



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

## **Towns Fund: Supplementary Guidance on the role of Town Deal Boards in the delivery phase**

1. Section 4 of the Towns Fund Guidance (published in June 2020) sets out the role of the Town Deal Board:

*The Town Deal Board will sign off each stage of a Town Investment Plan and Town Deal. The Board is responsible for:*

- *Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)*
- *Developing and agreeing an evidence-based Town Investment Plan*
- *Establishing a clear programme of interventions*
- *Embedding arrangements in local plans (where appropriate) and undertaking Environmental Impact Assessments and fulfilling duties on public authorities under the Equalities Act, in particular, and the public sector equality duty.*
- *Coordinating resources and engaging stakeholders*
- *Ensuring communities' voices are involved in shaping design and decision making at each phase of development*
- *Ensuring diversity in its engagement with local communities and businesses*
- *Helping develop detailed business cases*
- *Overseeing each step of agreeing a Town Deal, and overseeing compliance with the Heads of Terms Agreement with government*

2. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) expectation is that Town Deal Boards will continue to work to these principles; however, we recognise that as towns move into delivery of their projects, some additional guidance may be useful. **This guidance should be read as supplementary to the Towns Fund Guidance published previously.**
3. The Towns Fund Delivery Partner (TFDP) article "Town Leadership in the Delivery Phase" (available on the Towns Fund website: <https://townsfund.org.uk/blog-collection/town-leadership-in-the-delivery-phase>) provides a helpful starting point for Boards to consider how they operate moving forward. **DLUHC expects Boards to continue meeting regularly** to discuss progress, ensure that projects are staying true to the vision of the Town Investment Plan, and to work through risks and issues together.
4. It is important to maintain the distinction between the local authority as the accountable body, and the Town Deal Board. However, as at TIP and Summary Document stage, we expect that the Town Deal continues to be a collaborative effort and that Town Deal Boards continue to be consulted on and involved in key decisions.

5. Engagement with local communities is a vital part of the Town Deal process, and this remains the case as projects move into delivery. Town Deal Boards have demonstrated that they are a key link to the local community and local businesses and should be involved in any refresh of engagement and communication plans.
6. Town Deals have always had a focus on local accountability and decision making, and this will continue as the programme moves into delivery. However, as places will be aware, DLUHC requires local authorities (as the accountable body) to report on progress every six months. These reports cover Expenditure, Progress, Risks, Outputs and Outcomes. **Town Deal Boards are required have sight of these performance reporting returns, and the opportunity to feed into them, before they are submitted to DLUHC. The Town Deal Board Chair must sign the performance reporting return before it is submitted to DLUHC.**
7. When submitting Project Adjustment Requests, Local Authorities are required to confirm that the Town Deal Board have reviewed and agreed the proposals. This requirement will continue; Town Deal Boards should be involved in any discussions around project changes and agree these before they are made either under local delegation or submitted to DLUHC for a decision. This includes Project Adjustments to projects already in delivery.

### ***Governance Checks***

8. As referenced in the Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework September 22 (page 20 110-112), compliance checks will be completed annually by DLUHC for all Town Deals. The checks review whether the Town Deal Board is working in line with the governance and information provision requirements set out in the prospectus and subsequent guidance.
9. Checks will be carried out annually on publicly available records which cover the governance requirements as laid out in the Towns Fund Prospectus 2019; Towns Fund Guidance June 2020 (Annex D Town Deal Board governance guidance); Towns Fund Guidance Stage 2 December 2020; and this October 2022 supplementary guidance.
10. Following the checks, recommendations for action (if required) will be provided to local authorities and the Town Deal Board. Confirmation that the actions have been addressed will be required and evidence may be requested.
11. Annex A sets out the key aspects of governance for Town Deal Boards that will be checked annually.

## **Annex A: Town Deal Board Roles and Responsibilities**

1. Roles and Responsibilities: The Town Deal Board should have a document, published on the Lead Council's website, which clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities and the governance and decision making processes for the Town Deal Board, the Town Deal Board Chair and Lead Council.
2. Code of Conduct policy: outlining the Lead Council's record keeping responsibilities on behalf of Town Deal Board with specific reference to the seven principles of public life, including a register of gifts and/or hospitality.
3. Conflict of interest policy: process of record for each Board member.
4. Transparency: transparent decision making is supported by the publication of information on the Lead Council's website and we expect the following standards to be applied:
  - A documented decision-making process outlining the voting rights of the Board to be published
  - Profiles of Board Members to be published (stating private or public member)
  - All Board papers to be published on the Lead Council's website in advance of the meeting (within 5 clear working days)
  - To promptly publish draft minutes of meetings on the Lead Council's website following the meeting (within 10 clear working days)
  - To publish final minutes on the Lead Council's website, once approved by the Board (within 10 clear working days)
  - Any conflicts of interest reported to be formally noted within the published minutes.
5. The Town Deal Board's membership should reflect the diversity of the town and surrounding area. The Towns Fund Prospectus stated that membership of Town Deal Boards should comprise:
  - A private sector chair
  - All tiers of local government for the geography of the town
  - The MP(s) representing the town
  - The Local Enterprise Partnership
  - Local businesses and investors
  - Community/local voluntary community sector representatives
  - Other relevant local organisations, such as FE colleges or Clinical Commissioning Groups.