

Long Term Plan for Towns Introduction

BURNLEY TOWN BOARD



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REPORT AUTHOR	Kate Ingram
TEL NO	01282 477271
EMAIL	kingram@burnley.gov.uk

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to appraise Members of the newly formed Burnley Town Board (Town Board) of the background to the Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) initiative, the role of the Town Board, and to consider a work programme and some minor amendments to the qualifying boundary.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that Members of the Town Board:
 - (1) Note the content of the report, particularly the very tight timescales for submitting the Long Term (10-year) Plan for the town and accompanying investment plan;
 - (2) Agree the work programme, consultants brief and use of funding as set out in paragraphs 20-21 and 27 of this report;
 - (3) Consider approving the proposed boundary changes set out in paragraph 12 of this report and in the map at Appendix 4.
 - (4) Agree to establish a sub-group for each of the LTPT themes and appoint a Town Board Member to chair the groups and delegate authority to the relevant Chair of the Town Board to appoint members to those sub-groups (including co-opted members) and set out the terms of reference for the same if considered appropriate.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. To:
 - (i) appraise Members of the Town Board of the LTPT initiative and their role agree a work programme to deliver the Long Term (10-year) Plan and accompanying investment plan within the timeframes set by Government, and
 - (ii) consider changing the proposed extent of the qualifying boundary in view of the reasons set out in this report.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Background

4. The LTPT initiative was announced by the Government in October 2023 targeting 55 “left behind towns”. Through this initiative the Government aims to:
 - a. Put 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. This will be done via a Town Board and a £20m endowment style fund to invest over the next decade.
 - b. Provide local communities (The Town’s Board) with the tools, including £250K capacity funding and a data pack so that towns can build their local capacity, talk to local people about what they want and develop a plan.
 - c. Make towns places where people and businesses want to invest, create new jobs and breathe new life into our high streets and town centres.
5. Burnley is one of 55 places selected using pre-determined criteria, as set out in the Long Term Plan for Towns Selection Methodology Note <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/long-term-plan-for-towns-towns-selection-methodology-note>.
6. The fund is administered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). DLUHC issued guidance on the 18th December providing details on how the programme will operate and the role of Town Boards (Appendix 1). Since then, the Council and other stakeholders have met with DLUHC and the newly appointed Chair of the national Town’s Unit, Adam Hawksbee. On 6th February, the Council received further correspondence from Adam Hawksbee regarding LTPT and a copy of the letter is included at Appendix 2.

Town Boards

7. The Town’s Board is central to the delivery of LTPT. The Local Authority (Burnley Borough Council) was required to appoint a Town Board chair at the earliest opportunity. Karen Buchanan, Principal of Burnley college was appointed as the Chair of the Town Board following consultation with the MP for Burnley and Group Leaders of Burnley Council.
8. The guidance sets out a range of organisations and stakeholders that it would expect to be on a Town Board. A list of individuals and organisations invited, by the Council and the shadow chair, to be represented on the Burnley Town Board is at Appendix 3. The Burnley Town Board membership reflects the membership suggested in the guidance.

The Town Board is responsible for:

- Identifying issues and priorities to focus on for the Long-Term Plan, including supporting the process of 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 Town Board members to utilise specific powers and statutory powers 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.
9. Town Boards must be established by the 1st April 2024. The Council will need to provide DLUHC with assurance that the Town Board has been established and a chair appointed, together with proposals for any boundary changes before 1st April 2024. Guidance on what is expected in the assurance documents is awaited. Once DLUHC has completed its assurance checks a sum of £200,000 of capacity funding i.e. funding to assist Town Boards in completing their plans, will be released.

The Town

10. The Long-Term Plan for Towns initiative does not cover the entire borough of Burnley. The geography used to select Towns is based on an ONS nomenclature of Built-Up Areas (BUAs). BUAs with a population of less than 20,000 population were excluded, then other BUAs were excluded based on the criteria set out in the selection methodology note. The settlements of Cliviger, Hapton, Worsthorne and Padiham are excluded from the LTPT area for Burnley. A map of the area is included at Appendix 4.
11. As set out in the letter dated 6th Feb (Appendix 2) from the Chair of the Towns Unit, Adam Hawksbee, there is scope to make representations to the department to alter those boundaries, where an amendment remains within the spirit of the programme and includes, as part of the revised area, the town that was originally selected. For example, a town's local station may lie just outside of the boundaries provided or essential green spaces may have been excluded, due to the emphasis on 'built up' areas. Alterations to the boundary should not bring in additional, separate population centres (i.e. different towns) and must remain contiguous.
12. It is recommended that the Town Board considers requesting an amendment to the plan to include Townley Park, Thompson Park, Bank Hall Park, and some other amendments to include key Active Travel routes and some stretches of the Leeds Liverpool Canal (hatched areas on the map at Appendix 4). These are considered to be within the spirit of the programme as these parks and green spaces are important community and heritage assets, and their inclusion would not alter the demographic metrics used in the selection process.

The Long Term Plan and 3 year Investment Plan

13. Town Boards are responsible for developing a Long-Term (10 year) Plan for the town. 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. The guidance acknowledges that in many places, there are strategies and plans for the town that align with the Long-Term Plan for Towns' objectives, and Long-Term Plans should build on these.
14. 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:

- i. 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.
- ii. The strategic case for change, building on the evidence in the pack provided by DLUHC (Appendix 5) with, where relevant, more granular local data and stories.
- iii. 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.
- iv. The planned direction of travel for the regeneration of the town, across the 3 investment themes – Safety and Security; High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration; and Transport and Connectivity. It should detail the interventions that are available to achieve this. The Town Board should seek to draw on the list of interventions that are set out in the guidance and can also consider other, 'off-menu interventions, provided they sit within the 3 investment themes. Detail on investment and interventions only need to focus on the first 3 years and should sit within the 3-year investment plan annex.
- v. 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.
- vi. 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.
- vii. 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 toolkit¹ will be used in a way that best suits the town across the 3 investment themes.

3-year Investment Plan Annex

15. The 3 Year investment plan 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.

16. The Council 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.

17. There is an expectation that 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

¹ The policy toolkit identifies a wide range of powers, most of which are already available to and used by the Council, for example Public Space Protection Orders, Criminal Behaviour Orders, powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Business Improvement Districts, Planning Powers including Local Development Orders and Neighbourhood Plans, CPO powers, Listed Building Regulations, Community Asset Transfer and highways powers (LCC).

deadline for submitting plans is 1 August 2024. Further details on how to submit will be published in supplementary guidance in early 2024. Submissions will be dealt with on a “first come first served basis”.

18. 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 DLUHC 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.

Proposed Work Programme

19. Although Town Boards can submit their plans as early as 1st April, this is really not feasible if the Town Board is to undertake meaningful engagement.
20. It is proposed that consultants are appointed to support the Town Board to develop the Long-Term (10-year) Plan. An outline of the work programme is set out in the chart at Appendix 6 together with a copy of the consultant’s brief. Due to the short time scales involved the brief, agreed by the shadow chair, is already out to tender and it is expected that an appointment will be made wc 25th March. The consultants will provide additional capacity and be able to act objectively, balancing the views of varied stakeholders, with data analysis to develop an evidence-based plan with wide support.
21. To progress the programme, it is proposed that a workshop, facilitated by the consultants, is held at the next meeting focussing on the Long-Term Vision. To support the work of the Town Board it is proposed that 3 subgroups aligned with the LTPT themes, chaired by a Town Board member, with other board members and co-optees are established to look at each theme in more detail.
22. An Engagement and Consultation Plan is included in a separate report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

Funding Profile

23. On the 23rd February 2024, the Council received further correspondence from Jacob Young MP, Minister for Levelling Up, setting out more details on the funding profile and the flexibility to carry forward underspends. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 7.
24. The funding profiled, subject to some flexibility, is set out over 10 years as follows:

In 000's	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34	Total
Total RDEL per place	50	449	423	449	449	449	449	454	467	467	467	4,574
Total CDEL per place		491	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	14,936
Total amount per place												19,510

25. Members of the Town Board will note that the amount of funding available is slightly less than the £20m announced. This is because a portion of the revenue funding, is top sliced annually, to support a national High Streets and Towns Task force that will provide hands-on support from placemaking experts to support with delivery, encourage shared learning and promote networking between the Town Boards

Local Authority Accountability Role

26. Although decisions on the Long-Term Plan and the use of the funding sit with the Town Board, the Local Authority remains accountable for the funding, to ensure that it is used correctly and in accordance with the assurance framework. Although DLUHC has referred to an Assurance Framework the Council has not yet seen details. The guidance suggests that it will be light touch and we expect it to be along similar lines to our current reporting procedures for Levelling Up Fund and UKSPF, whereby the LA has to submit quarterly reports signed by the Council's s151 officer (who is currently the Borough Council's Director of Resources). Once we have further details, the Council will revert to the Town Board with a proposal on how it will manage the programme, and any costs in doing so. The programme is currently being supported by existing Council resources and the Council's democracy team are available to service Town Board meetings, ensuring that Agenda's and minutes are circulated in a timely fashion and are published in accordance with the guidance.

Consultants Costs

27. As set out in paragraph 20 it is proposed to engage consultants to work with the Town Board over the next few months to undertake public consultation and engagement, assess data and help develop the vision and investment plan. It is proposed that a sum of circa £70,000 from the £250k capacity funding provided by DLUHC.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

28. As set out in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

29. None