and support our wider mission of changing the economic geography of the UK.

What we have done so far

The UK Government has supported towns in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through a series of targeted investments and taskforces over recent years:

- The **£3.2 billion Towns Fund** supported 101 English towns to drive economic and productivity growth. £1 billion of this funding went to the Future High Streets Fund, supporting 72 places to create thriving high streets in the future.
- The **Levelling Up Fund** has allocated £3.8 billion during two rounds to support over 200 places across the UK, many of them towns, with their regeneration, town centre improvements, transport, and culture projects. Funding has been provided across the UK for a range of projects including a new transport hub in Porth and the creation of new cultural and creative destinations in Wakefield.
- The **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** has delivered **£2.6 billion** between local authorities across the UK, with funding to increase pay and productivity, skills and feelings of community, pride and empowerment.
- **Levelling Up Partnerships** are targeting **£400 million** at towns and places most in need of coordinated government and local support in England. This builds on deep dives in Blackpool, Grimsby and Blyth – with targeted investments such as £18 million to repurpose run-down and empty homes in Blyth to boost a regeneration project for 40,000 residents.
- The **Community Ownership Fund** has invested **£150 million** to support community organisations to save local assets, at risk of closure, across the UK. This year, it has been expanded to allow Town Councils to apply and increased the cap to £2 million to allow more applications for community ownership of assets in towns and on high streets.
- Building on the Future High Streets Fund, the **High Streets Task Force** has so far visited over 130 local places in England, providing guidance, tools and skills to local authorities to help plug gaps in local capacity.
- Running from 2012-2022, the **Coastal Communities Fund** committed £188 million to projects targeted at creating jobs and wider economic regeneration in coastal areas in England.
- We have established eight **Freeports** in England, and this year announced a further two in Wales and two Green Freeports in Scotland. Freeports unlock much-needed investment into port towns and communities through a combination of tax reliefs on new economic activity, a special streamlined customs procedure, an ambitious programme of public investment, and wide-ranging support from the UK Government to help businesses trade, invest, and innovate.

Case Study: Lincoln Town Deal- Lincoln, England

Lincoln was awarded £19 million through the Towns Fund to deliver a range of skills, regeneration and connectivity projects.

Three of Lincoln's 13 projects have already completed and are making a significant impact; including the HEAT Institute (Hospitality, Events, Arts and Tourism) which has seen the creation of a new 'working restaurant' facility at Lincoln's Old Bakery, and a refurbished Sessions House at Lincoln college campus, both are being used for student training. In addition, the renovation and rebranding of the Drill Hall as a cultural event venue has allowed students to benefit through end of year performances and work experience, the first cohort of Performing Arts students based at the Drill are expected to start in September 2023.

Our Long-Term Plan for Towns



We will now go further to demonstrate an enduring commitment to our towns. Drawing from our experiences delivering the Levelling Up Fund, Towns Fund and Levelling Up Partnerships, and listening to the feedback from local authorities and delivery partners, we will put local people at the centre of their towns' development, with long-term, flexible funding to respond to the priorities of local people.

Our Long-Term Plan for Towns will bring together community leaders, businesspeople, and local bodies to forge their town's future together, alongside the funding needed to deliver for their communities in the long-term. We want towns with proud histories and rich heritage to have the tools and the funding to seize a brighter future for themselves, rather than have to wait for decisions made in Westminster. This aligns with the recommendation of the National Infrastructure Commission, who found that "infrastructure strategies and wider place-based town plans need to be developed locally, by people who understand the needs and strengths of the area and the individual towns. They should look to build on the existing strengths of towns, which will give them the best chance of supporting economic growth".³²

Through our existing programmes and the experience of other countries, we have learnt what works well: longer-term funding certainty; building local partnerships; having a clear plan for delivery; joint working between central and local government; and involving people and communities from the outset. Successful towns cannot be built on government funding and intervention alone. We want to harness local communities and crowd-in investment of both time and money to support long-lasting change.

³² NIC. [Infrastructure, Towns and Regeneration](#). 2021.

Our Long-Term Plan for Towns, backed by £1.1 billion overall, will drive ambitious plans to regenerate 55 towns around the United Kingdom over the long-term through Town Plans.

Each town will receive a ten-year **endowment-style fund, with £20 million of funding and support** to give towns long term certainty to deliver projects over multiple years and the flexibility to invest in interventions based on evolving local needs and priorities. This will ensure a focus on long-term strategic transformation as well as shorter-term improvements. The funding will be focused on the issues that matter most to local people, including high streets, heritage and regeneration, and public safety and security.

A new Town Board will be established in each town in England, bringing together community leaders, employers, local authorities, and the local MP to develop a shared vision for their town and oversee the funding together. Working with local authorities, these boards will be encouraged to use the full suite of powers and flexibilities the Government has granted places to turn their high streets and towns around and be backed by the funding needed to do so. Learning from Town Deal Boards, to ensure that local people, not just politicians, drive change, we expect these boards to be chaired by a local business or community leader.

In exchange for long-term, flexible funding, each town in England will be required to develop a ten-year **Long-Term Plan for their town**, setting out the town's vision and priorities for investment and regeneration, aligned to themes of safety and security, high streets, heritage and regeneration, and transport and connectivity. Towns will be required to demonstrate how they have developed plans in consultation with local people. As part of this plan, areas will be expected to bring something to the table, whether that's the time and resource of key people, local match-funding or properties to include in regeneration projects.

Government will not only provide funding and powers to towns to develop the long-term plans, but also additional and much needed capacity support. This will be mirrored by a new high-powered **Towns Taskforce** at the heart of government, reporting directly to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, and working closely with the Levelling Up Directorate and Inter-Ministerial Group, to ensure the voices of these towns will be heard loud and clear across Government.

In Scotland and Wales we will also work with local partners, including local authorities and the devolved administrations, to make sure funding and support aligns with other programmes to have the best possible impact. In Northern Ireland, we look forward to working with a restored Executive to determine the approach to providing support there.

Alongside providing towns with the scope to deliver a range of interventions that reflect local priorities and ensure a long-term focus, this approach will facilitate improvements that will have a range of social and economic benefits, as well as boosting local people's pride in their town.

This new approach builds on our work levelling up the UK since 2019. By taking endowment principles to maximise the flexibility and impact of funding, and combining

this with targeted support, we hope to help towns build on existing interventions from our most intensive Levelling Up Partnerships and the wider funding programmes available to towns, cities and rural areas across the UK. The ingenuity of local leaders has been critical to our successes so far, and through this plan a new, more flexible, approach to funding and powers can have an even greater impact when put in the hands of local people.

Our new Long-Term Plan for Towns forms part of an ambitious and much wider programme of reform and investment to level up the UK, which puts powers and funding in the hands of individuals in every corner of our isles. From announcing a new Community Wealth Fund – putting millions of pounds of dormant assets directly in the hands of neighbourhoods and small local communities – to agreeing new trailblazing devolution deals with some of our largest and most ambitious cities. And from investing in key sources of local growth and pride through the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund, to granting funding and flexibilities to places themselves with Investment Zones in cities and Innovation Accelerators.

Our Long-Term Plan for Towns is one piece of this wider puzzle, but it is a vital step towards giving local people control of the place they call home and ensuring that towns no longer feel they are forgotten by Westminster.

Investing in what works



Our £1.1 billion Long-Term Plan for Towns will support 55 towns over the next ten years to provide longer-term certainty and scale to drive improvements based on local knowledge and the priorities of local people drawing on our lessons from the ongoing Levelling Up Partnerships programme.

We want to see towns make use of the additional powers they have been granted across a range of areas, including responding to anti-social behaviour and diversifying high streets, to facilitate real improvements in a short timeframe that will stand the test of time.

We also expect that through their Long-Term Plan, towns will be involved in identifying the measures that matter most to local people. We are providing significant flexibility to make a range of improvements under three broad investment themes, and are open to being driven by the needs and wishes of local communities. These themes are:

Safety and Security:

- It is impossible to level up a town if people don't feel safe to go into the town centre and businesses are unable to trade because of crime and anti-social behaviour. Towns that feel or are unsafe repel consumers, deter investors, and undermine the norms and behaviour that underpin a thriving society.
- The increase in shop vacancy rate³³ and decrease in high street footfall³⁴ has left high streets as prime locations for anti-social behaviour. Increases in anti-social behaviour make people feel unsafe³⁵ and drive reluctance to use local facilities, further decreasing footfall on local high streets and diminishing pride in place.³⁶
- Following the launch of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan this year in England and Wales, towns will now be able to use this funding to reduce crime and improve safety in their local area.
- Interventions could include new and improved security infrastructure, such as CCTV and street lighting; providing additional hotspot policing and local authority wardens; as well as diversionary activity through ASB awareness courses and support for community outreach facilities.

Case Study: SMART Tottenham Project, Haringey, London – England

£500,000 from Haringey's Future High Streets Fund award focuses on reducing crime and supporting retail on Tottenham High Road. Funding an increased level of CCTV in the high street, it aims to generate behavioural change and discourage antisocial behaviour, tackling crime and making the area safer.

High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration:

- High streets have been centred on retail since the 1960s.³⁷ As domestic and retail needs have increasingly been met online and in out-of-town retail centres, the challenge for high streets has been whether they are able to adapt.³⁸ It has been estimated that there is an oversupply of retail of up to 40%.³⁹ The slow decline in traditional high streets has led to a 17% decrease in employment between 2009 and 2021.⁴⁰
- The hollowing out of high streets and town centres can affect the liveability of a place, making it less attractive for, and harder to retain, more highly skilled workers. The skilled workers of the future leave towns, which provide only limited education and employment opportunities, and do not return to the same towns in the same

³³ BRC. [Britain loses 6,000 storefronts in five years](#). 2023.

³⁴ High Streets Task Force. [Review of High Street Footfall in England](#). Jan-Dec 2022.

³⁵ YouGov. [YouGov/DLUHC – Anti-Social Behaviour – 230113](#). 2023.

³⁶ Gov.UK. [Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan](#). 2023.

³⁷ Local Government Association. [Creating resilient and revitalised high streets in the 'new normal'](#). 2022.

³⁸ Local Government Association. [Creating resilient and revitalised high streets in the 'new normal'](#). 2022.

³⁹ Power to Change. [Community Powered High Streets](#). 2023.

⁴⁰ ONS. [Employment trends outside cities and towns, England and Wales: 2009 to 2021](#). 2023.

numbers.⁴¹ This leaves towns and villages with an older population, living alongside a working-age population with fewer qualifications to provide an economic environment to meet individual and community needs.

- Towns would be able to use this funding to enhance their town centres, making them and their buildings more attractive and accessible to residents, businesses, and visitors in a post Covid environment.
- Interventions could include remediating and repurposing vacant department stores – including converting these to high quality housing; preserving and improving heritage sites in the town; creating and maintaining parks and green spaces; supporting high street cleaning projects; new markets/high street days; establishing Business Improvement Districts; running high street rental auctions; supporting skills and community development so local people can take up opportunities that emerge from business-led regeneration.

Case Study: Barrow-in-Furness Town Centre, England

This £16 million Levelling Up Fund project will be transformative for the town by fully revamping its market hall, making it a modern, desirable place to be with a great food and drink offering. The project will also boost connectivity including by improving walking links through the town and creating a pocket park, making the town centre a greener place where people want to spend time and visit local businesses.

Transport and Connectivity:

- The ease with which town residents can access high streets, jobs and local shopping centres is critical if towns are going to thrive into the future. This means offering sustainable transport options, linking different parts of the town with new infrastructure, safe ways in which people can walk or cycle into the centre, as well as ensuring public transport options are viable and attractive.
- Transport connectivity alone will not turn around the economic fortunes of a place. As the National Infrastructure Commission has noted: “there is no guarantee that more or better transport infrastructure will lead to improvements in economic growth and quality of life outcomes. Unless infrastructure constraints are demonstrably impacting these outcomes – for example, through substantial levels of congestion – it is unlikely to be the primary policy lever to turn around a town’s fortunes.”⁴⁴
- Investment will need to be used alongside other themes, particularly safety and security, to ensure that transport options are seen as attractive and safe. But used well, this funding could make towns more connected - increasing footfall and viability – to high streets and local shopping centres, and accessibility to local employment opportunities. The National Infrastructure Commission, for example, has highlighted how Stevenage is planning a new pedestrian walkway to link the town centre and its business parks, while Grimsby’s Town Deal built on the town’s heritage to link the town and its historic waterfront.

⁴¹ IFS. [The impact of living costs on the returns to higher education](#). 2021.

- Interventions could include new infrastructure schemes; road improvements; new programmes to encourage cycling; and making the town centre more walkable and accessible.

Case Study: Porth Transport Hub- Rhondda, Wales

£3.5m from the Levelling Up Fund for the Porth Transport Hub in Rhondda has completed the main interchange building of the transport hub. This was opened earlier this year and is addressing transport inadequacies, providing seven operational bus bays, two lay over spaces, electric vehicle charging capabilities and new roads in and out. It is facilitating better connectivity into the town centre, and boosting footfall and local economic opportunities in the town.

A new approach



Our Long-Term Plan for Towns means a new approach to funding, with endowment-style funding over ten years designed to give flexibility to towns to invest in local priorities to a timeline that works for local people, not just for Westminster.

Towns will receive funding and support of £20 million (25% Resource, 75% Capital split) to provide a range of interventions across the investment themes and will have ten years to deliver these, providing long-term certainty to deliver significant improvements in their towns.

Towns will have freedom to develop plans that meet local priorities across the investment themes. They will not be subject to onerous reporting requirements; instead, the Towns Taskforce will engage towns to monitor progress and help address problems that arise. Towns will be able to roll over funding into future years if best to deliver priority interventions to a high standard and will remain responsible for ensuring good use of public funds.

The flexibility within this funding will mean towns are more able to capitalise on private and philanthropic investment, aligning timings with businesses and investors to maximise the benefits for local people. This could include working with Business Improvement Districts to join up investments, using existing local authority assets or land to make funding go further, and working with the Towns Taskforce to identify philanthropic investment opportunities.

Putting local people in the driving seat

Town Boards will drive the priorities for investment, convene powers and responsibilities for making change, and steer the long-term vision for their town hand-in-hand with local people.

The Boards will comprise a group of local organisations, including:

- Community partners. Such as community groups, faith groups and local charities, the neighbourhood forum, the local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS).
- Local businesses and social enterprises. Such as the chair or board members for the Business Improvement District (BID), key local employers or investors in the town.
- Key cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations.
- Public sector agencies such as representatives from schools or police subject to local priorities.
- The local MP, relevant local authorities, including the parish or town council, where one exists, and a representative of the Mayoral, Combined or Upper Tier Authority where relevant.

We will encourage Town Boards to be chaired by a businessperson or a local community leader, to ensure that the board fully reflects the priorities of the town. Where the town already has a Town Deal Board in place, they will be able to repurpose the Board. In doing so, they should use the opportunity to make sure that they have the right members round the table to drive forward their priorities, including community partners, public sector agencies and cultural organisations.

Once established Town Boards will be responsible for:

- Identifying the issues and priorities to focus on for the Long-Term Plan, including supporting a process of ongoing community engagement
- Working with the local authority to develop the Long-Term Plan for their town, setting out how local partners will use their knowledge, powers, assets and new funding to deliver for their communities
- Identifying opportunities for Board members to utilise specific powers, such as neighbourhood planning, to drive forward their Long-Term Plan
- Identifying opportunities to bring in additional philanthropic or private investment to support the Long-Term Plan for their town
- Overseeing the delivery of projects set out in their Long-Term Plan

Boards will make sure the priorities within the Plan are underpinned by a shared vision with local people. A process of meaningful engagement should help Boards define the key issues to tackle, identify strengths and resources within the community and test potential projects. This might include engaging local people through events, community workshops, online consultations, and surveys. Board members will draw on relationships with other community leaders and community groups to make sure the engagement is diverse and representative of the whole community.

Boards might choose to establish subcommittees to focus on particular investment strategies or projects, or to drive forward particular themes, such as community engagement.

Using new powers and flexibilities

Town Boards, through their constituent members, have access to a range of levers and flexibilities to drive improvement and unlock barriers to regeneration and development. We will expect Long-Term Plans to demonstrate that they are convening the full range of powers available to them to achieve the best possible outcomes for their places in line with their investment priorities.

We will develop a toolkit, building on the powers identified below, in partnership with local authorities, including identifying opportunities for extending and strengthening powers in the future and helping local authorities to make full use of new powers shortly coming into force. We will also look at where local authorities can be granted more flexibility over exercising these powers without requiring central government approvals.

We will publish a full toolkit, guiding towns through the range of powers and levers available to them, in due course, including specific information for Long-Term Plans for towns in Scotland and Wales. Investment plans will demonstrate that places have used the toolkit to identify the powers that will help them achieve their desired priorities. We will expect towns to consider the full range of levers at their disposal. In England, these powers will include:

- Auctioning empty high street shops using new powers from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.
- Reforming licensing rules on shops and restaurants for example, enabling more high-street businesses to benefit from the al-fresco dining rules introduced in the pandemic.
- Making it easier for commercial buildings to quickly change use for example, allowing an empty shop to change into a café, nursery or gym without needing to fill out needless red tape.
- Supporting more housing in town centres by giving the automatic right for empty commercial buildings to be converted into homes for local people.
- On-the-spot fines of up to £1,000 for fly tipping offenders and £500 for litter and graffiti offenders.
- Enforcing against persistent anti-social behaviour in public spaces like local parks and high streets – and fining those who breach these rules up to £500.

To support this, through updated guidance we will make sure that Town Boards can contribute to neighbourhood plans and new Neighbourhood Priorities Statements,

including helping to identify potential development locations and aligning priorities as part of their town's Long-Term Plan. And we will help towns to maximise the long-term opportunities for investment by encouraging Local Planning Authorities and Town Councils to work with them to define spending priorities for the Community Infrastructure Levy, and the Infrastructure Levy when this is implemented.

A new toolkit for towns in England

Town Boards, through the local authority, can use **Public Spaces Protection Orders** to make sure that people are able to enjoy their parks and socialise in their town centres free from anti-social behaviour (ASB). They could maximise the impact of ASB powers held by the council and the police by using funding for **additional wardens to work with communities to keep towns safe places to live and work**.

Community groups can nominate the buildings and spaces that really matter to them as **Assets of Community Value**, and local authorities can also create **local heritage lists**, helping to protect these treasured assets for generations to come.

Parish and town councils and neighbourhood forums can use **neighbourhood planning** to give communities a greater say on the future of the places where they live and work, producing plans that have real influence over where new homes shops and offices should be built and what these buildings should look like.

A **national permitted development right** provides for such uses to change to residential, bringing new residents into our town centres. Town Boards can encourage the use of this right, to support more diverse and viable high streets and town centres.

To bring forward quality residential development, Town Boards can work with the Local Planning Authority to deliver **Local Development Orders** and promote the potential for owners to use permitted development rights to promote the regeneration of commercial sites.

Town Boards can consult with local partners on exercising existing powers to **track, manage and improve dilapidated building stock** and areas with particular issues of deprivation or crime. Taking these steps can directly tackle some of the underlying causes of social problems and visibly improve the safety and aesthetic of streets that otherwise can become “no-go” areas within towns.

Town Boards can help curate vibrant and resilient town centres by helping to set up a **Business Improvement District** (or working with them where they are already established) to coordinate activity and funding to boost local entrepreneurship and drive footfall from local people and visitors alike. They can also improve the look and feel of high streets by encouraging businesses to set up alfresco dining through **pavement licences**.

Through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill we are introducing new **High Street Rental Auction** (HSRA) powers which will allow local authorities to auction a lease of a property that has been standing vacant. Town Boards will be able to work with local authorities to identify opportunities to use HSRA and take action on vacant shops and buildings that blight the high street and bring down economic potential.

We are also introducing the **locally-led Urban Development Corporation** (LUDC) model, a localised form of the existing UDC model. The provisions allow local authorities to request to designate the urban development area and create an urban development corporation. Town Boards could work with local authorities to identify opportunities for creating an LUDC to drive forward their regeneration plans

We are clarifying **Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs)** to give local authorities more confidence to acquire derelict buildings that are holding back regeneration plans. New powers will also shortly be in force, which will enable Town Boards and other local authorities to provide more targeted support to **clean up and remove the blight of very poor quality supported housing** units, which are designed to help vulnerable people but have been shown to be exploited by criminal and rogue landlords.

With the full backing of government

Levelling Up Partnerships have shown the value of local and national government joining forces to tackle entrenched issues and seize transformative opportunities.

In Grimsby, when local concerns were raised about import tariffs on the town's fish processing sector, we coordinated a cross-government effort to agree the necessary tariff exemption. In Blackpool, when the location of the court was holding back regeneration in the city centre, we worked across government and with local partners to move it, and in doing so unlock £100 million of regeneration plans.

Now, learning from this experience, Long-Term Plans for Towns will ensure the full, collective weight of central government levers are brought to bear to support local priorities across these 55 towns into the future.

A new Towns Taskforce will therefore be established in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, reporting directly to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Levelling Up. The Taskforce will ensure the issues and opportunities of these towns are heard and acted on within the UK Government.

Alongside working with towns to understand their unique challenges and opportunities, the Taskforce would look to attract private and philanthropic investment into the 55 towns, championing the investment opportunities to building on the endowment-style funding granted.

As part of this we will extend the current High Streets Task Force, to provide each selected town with bespoke, hands-on support from place-making experts. It will work flexibly and collaboratively with Town Boards, delivering tangible outputs and outcomes on their behalf. Town Boards will be able to draw on support across a variety of issues, which could include helping to develop a masterplan for their area or understanding how to best use the powers and flexibilities that are available to them and set out in the Toolkit.

Preparing for a Long-Term Plan for your town



This document sets out a Long-Term Plan for Towns, with long-term, flexible non-competitive funding put in the hands of local leaders to deliver lasting improvements. The UK Government has granted new powers in England and funding to places across the UK, and through this new approach, will provide additional targeted support to the 55 towns set out below.

We are announcing the development of 11 Long-Term Plans for Towns in Scotland and Wales. We know this is a shared priority, and we will work with the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales to consider how best we apply this approach to towns in Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, we look forward to working with a restored Executive to determine the approach to supporting towns there.

ITL1/2 Region	Local Authority	Town/Place
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 (Nottingham)
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 (Northumberland)
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 (Wigan)
North West	Bolton	Farnworth
North West	Pendle	Nelson (Pendle)
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 (Wolverhampton)
West Midlands	Dudley	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	Scarborough	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 (Vale of Glamorgan)
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

In England the local authority named above will be the accountable body for funding and will be responsible for ensuring good use of public funds via existing Section 151 officer duties, according to the priorities set out by the Town Board in each town's Long-Term Plan. In Scotland and Wales we are minded to use the Financial Assistance power under Section 50 of the UKIM Act to fund towns directly while working with the Scottish and Welsh Governments to determine the most appropriate delivery structures.

In these 55 places, the UK Government will provide capacity funding in 2024/25 for local stakeholder working with relevant local authorities to establish a new Town Board, or to expand and adapt an existing Town Board. The capacity funding will support the ongoing running of the board and the development of their town's Long-Term Plan, including community engagement activities. This funding forms part of the overall funding package each town's Long-Term Plan is able to receive. This capacity funding will be accompanied by central engagement support in its delivery.

Capacity funding will be available from Spring 2024. We would encourage local authorities to start bringing together partners who will form part of their Town Boards in advance of this, and to begin to set out a vision, formulate investment priorities and engage with local communities.

Where an existing Town Deal Board already exists, we will work with towns to expand and adapt the board to ensure it is prepared to develop a Long-Term Plan for their town.

Once Board structures are in place, capacity funding will be made available from Spring 2024 for Boards to build on their vision and priorities to write their Town Plan. Each town's Long-Term Plan should be produced no later than Summer 2024. We will expect these Long-Term Plans to include:

- A clear articulation, evidenced by local engagement, of the priorities of town residents;
- A plan for how the £20 million endowment-style funding and support will be deployed in line with investment themes to support these priorities;
- How local authorities, community groups and businesses are using their existing assets and resources to support these priorities;
- How the Town Board intends to attract additional private and philanthropic investment to support these priorities; and
- How members of the Town Board are using their existing powers and flexibilities – including but not limited to those in the Toolkit – to support these priorities.

From Summer 2024, we will provide the first year of funding to support the interventions set out in the Long-Term Plan. This will be subject to assessment of the Plan by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). We will work with selected towns to discuss the details of this assessment and full expectations of Long-Term Plans. The allocation of funding will be non-competitive, and we expect to work collaboratively with places through the Towns Taskforce and existing local relationships to develop Plans.

Further details on next steps will follow in engagement with selected towns. Expected timelines are outlined below:

- By April 2024 – local authorities to bring local partners together to form Town Boards, or expand existing Town Deal Boards where these exist, and start the process of setting out a long-term vision based on local priorities.
- Spring 2024 – Once a Town Board has been set up, capacity funding will be released to support the development of investment plans, including additional community engagement activities. Ongoing engagement will be available from the Towns Taskforce.
- From Summer 2024 – Submission of Long-Term Plans and release of year one funding.

We will be in touch with the local authorities in these 55 towns to provide further guidance and discuss next steps.

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Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

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



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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.



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 DLUHC'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, DLUHC 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 DLUHC.

DLUHC 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

ITL1/2 Region	Local authority	Town/Place
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 DLUHC – 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, DLUHC'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. DLUHC 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 DLUHC.

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 DLUHC 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 DLUHC'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 DLUHC. 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 DLUHC 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 DLUHC 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 DLUHC 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 DLUHC.

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 Dumbarton 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 Dumbarton Central train station. The project improves active travel connections, attracting visitors and residents into the town centre, and making Dumbarton a more attractive destination.

Submit your Long-Term Plan to DLUHC

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 DLUHC. 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 DLUHC.

The 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan annex will be subject to a light touch assessment process by DLUHC. 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 151m² 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 DLUHC. 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 DLUHC. DLUHC 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 DLUHC 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 HSRA's 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.

HSRA's 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, DLUHC 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 DLUHC 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.

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Smethwick - local data profile

January 2024

Contents:

- (1) Indicators for policy investment themes
- (2) Town demographics and deprivation



**LEVELLING
— UP —**



About this document

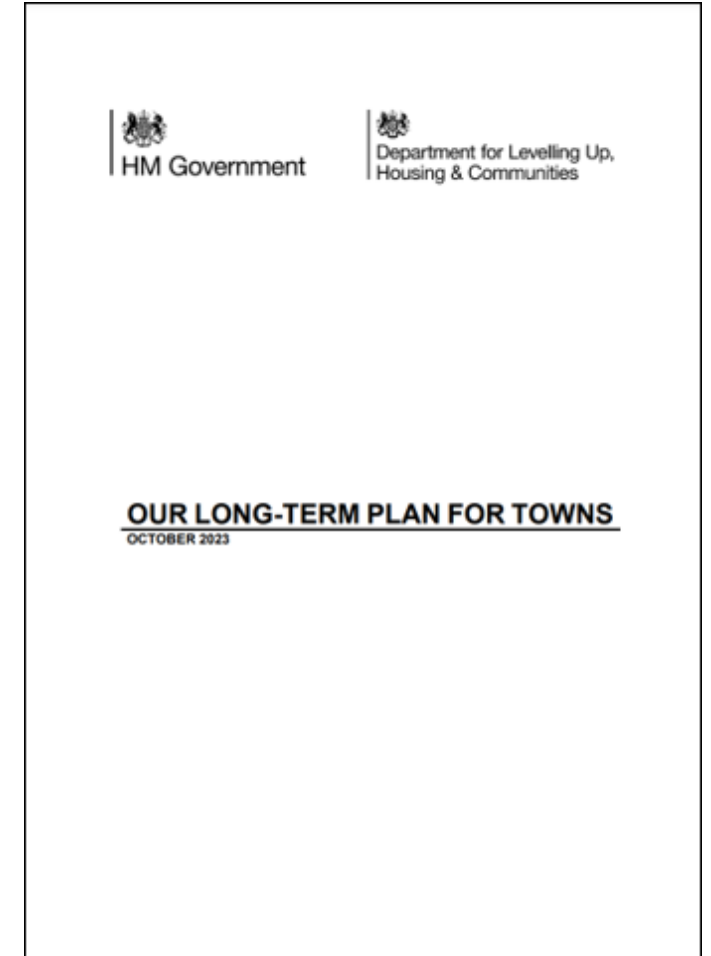
This document, produced by DLUHC in collaboration with ONS, presents high-level data to support the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme. This collaboration is supported through the Levelling Up Subnational Data project. It does not make policy recommendations.

Background

- On 1 October 2023, the UK government announced its long-term plan for towns. This will provide long-term investment in 55 towns to be spent on local people's priorities such as regenerating local high streets and town centres or securing public safety.
- This data pack primarily uses metrics and indicators across the three policy investment themes [as detailed further in the guidance for local authorities and Town Boards](#). Data presented in this pack are at town level, where possible, but other geographies are used where sufficiently granular data is not yet available.
- This is a local data profile. It does not take account of the implementation of current national or local policy interventions.

Data caveats

- Lockdown restrictions and the furlough scheme were in place at the time Census 2021 was conducted, which significantly impacted 'travel to work methods' data. As such, the data are not reflective of current commuting patterns. We have therefore used Census 2011 data in the commuter flows table shown in this pack. [Census 2021 employment data](#) may also be impacted by furlough and the timing of Census day (March 2021).
- The data sources in this pack are the latest available as of 30th November 2023. In collaboration with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), we have derived metrics at town level based on Built Up Areas for 2022 where this data was not previously available. Estimates are at town level unless stated otherwise. These are experimental estimates for small levels of geography that may be more volatile or have higher levels of uncertainty, which should be taken into consideration when interpreting the data.
- Due to data availability, estimates at local authority level are based on geographic boundaries as of 2022.

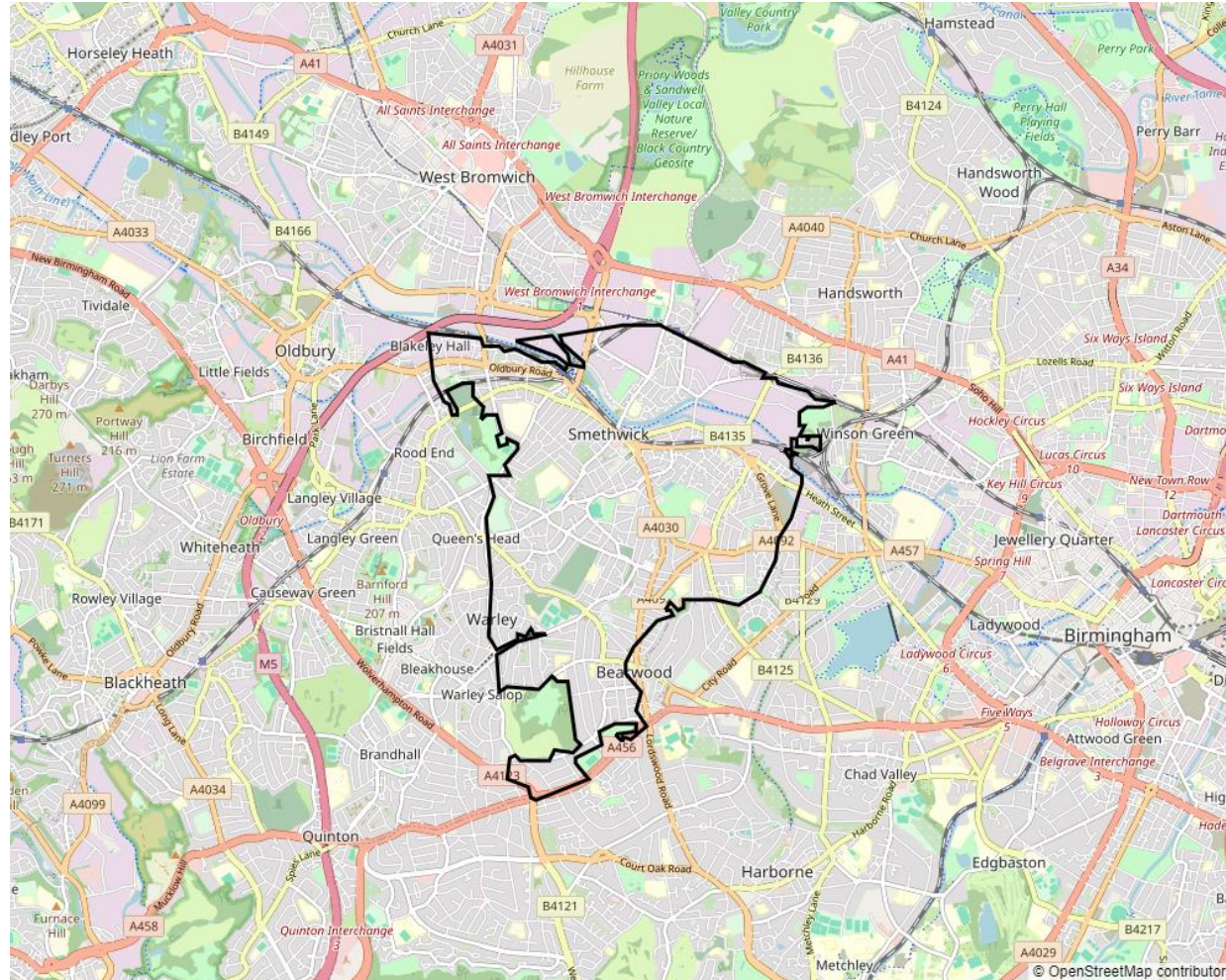




Map of Smethwick

This data pack defines a town's boundary based on the definition of Built Up Area (BUA, 2022), unless stated otherwise. This reflects the approach set out in the Long-Term Plan for Towns guidance for defining the geographical area covered by the Town Board.

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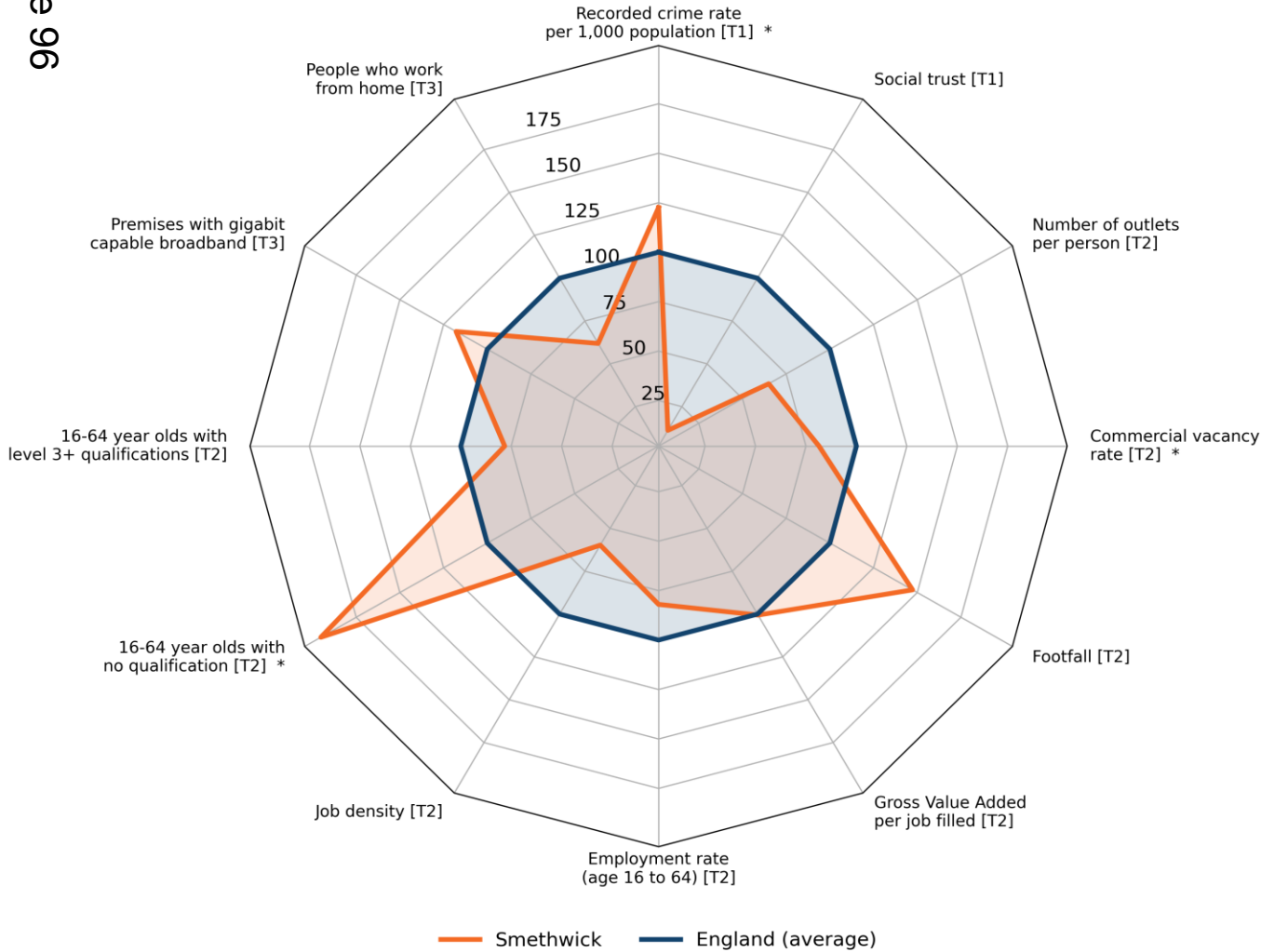
Source: [ONS, 2022](#)



Overview of town indicators

This page provides an overview of how the town's indicators (listed in Annex B) for policy investment themes fare against national averages.

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The chart on the left shows how Smethwick town's indicators (orange) fare against national averages (dark blue). Town values have been scaled relative to the national averages which were set to 100.

The policy investment themes are listed below:

- [T1] Safety and Security
- [T2] High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration
- [T3] Transport and Connectivity

How to read the chart:

1. Compare the overall shape of the town data points to the national average shape.
2. The closer a town marker is to value 100 on the chart, the closer it is to the national average.
3. A town marker higher than 100 indicates better performance than the national average, except for the three indicators marked with an asterisk (*), where the opposite is true.



Indicators for policy investment themes

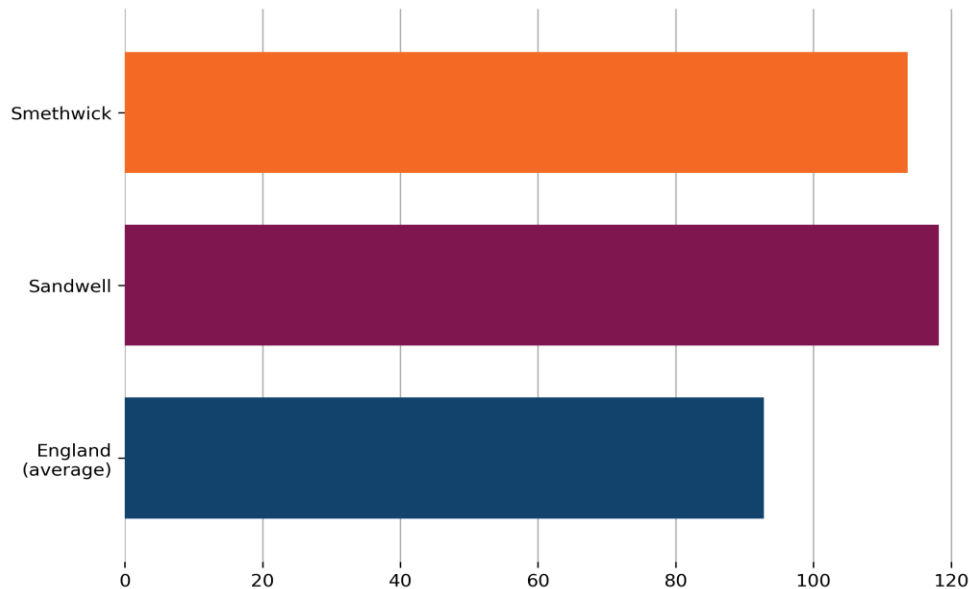


Safety and Security

“Towns will now be able to use this funding to reduce crime and improve safety in their local area.” (Our Long-Term Plan for Towns, 2023)

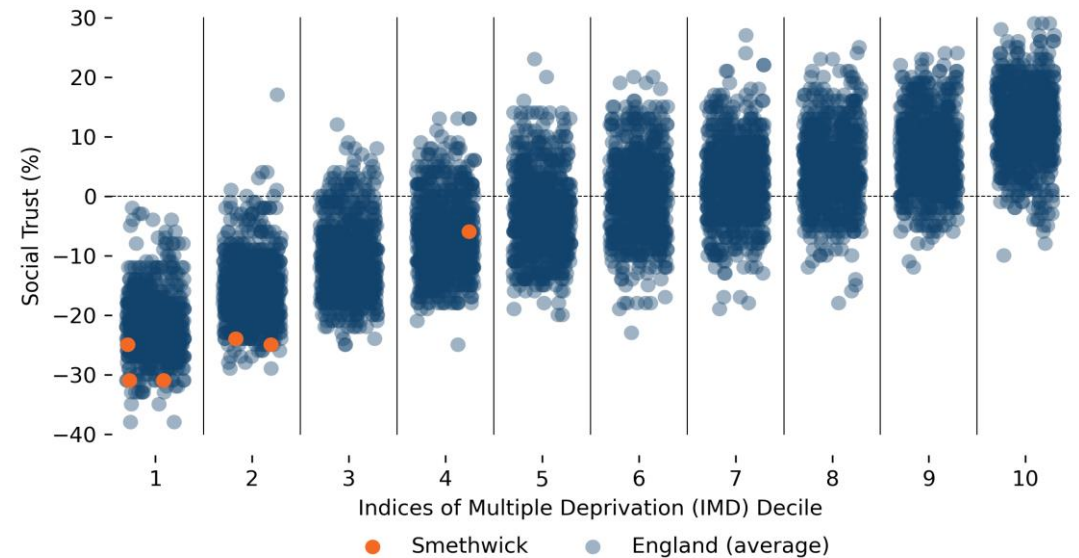
Indicator	Smethwick	Sandwell	England
Recorded crime rate per 1,000 population (2023)	113.7	118.2	92.8
Social trust (%) (2023)	-22.2	-19.2	-3.1

Recorded crime rate per 1,000 population, 2023



Source: data.police.uk, 2023

Social Trust (%) and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles
(IMD Decile 1 = Most Deprived)



Source: [MHCLG IMD, 2019](#); [Onward, 2023](#)

Note: Data is at MSOA level, resulting in multiple MSOAs per town. There was an average of 7 respondents per MSOA.

According to [Onward \(2023\)](#), **Smethwick has a social trust score of -22.2%**, which is lower than the England average of -3.1%, showing that there is a lower level of social trust within Smethwick than national levels. More deprived [Middle Layer Super Output Areas \(MSOAs\)](#) are likely to have lower levels of social trust than less deprived MSOAs in Smethwick.



High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration (1/2)

“Towns would be able to use this funding to enhance their town centres, making them and their buildings more attractive and accessible to residents, businesses, and visitors in a post Covid environment.” (Our Long-Term Plan for Towns, 2023)

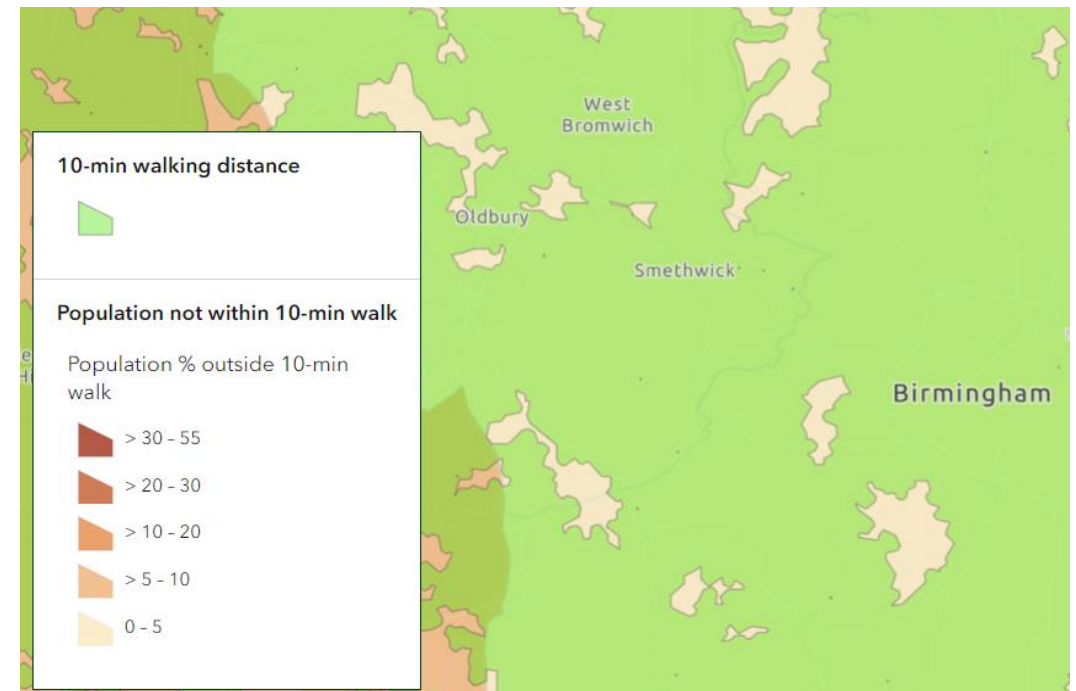
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Indicator	Smethwick	England
Number of outlets (takeaways, restaurants, clubs, bars, pubs, fitness facilities and sport clubs) per 1,000 population (Sept 2023)	1.3	2.0*
Commercial vacancy rates (%) (Nov 2023)	8.8	10.8*
Footfall index** based on O2 Motion mobile phone data (March 2022 to March 2023)	147.3	100

* England average is derived from Built Up Areas with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 only.

** Footfall is defined as the average daily number of outbound journeys (not including journeys to home) within the town/Built Up Area over the period March 2022-March 2023. The mean average footfall of all English towns with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 people, has been standardised to an index of 100, with the figure for this town scaled relative to this average.

10-minute walking distance to green spaces in Smethwick, 2023



Source: [Fields in Trust - Green Space Index, 2023](#)



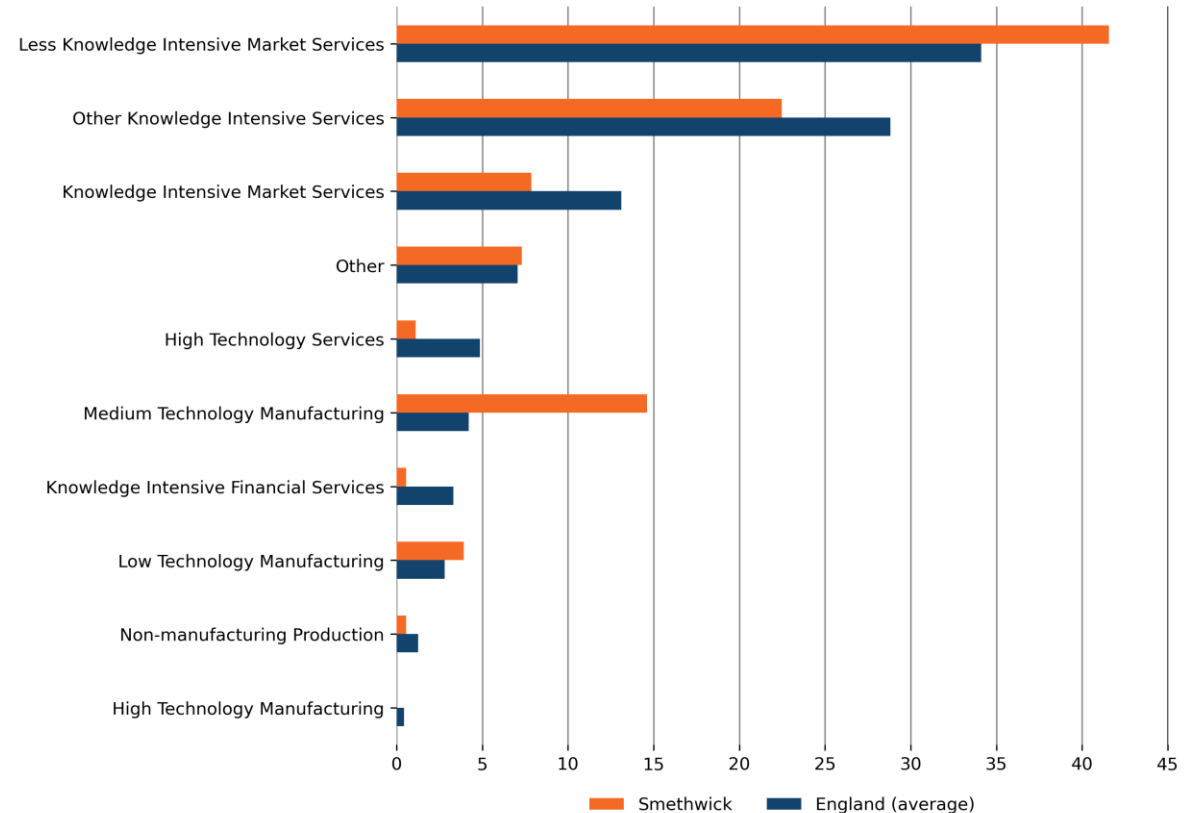
High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration (2/2)

“Towns would be able to use this funding to enhance their town centres, making them and their buildings more attractive and accessible to residents, businesses, and visitors in a post Covid environment.” (Our Long-Term Plan for Towns, 2023)

Indicator	Smethwick	Sandwell	West Midlands	England
Gross Value Added per job filled (£) (2020)	59,216	50,810	50,076	58,869
16-64 year olds with level 3+ qualifications (%) (2021)	43.5	42.4	51.6	55.6
16-64 year olds with no qualification (%) (2021)	24.6	21.7	14.8	12.6

Indicator	Smethwick	Sandwell	West Midlands	England
Employment rate (age 16 to 64) (%) (2021)	58.2	63.3	68.6	71.0
Job density (2019)	0.49	0.60	0.77	0.82

Employment share (%) by HTEC* industry groups in Smethwick, 2019



Source: [ONS, 2019](#)

*HTEC: High-tech industry and knowledge-intensive services industry groups. Calculations are based on rounded data.

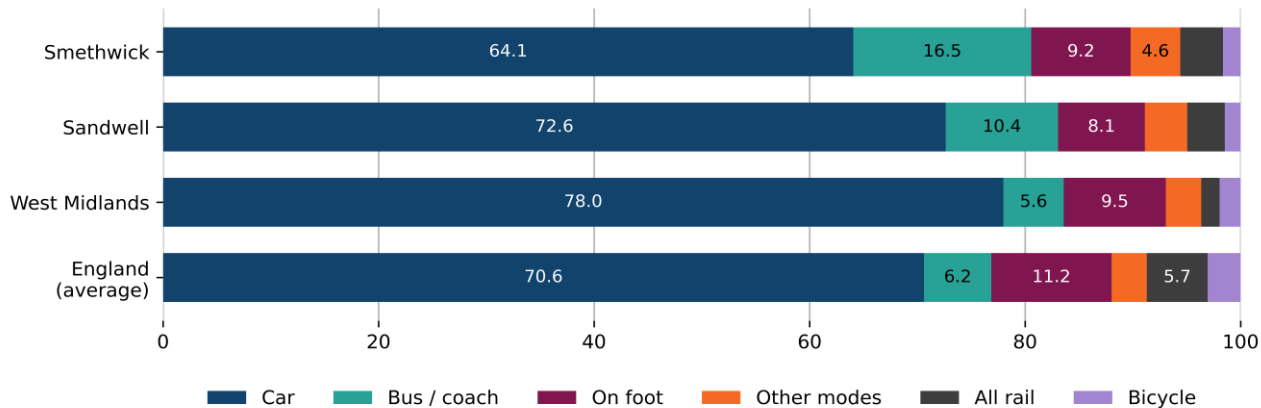


Transport and Connectivity (1/2)

“This funding could make towns more connected - increasing footfall and viability – to high streets and local shopping centres, and accessibility to local employment opportunities.” (Our Long-Term Plan for Towns, 2023)

Indicator	Smethwick	Sandwell	West Midlands	England
Premises with gigabit capable broadband (%) (2023)	85.9	87.3	76.2	72.9
People who work from home (%) (2021)	19.5	18.7	25.6	31.5

Method of travel to work (%), 2021



Source: [ONS, 2023](#)

We have excluded the “Work mainly at or from home” category from this chart to make it easier to clearly see the methods used to travel to work. Percentages do not include those working from home.

NB: Data presented on the chart above (from Census 2021) should not be compared with the tables on the right, which represent Census 2011 data. The tables on the right are based on BUA 2011 geographies, which may be different to the BUA 2022 geographies that the majority of data in this pack are reported at. Census travel data for 2021 were impacted by lockdown restrictions and the furlough scheme that were in place in March 2021.

Flows of commuters entering or leaving Smethwick, 2011

Town name	2011 Population	Incoming	Outgoing	Working local
Smethwick	48,765	13,813	14,650	3,974

Source: DLUHC analysis based on Census 2011 data

Top 10 residence – work connections between Built Up Areas, 2011

Place of Residence	Place of Work	People
Smethwick	Birmingham	6,901
Birmingham	Smethwick	4,684
Smethwick	Smethwick	3,974
Smethwick	No fixed place of work	1,630
West Bromwich	Smethwick	1,329
Smethwick	West Bromwich	1,229
Smethwick	Oldbury (Sandwell)	1,021
Oldbury (Sandwell)	Smethwick	805
Rowley Regis	Smethwick	616
Tipton	Smethwick	586

Source: DLUHC analysis based on Census 2011 data

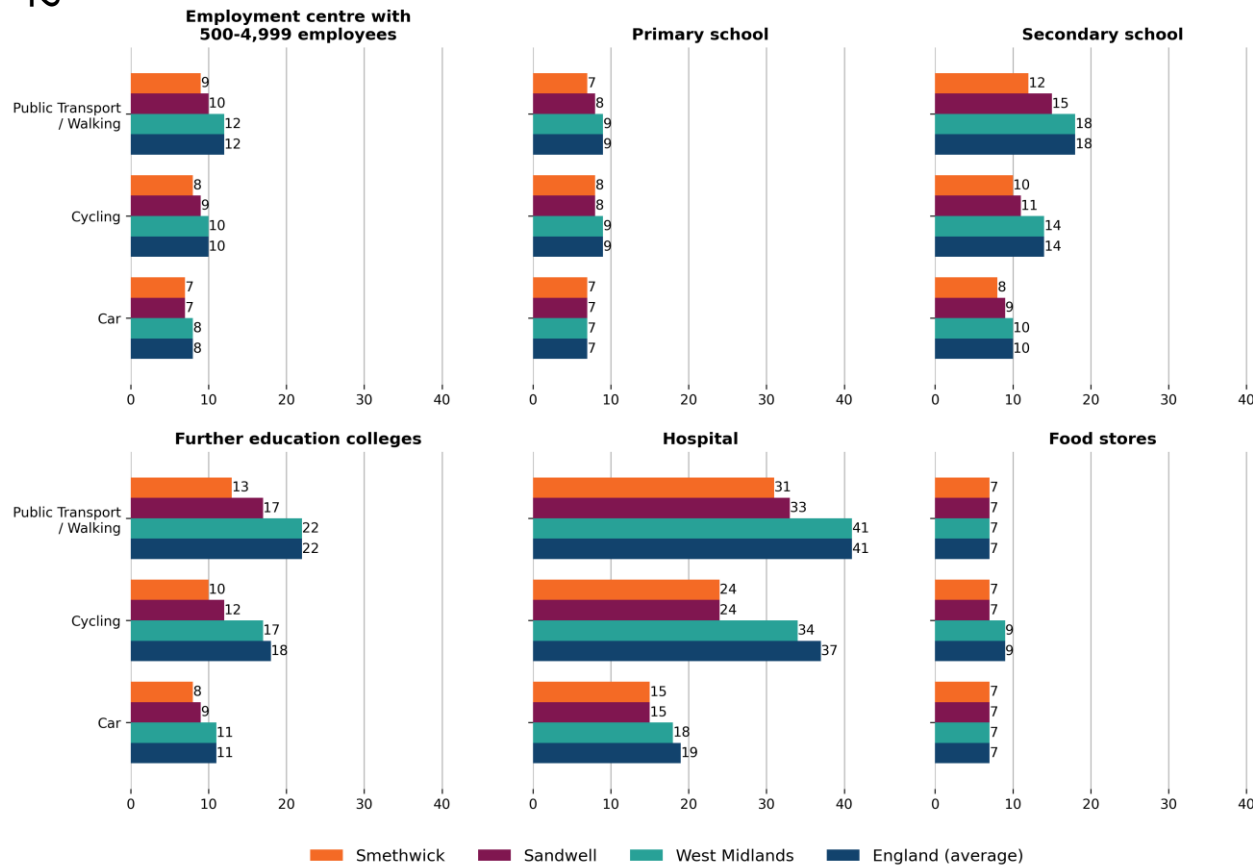


Transport and Connectivity (2/2)

“This funding could make towns more connected - increasing footfall and viability – to high streets and local shopping centres, and accessibility to local employment opportunities.” (Our Long-Term Plan for Towns, 2023)

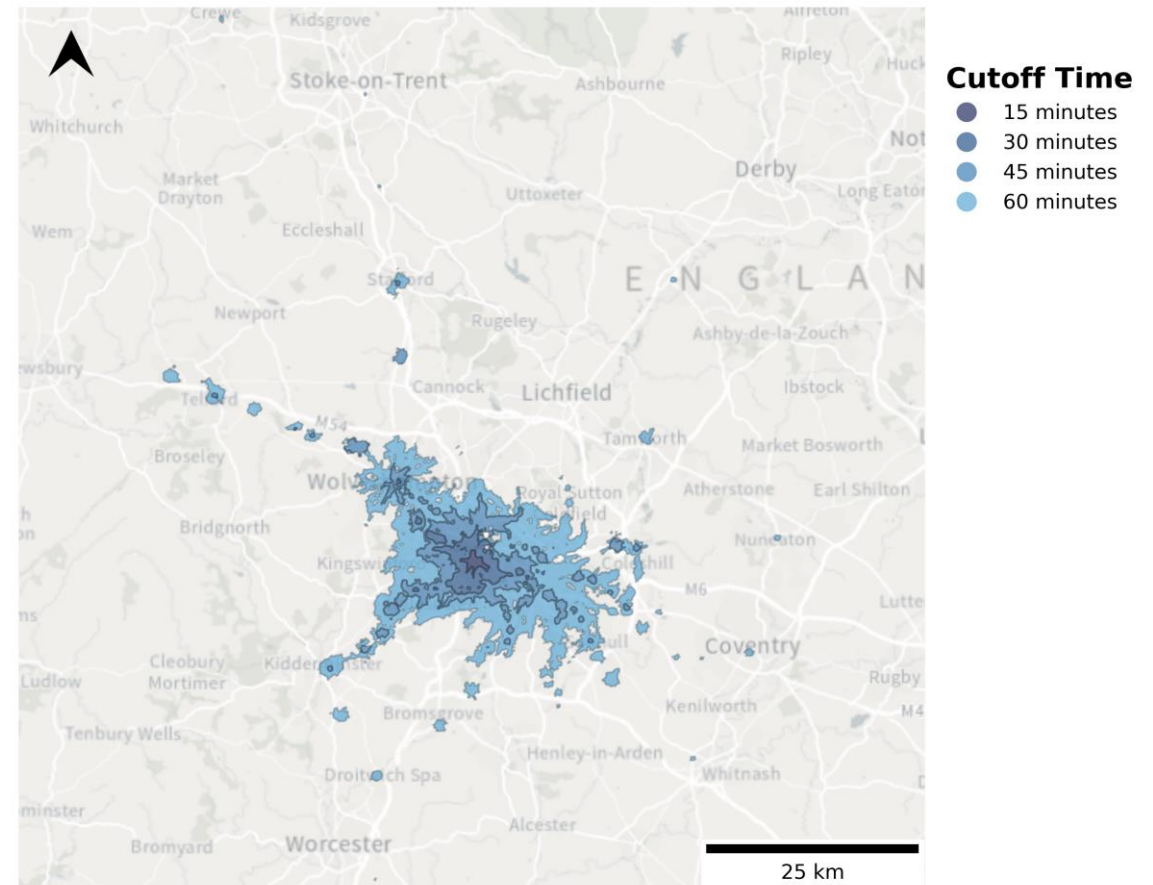
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Average minimum travel time to the nearest key service (minutes), 2019



Source: [Department for Transport, 2021](#)

Public transport accessibility by journey time from Smethwick Galton Bridge train station, between 7:15am and 9:15am



Source: [ONS, 2022](#)

Note: Data is from 15th November 2022



Annex A - Town demographics and deprivation

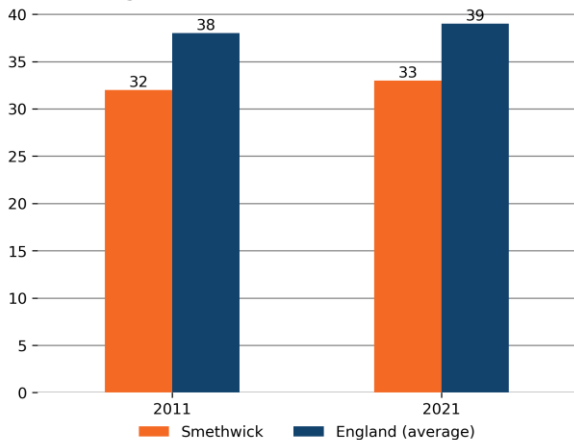


Demographics: Age and population

Headlines:

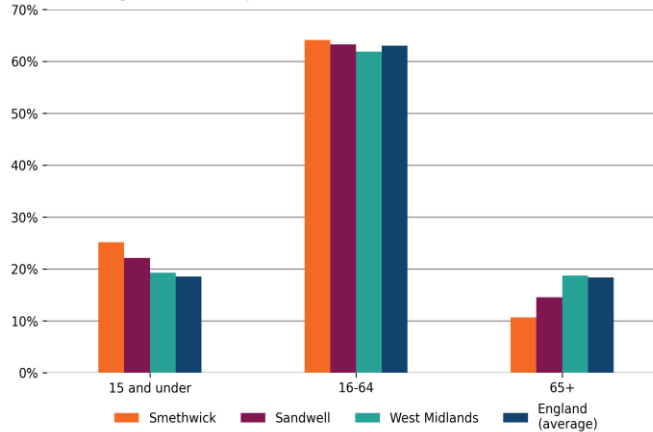
- The **median age in Smethwick (town) is 33 years** (2021). The **median age** for England is 39. The median age for Sandwell (local authority) is 37 years. The map on the right shows the average median age within Smethwick at MSOA level.
- The median age in Smethwick (town) **increased** by 1 year between 2011 and 2021. For context, the median age in England increased by 1 year over the same period (see *bottom left chart below*).
- Smethwick (town) has a **population of 56,343** (2021). Between 2011 and 2021, Smethwick's **population changed by 14.5%**. For context, the population changed by 11.0% in Sandwell, 6.2% in West Midlands, and 6.6% in England.
- 25.2% of people in Smethwick (town) are under 16 years old, and 10.7% are aged 65 and over. For context, the England average was 18.6% and 18.4%, respectively (see *bottom right chart below*).
- Across Smethwick, 30.7% of people identified with a White ethnic group, 42.3% as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh, 14.9% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African, 4.9% with Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, and 7.1% with other ethnic groups.

Median age of population, 2011 and 2021 Census



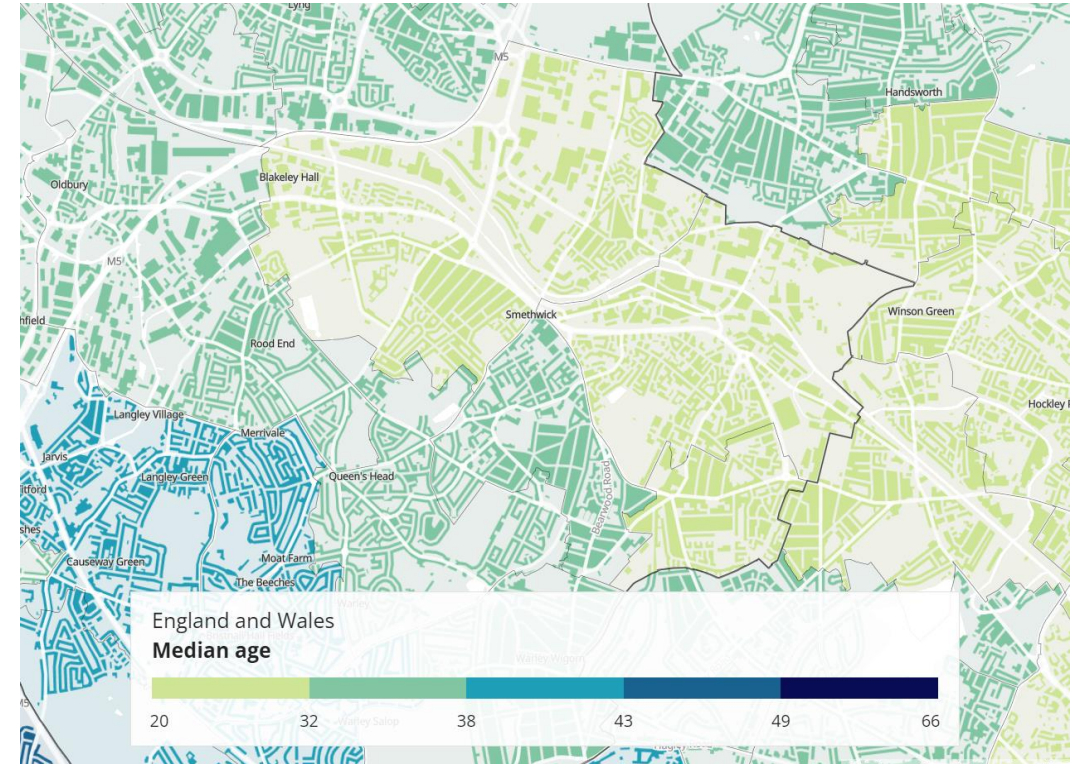
Source: [ONS Census, 2021](#); [ONS Census, 2011](#)

Age profile by location, mid-2021 estimates



Source: [ONS Census, 2021](#)

Median age in Smethwick, 2021



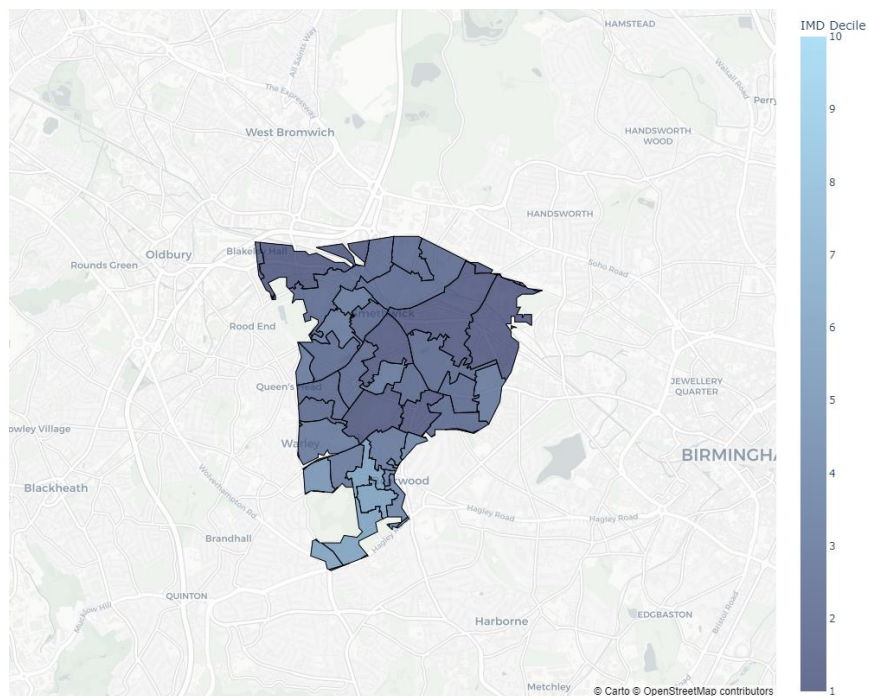
Source: [ONS Census, 2021](#)



Headlines:

- Over 80% of [Lower Layer Super Output Areas \(LSOAs\)](#) in Smethwick are in the top 20% most deprived in England in terms of Living Environment Deprivation.
- Living Environment Deprivation (47.6%) and Income Deprivation Domain (33.3%) were the domains that had the largest proportion of Smethwick's LSOAs in the top 10% most deprived in England.

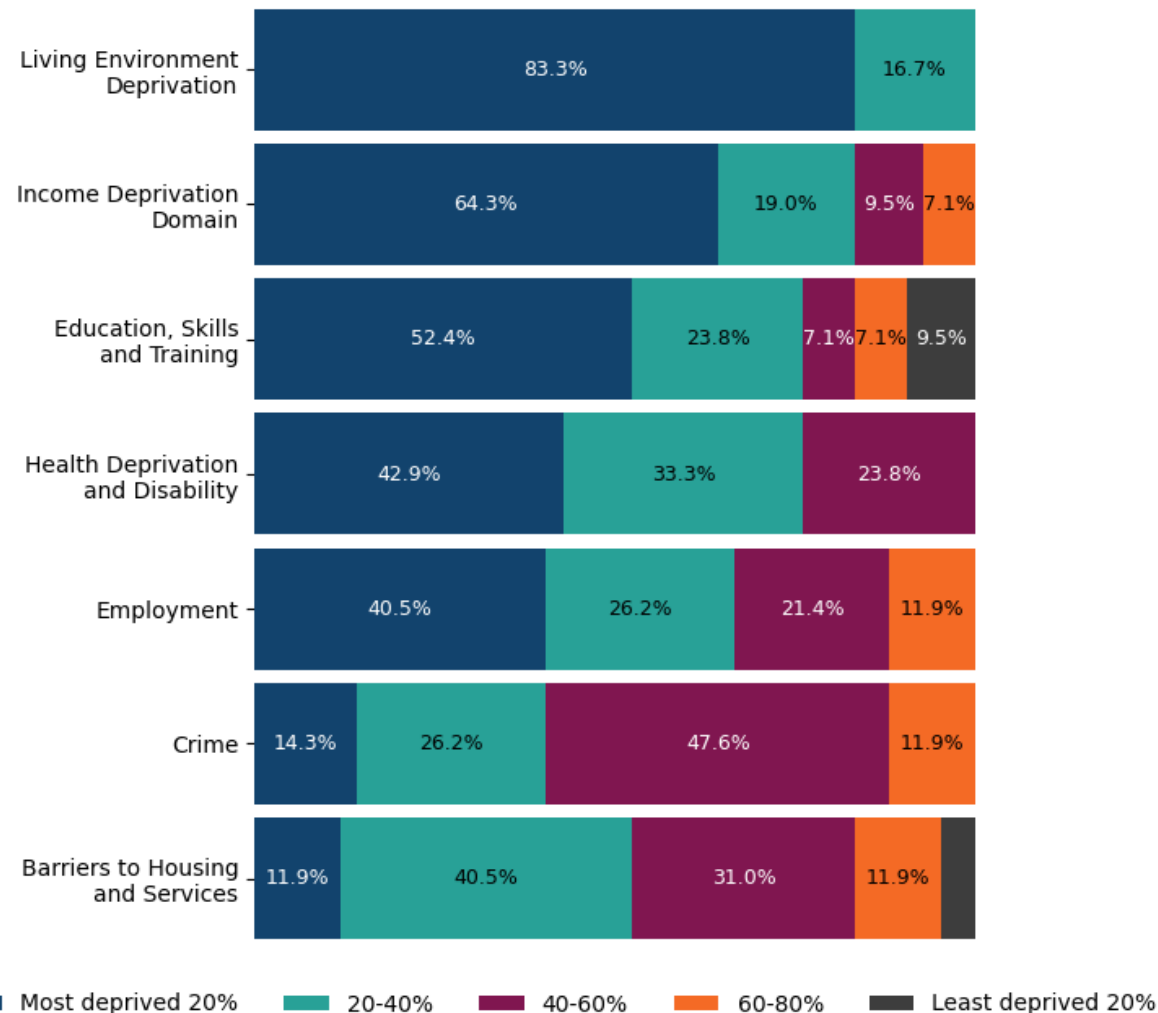
Deprivation levels across LSOAs within Smethwick by decile (Decile 1 = Top 10% most deprived in England), 2019



Source: [MHCLG IMD, 2019](#)

Deprivation

Deprivation levels (%) across LSOAs within Smethwick, compared to the England average, 2019



Source: [MHCLG IMD, 2019](#)

Note: Missing labels on the bars represent a percentage of less than 7%.



Annex B - Data and sources



Data and sources

Indicator	Policy investment theme	Source
Recorded crime rate per 1,000 population (2023)	Safety and Security	https://data.police.uk/data/
Social trust (2023)	Safety and Security	https://www.ukonward.com/reports/good-neighbours/
Number of outlets (takeaways, restaurants, clubs, bars, pubs, fitness facilities and sport clubs) per 1,000 population (Sept 2023)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	Local Data Company
Commercial vacancy rates (%) (Nov 2023)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	Local Data Company
Footfall index based on O2 Motion mobile phone data (March 2022 to March 2023)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	O2 Motion
10-minute walking distance to green spaces (2023)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/bad00cdfa6b140599b06c64d10dc73c9?data_id=dataSource_21-Local_Authority_GSI_Score_2023_6252%3A183%2CdataSource_22-Local_Authority_GSI_Score_2023_6252%3A183
Gross Value Added (£) per job filled (2020)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/uksmallareagvae/estimates
16-64 year olds with level 3+ qualifications (%) (2021)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/townsandcitiescharacteristicsofbuiltupareasenglandandwales/census2021#qualifications
16-64 year olds with no qualification (%) (2021)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/townsandcitiescharacteristicsofbuiltupareasenglandandwales/census2021#qualifications



Data and sources

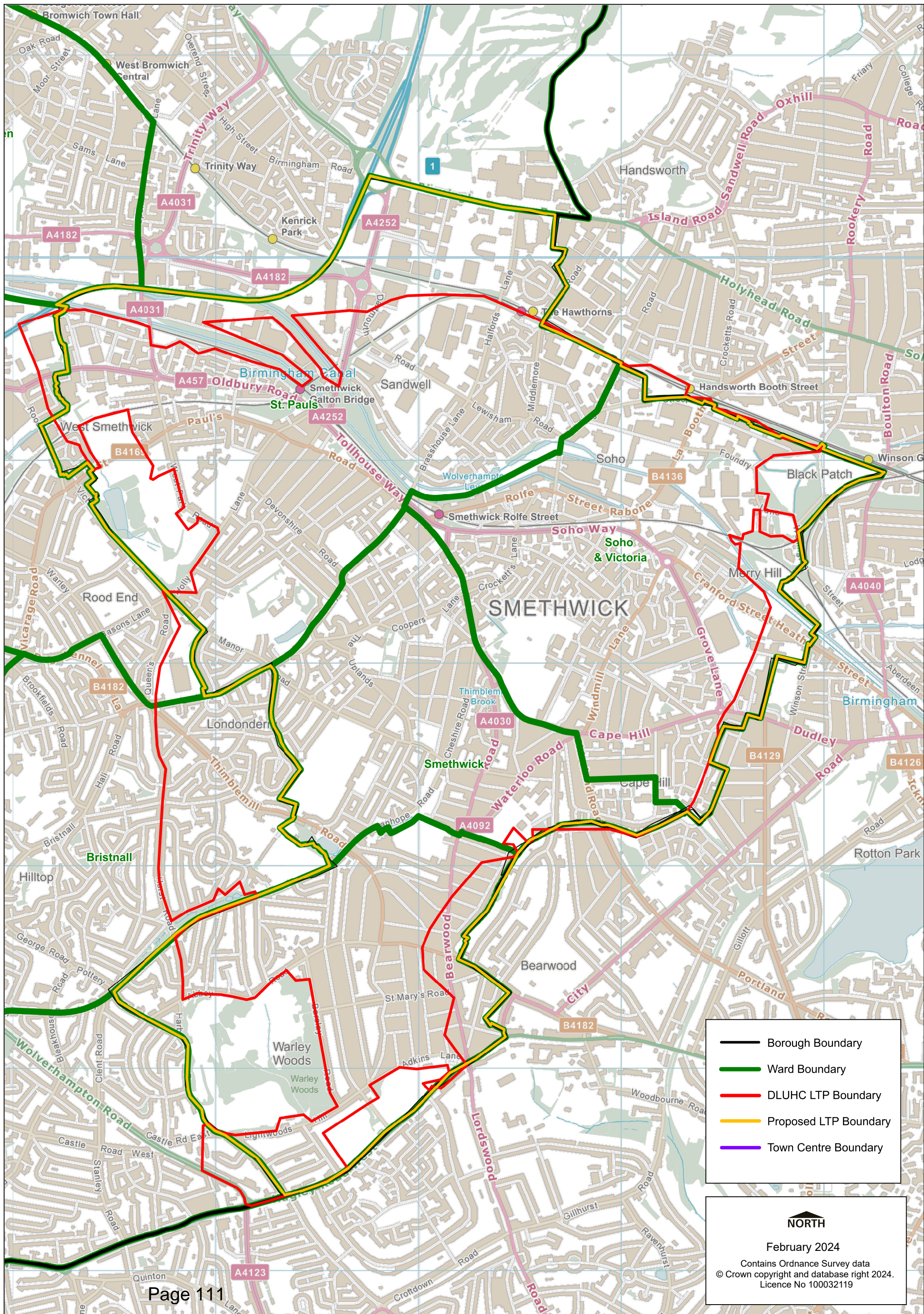
Indicator	Policy investment theme	Source
Employment rate (age 16 to 64) (%), 2021	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/townsandcitiescharacteristicsofbuiltupareasenglandandwales/census2021#employment
Job density (2019)	High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/understandingtownsinenglandandwalespatialanalysis
Premises with gigabit capable broadband (%) (2023)	Transport and Connectivity	https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/infrastructure-research/spring-2023
People who work from home (%) (2021)	Transport and Connectivity	https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS061/editions/2021/versions/4
Method of travel to work (2021)	Transport and Connectivity	https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS061/editions/2021/versions/4
Flows of commuters entering or leaving your town (2011)	Transport and Connectivity	DLUHC analysis based on Census 2011 data
Top 10 residence – work connections between Built Up Areas (2011)	Transport and Connectivity	DLUHC analysis based on Census 2011 data
Average minimum travel time to the nearest key service (minutes), 2019	Transport and Connectivity	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/journey-time-statistics-data-tables-jts




Data and sources

Indicator	Policy investment theme	Source
Public transport accessibility by journey time from the town train station/landmark (2022)	Transport and Connectivity	https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/
Median age (2021)	Used in the demographics section	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwales/census2021unroundeddata
Median age (2011)	Used in the demographics section	https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks102ew
Population estimates (2021)	Used in the demographics section	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/townsandcitiescharacteristicsofbuiltupareasenglandandwales/census2021#qualifications
Population by country of birth (2021)	Used in the demographics section	https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS004/editions/2021/versions/3
English Indices of Deprivation (2019)	Used in the deprivation section	https://opendatacommunities.org/data/societal-wellbeing/imd2019/indices

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- Borough Boundary
- Ward Boundary
- DLUHC LTP Boundary
- Proposed LTP Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary


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Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

7 March 2024

Subject:	Tracking and Monitoring of Scrutiny Recommendations
Director:	James McLaughlin Assistant Chief Executive James_McLaughlin@sandwell.gov.uk
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagira Democratic Services Manager Suky_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations







- 1.1 That the Board considers the items within the recommendations tracker and the progress on their implementation.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To facilitate the effective monitoring of progress on responses to and press with implementation of recommendations made by the Board and identify where further action is required.
- 2.2 Effective monitoring of recommendations facilitates the evaluation of the impact of the scrutiny function overall.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people	<p>The scrutiny function supports all of the objectives of the Corporate Plan by seeking to improve services for the people of Sandwell. It does this by influencing the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services.</p> <p>Effective monitoring of recommendations made supports this and allows scrutiny to evaluate its impact.</p>
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	
	A strong and inclusive economy	
	A connected and accessible Sandwell	

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The attached Appendix details the responses to and progress on the implementation of recommendations made by the scrutiny function.



Appendix 1

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Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Tracker 23/24

Date	Item	Recommendation/ Action	Responsible Person	Notes
November 2023	Sandwell Local Plan – Consultation on the Draft Sandwell Local Plan	To consider the potential use of co-operative ownership housing models and the social value that they can offer.	Andy Miller	

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Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

7 March 2024

Subject:	Cabinet Forward Plan and Board Work Programme
Director:	Law and Governance Surjit Tour Surjir_tour@sandwell.gov.uk
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagra Democratic Services Manager Suky_suthinagra@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations







- 1.1 That the Board considers the Cabinet Forward Plan, which sets out the matters programmed to be considered by the Cabinet.
- 1.2 That the Board reviews its work programme, which sets out matters to be considered by the Board in 2023/24.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 A strong and effective work programme underpins the work and approach of Scrutiny.
- 2.2 It is good practice for work programmes to remain fluid, to allow for scrutiny of new and emerging issues in a timely manner.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people	The scrutiny function supports all of the objectives of the Corporate Plan by seeking to improve services for the people of Sandwell. It does this by influencing the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services.
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	
	A strong and inclusive economy	
	A connected and accessible Sandwell	

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Scrutiny is a member led and driven function, driven by members' commitment to improve services and thereby people's lives.
- 4.2 An annual work programming event, involving chief officers, executive members and key partners, was held in June 2023 and all boards approved their work programmes for 2023/24 at their first meeting of the municipal year.
- 4.3 Boards have responsibility for their own work programmes, and it is good practice to keep them under review, to allow for new and emerging issues to be scrutinised in a timely manner.
- 4.4 Scrutiny Procedure Rules allow any member to request that an item is added to a scrutiny board's work programme. Each request should be carefully assessed, using the agreed process, to ensure that resources can be prioritised and that the scrutiny activity will add value.



5 Implications

Resources:	<p>Any resources implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/cabinet.</p> <p>Any specific implications for the Board's attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Legal and Governance:	<p>The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on the Executive to respond to Scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them.</p> <p>NHS service commissioners and providers have a duty to respond in writing to a report or recommendation where health scrutiny requests this, within 28 days of the request. This applies to requests from individual health scrutiny committees or sub-committees, from local authorities and from joint health scrutiny committees or sub-committees.</p>
Risk:	<p>Any risk implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/cabinet.</p> <p>Any specific risks for the Board's attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Equality:	<p>Any equality implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/cabinet.</p> <p>Any specific equality implications for the Board's attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Any health and wellbeing implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/cabinet.</p> <p>Any specific health and wellbeing implications for the Board's attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>



Social Value	<p>Any social value implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/cabinet.</p> <p>Any specific social value implications for the Board's attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Corporate Parenting	<p>Any corporate parenting implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/cabinet.</p> <p>Any specific corporate parenting implications for the Board's attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Any climate change implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/cabinet.</p> <p>Any specific climate change implications for the Board's attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Cabinet Forward Plan

Appendix 2 – Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Work Programme

Appendix 3 – Prioritisation Tool

7. Background Papers

None.



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The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive:-

Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
<p>1 Camera Enforcement of Endorsable Traffic Offences – West Midlands Regional Working Agreement'</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mervyn Bartlett</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)</p>		<p>13 March 2024</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
2	<p>Levelling Up Partnership Programme Update</p> <p>To receive an update on the delivery of the Levelling Up Partnership for Wednesbury following Cabinet approval in September 2022</p> <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p> <p>Assistant Director: Tammy Stokes – Assistant Director</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>13 March 2024</p>	<p>TBC</p>	



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
3	<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Grants – Delegation of authority to accept grants.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Andy Miller – Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager</p> <p>Director: Tammy Stokes – Assistant Director Growth & Spatial Planning</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>13 March 2024</p>	<p>No</p>	



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
4	<p>West Bromwich Indoor Market</p> <p>Cost Pressures Brief description Report to agree funding package for the delivery of West Bromwich Indoor Market and approval to procure contractor.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Alexander Oxley</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Exempt</p>	<p>13 March 2024</p>		<p>Cabinet Report</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
5	Long Term Plan for Towns - Smethwick Contact Officer: Jenna Langford Director: Tony McGovern	Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)	Public	13 March 2024	Yes – Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board	
6	Levelling Up Fund Round 3 bid submission Contact Officer: Jenna Langford Director: Tony McGovern	Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)	Public	13 March 2024		



ONE COUNCIL
ONE TEAM

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
7	<p>Sandwell Design Code - Supplementary Plan</p> <p>Contact Officer: Jenna Langford</p> <p>Director: Tammy Stokes (Assistant Director – Spatial Planning and Growth)</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	Public	13 March 2024		Cabinet Report EQIA
8	<p>Levelling Up Zone</p> <p>Contact Officer: Bart Shirm</p> <p>Assistant Director: Tammy Stokes – Assistant Director Spatial Planning and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		13 March 2024		



Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
<p>9 Single Settlement Memorandum of Understanding between WMCA & HMG</p> <p>Contact Officer: Tammy Stokes</p> <p>Assistant Director: Tammy Stokes – Assistant Director Spatial Planning and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		<p>13 March 2024</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
10	<p>Funding for Major Capital Projects</p> <p>Brief description: Request for capital budget for Darley House and The Lakes refurbishment projects</p> <p>Contact Officer: Sarah Ager</p> <p>Director: Dean Epton</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Councillor Rollins (Housing and Built Environment)</p>	Exempt	June 2024	No	Cabinet Report
11	<p>Community Hubs</p> <p>Contact Officer: Helen Green</p>	<p>Cabinet -</p> <p>Public Health and Communities (Cllr Khatun)</p>		June 2024		



ONE COUNCIL
ONE TEAM

Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/ 24

Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment



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Standing Items:-

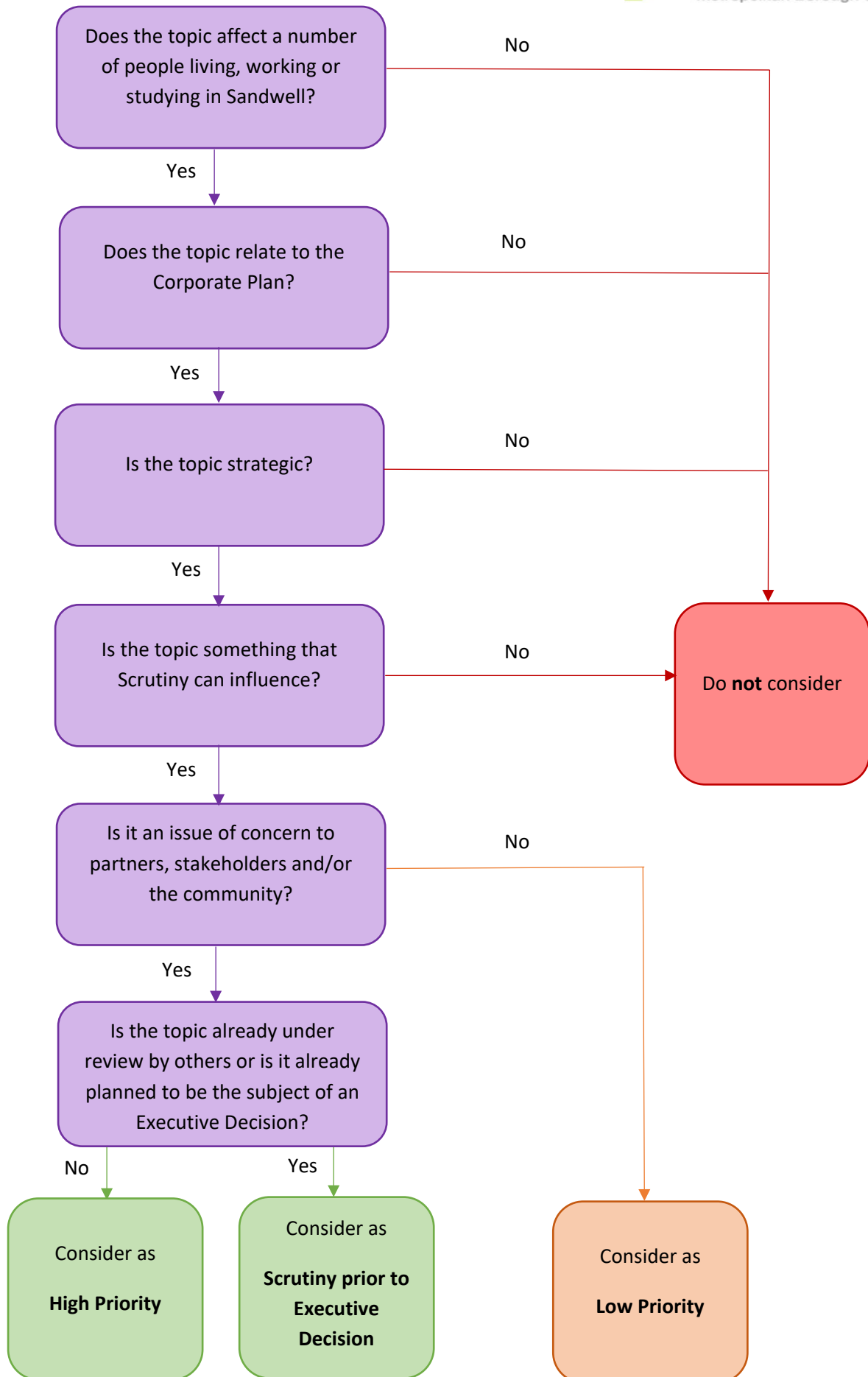
- Tracking and Monitoring of Recommendations to the Executive
- Work Programme (including Cabinet Forward Plan)

Meeting Date	Item	Presented by
13 July 2023	Cycle Route (Europa Avenue – Sandwell Valley) – referral from Cabinet Petitions Committee	Andy Miller/ Wayne Moore/ Tony McGovern/ Robin Weare (delivery of project/ Talvinder Sandu
	Work Programme 2023/24 and establishment of Scrutiny Review Working Group	Alex Goddard
03 October 2023	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim
	Europa Avenue Cycle Path and Associated Consultation – Considerations and Conclusion	Councillor Owen (Vice-Chair of Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board)
8 November 2023	Sandwell Local Plan – Draft Plan Consultation	Andy Miller
	Local Transport Plan	TfWM Officers (Via Andy Miller)
	Highway Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 – Report of the Working Group	Chair of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board
8 February 2024	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim

7 March 2024	Long Term Plan for Towns - Smethwick	Jenna Langford
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Items to be scheduled: Grass verge parking policy (2024/2025 municipal year) Cycle-path schemes current position and policy Waste Presentation Policy – Q1 24-25 MY – Ben Percival
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Scrutiny Review/s
Local Centres – revitalisation and diversification  



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