

# Loughborough Town Deal Board

24th July 2020

10.00am Virtual Meeting, Charnwood Borough Council, Southfields, Loughborough

## Agenda

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## Meeting minutes

<b>PROJECT</b>	Town Deal		
<b>DATE</b>	12 June 2020	<b>LOCATION</b>	Virtual meeting using Zoom

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Board Members</b>	
Dr Nik Kotecha (Co-Chair)	Morningside Pharmaceuticals
Cllr Jonathan Morgan (Co-Chair)	Charnwood Borough Council
Professor Tracy Bhamra	Loughborough University
Cllr Jenny Bokor	Chair of MRG
Lez Cope Newman	Loughborough BID
Jane Hunt MP	MP for Loughborough
Jo Maher	Loughborough College
David Pagett-Wright	Chair of CECG
Cllr TJ Pendleton, CC	Leicestershire County Council
Andy Reed	LLEP
Martin Traynor	Economy & Skills Group
<b>Officer Attendees</b>	
Rob Mitchell	Charnwood Borough Council
Eileen Mallon	Charnwood Borough Council
Richard Bennett	Charnwood Borough Council
Sylvia Wright	Charnwood Borough Council
Mike Roberts	Charnwood Borough Council
Chris Grace	Charnwood Borough Council
Helen Harris	Leicestershire County Council
Mandip Rai	LLEP
Peter Sutton	BEIS/Communities
David Marlow	Third Life Economics (Consultant)
Nicky Conway	Minute Taker (Charnwood Borough Council)

<b>Apologies</b>	
Tom Purnell <i>(Helen Harris acting as substitute)</i>	Leicestershire County Council

<b>Meeting Type (Team, Board or other)</b>
Board Meeting
<b>Meeting Minutes</b>
<b>2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</b>
The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record and there were no matters arising.

## Meeting minutes

### 3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest. It was noted that of the 11 board members only 7 completed register of declaration forms had been received so far. Members were encouraged to complete their forms by the next meeting.

### 4. Project Overview Update

Chris Grace (TD Project Manager) presented this update. He noted that the project was on schedule, although some of the programme deadlines had been shortened in view of the pandemic situation.

Key areas of action completed included the appointing of a consultant (David Marlow from Third Life Economics), the arrangement of meetings for the Member Reference Group and Community Engagement and Consultation Group and the initial development of a draft investment plan proposition. Future actions included working with the Consultant to bring together views from all of the consultation feedback.

**Recommendation Agreed:** That the Board notes the content of this report and that the project is on schedule to produce an Investment Plan by the end of July 2020.

### 5. Online Public Survey Outcomes (February 2020)

Chris Grace (TD Project Manager) presented this report. He stated that the public engagement exercise had been completed in February 2020 and was a 'starter for 10' rather than seeking feedback on specific project details, further in depth consultation was planned. A good response had been received and he highlighted to the Board the key outcomes as stated in the report.

Members of the Board discussed the outcomes. It was considered that the data could be skewed by responses from more local businesses than residents and that the sample size was small. It was noted it was a good test of public opinion but not the grounds for driving policy.

Board Members raised the following points:

- it was surprising that sports/fitness/leisure facilities had not scored higher, considering that the town had a sports university and was strongly associated with sports excellence. It was possible that sports and health was not evident in the themes put forward. It was noted that sports participation in Loughborough was relatively similar to other boroughs across the country in spite of the sports university.
- it would be interesting to compare the survey outcomes with further consultation responses from focus groups and different sections of the community. It would be vital to ensure all communities were encouraged to take part.
- it was noted that the survey was pre-COVID pandemic and that views may have shifted in relation to sports connectivity and skills.
- feedback on local media websites could be taken into account as the views shared were different to the survey outcomes.

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Officers highlighted that the Government had identified specific thematic areas to focus on and although there was some local discretion, they would mainly inform the project going forward.

**Recommendation Agreed:** The outcomes of the survey are noted and used as part of the overall evidence base that informs the development of the town deal investment plan.

### 6. Communications and Public Engagements Update

Mike Roberts, Communications Manager presented this update. He stated that the consultation strategy had been revised to enable adherence to the current social distancing rules and that less face-to-face sessions and more online activities would be arranged. The Town Deal website was live and all council communication channels would be utilised to reach as many areas of the community as possible, including BAME and Disabled groups. It was anticipated that MEL Research would deliver the consultation analyses by 6th July.

*Martin Traynor left the meeting.*

Board Members raised the following points:

- it was important to obtain views of visitors to the town – the online survey would be shared with the Council's partners outside the borough and Board Members were encouraged to share the link with their members/colleagues,
- Market traders could be asked to signpost the survey to their customers and signage could be displayed in the town. A market stall could be hired to invite responses to the survey.
- the voluntary sector should be included in the consultation – this would be through the Community Engagement and Consultation Group and with direct communication to individual groups.

**Recommendation Agreed:** That the Board approves the consultation plan.

### 7. Town Deal Investment Plan, Proposition Draft

Eileen Mallon introduced this report and stated that as no indication had been received from the Government that the timetable would be shifting, the investment plan was sticking to its current schedule. Further guidance was expected soon and it was anticipated to include reference to the recovery from the pandemic - this had been included in the proposition draft and David Marlow had been tasked to look at the impact of COVID to the Borough.

David Marlow showed a presentation to highlight the salient points of the proposition draft (attached to these minutes). He noted that this was not a final draft, it would be subject to further development and consultation, more field work, input from the Government and require further approval by the Board.

Peter Sutton (BEIS) provided an update of the Government's position, explaining that further guidance was expected in the next few days, but it was unlikely to change the content of this proposition draft. However, he noted that although the types of intervention the fund could support wouldn't necessarily alter, the strategic objectives and prioritisation could change due to the COVID impact. The Government would be expecting to see evidence of mitigating this

## Meeting minutes

in the plan. If the Project kept to its July submission date this was likely to put Loughborough towards the front of Town Deal submissions.

Board Members were asked to consider if the proposition draft had positioned Loughborough correctly and that the themes targeted for investment were appropriate.

*Martin Traynor re-joined the meeting.*

Board Members raised the following points:

- that they welcomed the proposition draft and considered it to be a great plan with many exciting opportunities for the town. Areas highlighted were the smart green agenda and innovation focus, provision of re-skilling hubs, accelerating the transformation of high street, and the importance of the Tri-city zone, which was perceived as a great advantage but also raised concerns with leakage to the cities of employment and resources.
- it was a great opportunity for inward investment particularly in technology and skilled people, to create a real destination to bring money and business into the town and be a centre for excellence. Students could be encouraged to use the town centre more, particularly in relation to the night-time economy, and to stay in the town after graduating.
- there was a need to change lives fundamentally for all Loughborough residents, including those who felt 'left behind'. There were significant areas of deprivation in Loughborough to be considered.
- that the provision of affordable housing and improved transport infrastructure should be considered to maximise on attracting people to Loughborough.
- that a few minor adjustments were required; in particular that Loughborough College should be mentioned as an asset and included in the investment plan, and that it stated the University closed over the summer, but all staff were in the office and most post-graduates were still in attendance during this time.
- that the Midlands Engine Vulnerability Index had identified Loughborough as vulnerable, but this could strengthen its funding position and it was noted the town was also strong in some areas.
- that as a result of the COVID pandemic, the improvement of transport services provision and cycle paths/storage facilities could increase in priority. It was important to remember that the town had challenges to resolve prior to the recent pandemic.
- whether the town should be identified as a county town, innovation city or market town. It was noted that there was a conflict in words used, and that the town should be thought of as a leader in Leicestershire, a centre of knowledge and innovation, as a market town with a university, and a high technological centre of the midlands. It was important to ensure the same message was being presented across all platforms.
- that it was vital to use the town deal funding smartly to unlock bigger projects. The Government would be publishing its 3-year economic recovery plan in July and there would be opportunities for 'shovel ready' projects to be funded / part funded using the town deal funding flexibly alongside. It was noted that board members' organisations already had portfolios of 'shovel ready' projects and it was necessary to pull these together.

Eileen Mallon and Rob Mitchell concluded the discussion by stating it was a great opportunity to develop a new shared ambition for Loughborough, to coordinate all strategies across all agencies and to use the Town Deal as a catalyst. In the short term it was necessary to identify shovel ready schemes.

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David Marlow thanked the Board for their positive feedback and noted that it would be collated with other consultation responses to progress to the next stage.

**Recommendations Agreed:**

- 1) That the Board considered the vision for Loughborough contained within the town deal investment plan proposition document and the ambition for the town as being a place of distinctive national significance and quality.
- 2) That the Board considered the town deal investment plan proposition document and agrees the key themes for projects investment, namely:
  - a) Physical regeneration and how Loughborough functions as a place
  - b) Equipping people, communities and businesses for the future
  - c) A smart, green Loughborough
  - d) Loughborough – innovation ‘city’; a global, national and regional destination.
- 3) That the Board asks officers of the Council and the retained consultants to undertake consultation on the document and its content.

**8. Date of Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for 31st July 2020 and will be a virtual meeting.

**9. AOB**

It was noted that holding events in the town centre was a great way to bring visitors into the town.

**Follow up actions**

<b>1</b>	<p><u>ITEM 6 - Communications and Public Engagements Update</u></p> <p>Board Members to share the online survey with their colleagues, students, members. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof Tracy Bhamra to circulate online survey to the President of the Students Union,</li> <li>• Jo Maher to circulate online survey to college students.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><u>ITEM 6 - Communications and Public Engagements Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob Mitchell to investigate arranging signage around the town to publicise the online survey,</li> <li>• Mike Roberts to investigate hiring a market stall to publicise the online survey to residents and visitors.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><u>ITEM 7- Town Deal Investment Plan, Proposition Draft</u></p> <p>Peter Sutton to liaise with officers and Town Deal Board members regarding further Government Guidance (when published).</p>

## LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN DEAL BOARD

24th July 2020

### Item 4 – Project Overview Update

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report gives an overview of the current status of project activity which is in place in order to produce Loughborough's Town Investment Plan.

#### Recommendations:

1. That the Board considers the content of this report and agrees that early discussions are held with the Towns Hub support function in order to develop a plan of key milestones for submitting the town investment plan before 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.
2. That Endorsement is given to the decision to submit Loughborough's Town Investment Plan in Cohort 2 by 31st October 2020.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Loughborough Town Deal Board is responsible, in conjunction with Charnwood Borough Council as Lead Council, for securing a Town Deal for Loughborough, worth up to £25 million. In 'exceptional circumstances' the Government will potentially agree a deal worth up to £50 million. Production of a Town Investment Plan and its submission to Government will complete Phase 1 of the overall Town Deal process.
- 2.2 The Board has previously met in January and June 2020 and had resolved to produce an Investment Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all elements of society and this included the ability of government to issue further Towns Fund guidance on the timeline originally planned and to get the Towns Hub function up and running. Work on the town deal has been progressing in the context of the pandemic and not being able to engage with the public, stakeholders, consultants and project sponsors in the ways which would normally be efficiently deployed.
- 2.3 Since the Board met on 20<sup>th</sup> June there have been many areas of action, much work has been undertaken and further guidance and advice has been received from the Government and its Towns Hub support function. This report highlights what has been happening.

### 3. Timelines and Milestones

- 3.1 Following the meeting of the Board on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and the approval of the investment plan proposition draft a period of consultation took place (see Item 4 below). Officers, MEL Research and Third Life Economics worked closely together to engage with people face-to-face by 'virtual' means as well as promoting the online questionnaire. For example, the Council held its first ever Zoom-based 'coffee and a chat' session where there was no agenda and attendees could ask whatever they wanted about the town deal and put forward their ideas and thoughts.
- 3.2 Stakeholders and the wider public were asked in June to put forward project proposals which could potentially be suitable for the investment plan. This was via email to all the stakeholders on the Community Engagement Group, the town deal website, one-to-one contacts, social media publicity, a press release, the professional networks of officers and the Board and focus groups. Any organisation or individual with a project proposal was asked to complete a project proforma to be returned to David Marlow / Chris Grace by no later than 10<sup>th</sup> July. Item 5 on this Agenda deals with details of the project proposals received.
- 3.3 On 13<sup>th</sup> July a decision was taken by the Board's Co-Chairs that it was prudent to change the target date by which Loughborough's Town Investment Plan will be produced and submitted. This was explained in a letter sent to all Board Members by the Board's Co-Chairs and which is attached as the Appendix to this report.
- 3.4 In a meeting with ARUP (the consultancy which is leading the support provided to town deal locations by the Towns Hub) it became clear that that they [and their associate consultants across many fields of expertise] can provide much useful advice in helping towns develop a strong investment plan. 'Check and challenge' sessions and other support mechanisms will enable a robustness of submission which can prevent delay further down the line of the overall town deals process. Officers are awaiting further contact from ARUP to arrange check and challenge sessions and to agree a package of 'support' which will act as a critical friend function as, collectively, we continue to development Loughborough's plan.
- 3.5 Once ARUP has made further contact (which is expected w/c 20<sup>th</sup> July) it will be possible to draw up a proposed new timeline and list of key milestones / meetings to ensure the Town Investment Plan is submitted in Cohort 2 (see Section 9 below) by October 31<sup>st</sup>, at the very latest. The table below is updated against the key milestones which had been identified for the originally intended July submission.

Objective / Activity	Deliverable	Indicative Programme	Responsibility
Inception Meeting (virtual)	Contract signed off	w/c 20 April 2020	Consultant / CBC <b>COMPLETE</b>
Desktop analysis and engagement with stakeholders, other consultants and CBC officers. Evaluation of projects ideas.		22 April – 22 May 2020	Consultant(s) <b>COMPLETE</b>
Draft Investment Plan Proposition submitted to CBC	Draft Investment Plan Proposition Document	1 June 2020	Consultant <b>COMPLETE</b>
Draft Investment Plan Proposition considered by Board for approval		12 June 2020	CBC <b>COMPLETE</b>
Consultation seeking comments from Board, stakeholders, Member Reference Group, Community Engagement Group and wider public		15 June – 3 July	Consultant(s) / CBC <b>COMPLETE</b>
Revisions to and development of Investment Plan document, informed by the consultation feedback		6 July – 16 July 2020	Consultant <b>COMMENCED</b>
Proposed final Investment Plan document submitted to CBC officers for comment	Proposed Final Draft Investment Plan	17 July 2020	Consultant <b>COMMENCED</b>
Presentation of Final Investment Plan to Board for approval	Approved Investment Plan	31 July 2020 <b>NEW DATE TO BE CONFIRMED; NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 2020</b>	Consultant / CBC

#### 4. The Board

- 4.1 The Board previously met on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and the minutes and matters arising are included at Item 2 on this Agenda.
- 4.2 The Register of Interests declarations for Board Members have been published on the Loughborough Town Deal website.

## **5. Member Reference Group**

- 5.1 The Member Reference Group met on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and 20<sup>th</sup> July. Notes of the latter meeting are not available at the time of the drafting of this report but the Group's Chair, Cllr Bokor, will verbally report to the Board the Group's views and any agreed motions.
- 5.2 Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> June meeting have been published and circulated. A key decision of the Group was that the Board be asked to consider deferral of submission of the Town Investment Plan beyond July 2020, should it feel that more time was needed to ensure the working-up of a robust plan.

## **6. Community Engagement Group**

- 6.1 The Community Engagement Group met in two sessions on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June and in one session on 17<sup>th</sup> July. Notes of the latter meeting are not available at the time of the drafting of this report but the Group's Chair, David Pagett-Wright, will verbally report to the Board the Group's views.

## **7. Investment Plan**

- 7.1 Consultant David Marlow of Third Life Economics produced the investment plan proposition draft for consultation purposes and has also been working with a wide range of organisations and individuals to identify projects which could form the foundations of the town investment plan. He has been, and continues, to meet both virtually and [since lockdown easing] physically with organisations that are putting forward project ideas for the investment plan.
- 7.2 David Marlow will be attending the Board meeting and will present an update on the very latest state-of-play regarding projects and the production of the town investment plan at Item 5.

## **8. Communications and Public Engagement**

- 8.1 The town deal website was launched in June and can be viewed at [www.loughborough.co.uk](http://www.loughborough.co.uk)
- 8.2 See Item 4 for other progress regarding public engagement and the outcomes of the public consultation exercise regarding the investment plan proposition draft.

## 9. Government Guidance

- 9.1 Town deal locations received further Towns Fund guidance from the Government in mid-June. It had originally been due early this year but was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 9.2 The guidance contained nothing which suggested Loughborough has been taking a wrong approach to our town deal process. Indeed, it confirmed our belief that Loughborough's approach is very much consistent with the objectives of the Towns Fund.
- 9.3 The guidance contained an informative that town deal locations would have a choice to submit their Town Investment Plan in one of three cohorts ending July 31<sup>st</sup>, October 31<sup>st</sup> or January 31<sup>st</sup>. Previously guidance had simply referred to 'summer 2020' as a deadline for submission.
- 9.4 The guidance also requires town deal locations to take account of the local economic impact of Covid-19 and to demonstrate in the town investment plan how our projects will help address the issues arising from the pandemic.

## 10. Risks

- 10.1 The following risks have been identified:

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
1	Ongoing Covid-19 regulations prevent face-to-face group meetings	Difficult to exchange knowledge and views	Increased use of emails, phone calls and video conferencing
2	Community does not engage in the process	Failure to gather the knowledge and experience of those living in the town	Ensure the communications strategy is followed
3	Absences from work caused by Covid-19 related illness and / or self-isolation / quarantine	Delays in progressing project work	Ensuring close working between officers and consultants and sharing of access to documents where possible and appropriate

## Appendix

Appendix - Cohort Decision letter to Board



Southfield Road, Loughborough,  
Leicestershire. LE11 2TT

Ask for: Chris Grace

Direct Line: 01509 634534

Email:

Christopher.grace@charnwood.gov.uk

14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Town Deal Board Member

### **Loughborough Town Deal Investment Plan**

You will have seen the letter which was sent to MHCLG late yesterday afternoon advising that it has become necessary to submit our Town Investment Plan after July 31<sup>st</sup> and therefore in Cohort 2 of the three cohorts offered by Government. We would like to explain the background to this and why it was not possible to consult with fellow Board members on this occasion.

As you are aware, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, all of us have consistently been working hard towards producing the investment plan by 31<sup>st</sup> July. That remained the case until yesterday, when it became clear that in order to submit a plan which stands the best chance of success more time is needed.

Only in the last week did the Government's Towns Hub support mechanism become active. As soon as was possible, we met with ARUP, the consultancy leading on providing support and the 'check and challenge function'. That meeting was very useful. We were advised that very few towns will be submitting investment plans in Cohort 1 (expected to be less than 18); ARUP stressed that it is important that investment plans are robust because they will be subject to a testing evaluation and that there was risk associated with submitting in Cohort 1 if all aspects of the plan were not fully developed.

Locally, we had set a deadline of last Friday for all project proposals to be submitted to David Marlow / Chris Grace. Unfortunately, as Friday progressed it became clear that:

- a variety of project sponsors were going to miss that deadline,
- that one major strategic partner would not be submitting any project proposals,
- and that some of the proformas returned to us were relatively weak and needed further development work.

The weekend was spent trying to address the above issues but by late Monday morning it became clear we are not, yet, in a position to put forward a plan which does justice to the ambition that we all have for Loughborough.

It was a requirement to notify Towns Fund officials by yesterday afternoon which cohort we would be utilising. Accordingly, time was against us and it prevented full consultation with the Board. Both of us met with officers and David Marlow to be briefed on the state of play. In the context of the discussion we had had with ARUP and the state of play re. projects we decided that it is in the best interests of the town to submit in Cohort 2 and that the town will not be at any disadvantage in doing so. Indeed, it will give us time to make use of the Towns Hub support function and to develop project proposals further with partners.

We suggest that this course of action provides an opportunity to work-up an excellent plan and one which might indeed enable us to secure more than £25 million.

We look forward to providing further information to the Board and being able to have a full discussion at the forthcoming Board meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July.

Yours sincerely

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is 'Nik Kotecha' and the second is 'Jonathan Morgan'.

Dr Nik Kotecha, Co-Chair, Loughborough Town Deal Board  
Cllr Jonathan Morgan, Co-Chair, Loughborough Town Deal Board

## LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN DEAL BOARD

24<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### Item 5 – Public Consultation Activity and Outcomes

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper provides a review of the public consultation exercises carried out for the Loughborough Town Deal investment plan proposition and presents the consultation report prepared by MEL Research.

#### 2. Recommendations:

1. That the outcomes of the public consultation are welcomed as a useful part of the town deal process;
2. That Third Life Economics utilises the consultation outcomes in formulating the drafting of the Town Investment Plan.
3. That the draft consultation outcomes report produced by MEL Research is approved as the formal consultation report which will inform the Town Investment Plan.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1. An original consultation and engagement strategy for the town deal process was amended due to the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic and the difficulty of holding public-facing events. The timescale was also compressed.
- 3.2. MEL Research was commissioned in order to support consultation exercises.

#### 4. Consultation on the Investment Plan Proposition

- 4.1 The consultation ran between 16<sup>th</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020. This was a shorter timescale than originally envisaged in January but necessary. The pandemic has severely impacted available resources and therefore capacity to conduct a consultation. The Board had also indicated its intent to submit a bid before the end of July
- 4.2 As face-to-face events could not be held, alternative approaches were used to engage in meaningful conversations as part of the consultation. They included:

- Virtual Chat – this was a Zoom meeting which was promoted on all communications channels and available for anyone to sign up to. Participants were invited to talk to officers directly involved in the project. In total 30 people signed up for the chat and 14 took part. Following a brief presentation, the participants, all members of the public, asked questions and gave their views on the Town Deal and Loughborough in general. It is the first time the Council has held an open virtual meeting like this.
- Six online focus groups were held for:
  - businesses
  - young professionals / couples
  - households with children (pre-school and/or older families), single parents
  - empty nesters / retired households
  - young people and students aged 16 years and over
  - non-Loughborough residents
- Two Community Engagement Group Meetings – stakeholders took part in interactive sessions to seek views on the investment plan proposition

4.3. 'Harder to reach' groups across the town were directly encouraged to complete the online survey.

4.4. The consultation was heavily promoted across multiple communication channels, including the media and social media, and by partners. A breakdown of the channels used is contained in the table below.

	Channel	Metric	
1	Community Engagement Group Meetings	Two held, June 16 and 17	
2	Focus groups	6 held	
3	Virtual Chat via Zoom	14 members of the public attended and asked a range of questions and made comments	
4	Town Deal website	1,152 Page views	
5	Media	Press releases	
		Consultation launched press release	16.06.20
		Time running our press release	30.06.20
		Coverage	

		Loughborough Echo	17.06.20		
		The Business Desk	17.06.20		
		Leicester Mercury	19.06.20		
		BBC Radio Leicester	25.06.20		
		Loughborough Echo	01.07.20		
6	Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 8 posts on corporate Facebook</li> <li>○ Most viewed post reached 13,965 people, received 50 comments, 194 link clicks (supported by small, paid-for boost)</li> <li>○ Other posts reached 3,099; 3,154; 1,531 and then smaller numbers</li> <li>○ The consultation also appeared on other local Facebook pages</li> </ul>			
7	Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 20 posts on corporate account</li> <li>○ Most viewed post reached 2,517 with 28 link clicks</li> </ul>			
8	Linked In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 posts</li> <li>○ Reached a total of 763 with 18 link clicks</li> </ul>			
9	Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One post</li> <li>○ Reached 384 with 13 likes and one link click</li> </ul>			
11	Council email bulletins	Email topic	Date		
		Subscribers	Open rate %		
		Charnwood Now	16.06.20	6,484	32
		Business Bulletin	17.06.20	3,295	20
		Community News	17.06.20	3,748	23
		Charnwood Now	20.06.20	6,498	21
		Charnwood Now	24.06.20	6,544	22
		Business Bulletin	25.06.20	3,332	22
		Charnwood Now	25.06.20	5,553	22
		Your Homes Matter	26.06.20	2,792	20
Community News	27.06.20	3,802	21		
Charnwood Now	02.07.20	6,603	40		
12	Printed materials	Posters displayed around the town centre			
13	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared by partners on social media and other channels</li> <li>• Email to Members</li> </ul>			

258 Respondents completed the online survey.

## 5. Consultation Outcomes

5.1. A report on the outcomes of the consultation has been produced by MEL Research and is shown at the Appendix 1 to this report.

5.2. Key findings from the consultation exercises were as follows:

### **Views around ambition for the Town**

- A majority of the focus group participants felt that shorter-term improvements to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Loughborough communities and businesses was much more important than focusing on building its profile and reputation in the medium to long-term.
- Interestingly, respondents who completed the online survey took a more balanced view, with an average of 54% suggesting a focus on medium and longer-term projects and 46% supporting a focus on shorter-term projects.

### **Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis**

- Most people agreed with the SWOT analysis that was included in the draft proposition in both the focus groups and the online survey.
- The SWOT analysis was explored in detail during the focus groups and indicated the following:
  - The University, the town's location and heritage (e.g. Great Central Railway and the Bell Foundry) were considered key strengths of the town.
  - In terms of weaknesses, people commented on the appearance of the town, feeling unsafe (particularly after dark) and poor accessibility (e.g. distance from train station to town centre).
  - Strengthening links between the University and employers was considered beneficial to help with future innovation.
  - Over-development and loss of green space was deemed as a potential threat.
- Feedback was also provided on how the Town Deal could be used to benefit residents and the wider community. People mentioned support to help them overcome the various challenges with COVID-19 (such as redundancy support, lower business rates) but also ensuring the town was a more attractive place to live, work and visit.
- All residents and businesses that took part in the consultation were provided with a copy of the draft vision statement and asked to give their initial views. Feelings were mixed. Some (particularly students) gave positive views and thought it was ambitious but realistic. Residents and businesses generally felt it needed to be shorter, more specific, and easier to understand.

### **Use of Town Deal Funding**

The majority of participants felt that the funding should be spent on large, new infrastructure projects which focus on the town centre and urban core.

### **Draft Investment Plan**

- The Investment Plan explored four key themes; Physical regeneration; Equipping people, communities and businesses for the future; a 'Smart,

Green' Loughborough; and Loughborough as an 'innovation city, global national and regional destination.

- A high proportion (68%) of survey respondents agreed with the Council's overall approach to formulating the Town Deal programme (e.g. focusing on physical regeneration, etc)
- Whilst people felt all four themes were important, physical regeneration and achieving a Smart, Green Loughborough were considered vital for future generations.

5.3 The outcomes of the public consultation will be used to contribute to the work which is taking place to formulate the Town Investment Plan. The views of the Board as to whether there are any aspects of the consultation exercises outcomes which warrant particular attention in deciding the final emphasis of the plan, are welcomed.

5.4 During the consultation period an open letter to the Board [in email format] was received from a member of the public and this is attached below at Appendix 2.

**Appendix 1 - MEL Research report**

**Appendix 2 - Mr Dakin email open letter**



**Loughborough Town Deal**

**Charnwood Borough Council**

**Draft Report  
July 2020**

## Project details

<b>Project title</b>	Loughborough Town Deal Consultation
<b>Client</b>	Charnwood Borough Council
<b>Project number</b>	PR20034
<b>Author</b>	Clare Rapkins, Associate Director
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# Executive Summary

## Background

In late 2019, Loughborough was invited to submit an Investment Plan to bid for Town Deal funding from the Government's £3.6bn Town Fund. The Town Deal (TD) programme *seeks "to increase economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture"*. In total, 100 towns and cities around the country have been invited to bid for funding. The Town Deal offers an opportunity to shape the future of Loughborough by supporting local communities and businesses.

A Loughborough Town Deal Board has been formed and is responsible for drawing up a Town Investment Plan which will provide a vision for building on the town's unique strengths to transform its economic growth prospects.

M·E·L Research were commissioned to undertake a consultation with residents living in Loughborough and the surrounding areas (such as Leicester, Melton Mowbray etc) and local businesses. Their feedback will help the Council produce a full Investment Plan compliant with Government guidance and expectations by July 31, 2020.

## Methodology

Charnwood Borough Council commissioned M·E·L Research to conduct a mixed methods consultation using qualitative and quantitative techniques. We delivered six online focus groups between 16<sup>th</sup> June and 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020. To aid recruitment to the online focus groups, M·E·L Research leased email addresses and telephone contact data (with the exception of the focus group with students) from a GDPR compliant consumer database provider, Sample Answers. Students were recruited directly via Loughborough College and Loughborough University. Charnwood Borough Council also promoted the focus groups on their website, via social media and by notifying their email subscribers that the focus groups were taking place.

A recruitment screener questionnaire was developed to ensure the right mix and number of participants were recruited for the focus groups and that participants were residents of Loughborough (with the exception of the non-residents group). In total, 28 residents, 11 businesses and 11 students took part in the focus groups, plus 5 non-Loughborough residents.

M·E·L Research also designed an online survey to help quantify the key findings from the qualitative research. The online survey went live on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and closed at midnight on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020. In total, 258 responses were obtained. It should be noted that online survey was open to anyone with an interest in commenting on the Investment Plan. Therefore, the results should be treated as a 'snapshot' of views only as they may not reflect the views and be representative of all residents and businesses living in Loughborough or surrounding areas.

## Key findings

### Views around ambition for the Town

- The majority of focus group participants felt that shorter-term improvements to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Loughborough communities and businesses was much more important than focusing on building its profile and reputation in the medium to long-term.
- Interestingly, respondents who completed the online survey took a more balanced view, with an average of 54% suggesting a focus on medium and longer-term projects and 46% supporting a focus on shorter-term projects.

### Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis

- The majority of people agreed with the SWOT analysis that was included in the draft preposition in both the focus groups and the online survey.
- The SWOT analysis was explored in detail during the focus groups and indicated the following:
  - The University, its location and heritage (e.g. Great Central Railway and the Bell Foundry) were considered key strengths of the town.
  - In terms of weaknesses, people commented on the appearance of the town, feeling unsafe (particularly after dark) and poor accessibility (e.g. distance from train station to town centre).
  - Strengthening links between the University and employers was considered beneficial to help with future innovation.
  - Over-development and loss of green space was deemed as a potential threat.
- Feedback was also provided on how the Town Deal could be used to benefit residents and the wider community. People mentioned support to help them overcome the various challenges with COVID-19 (such as redundancy support, lower business rates) but also ensuring the town was a more attractive place to live, work and visit.
- All residents and businesses that took part in the consultation were provided with a copy of the draft vision statement and asked to give their initial views. Feelings were mixed. Some (particularly students) gave positive views and thought it was ambitious but realistic. Residents and businesses generally felt it needed to be shorter, more specific, and easier to understand.

### Use of Town Deal Funding

- The majority of participants felt that the funding should be spent on large, new infrastructure projects which focus on the town centre and urban core.

## Draft Investment Plan

- The Investment Plan explored four key themes; Physical regeneration; Equipping people, communities and businesses for the future; a ‘Smart, Green’ Loughborough; and Loughborough as an ‘innovation city, global national and regional destination.
- A high proportion (68%) of survey respondents agreed with the Council’s overall approach to formulating the Town Deal programme (e.g. focusing on physical regeneration, etc)
- Whilst people felt all four themes were important, physical regeneration and achieving a Smart, Green Loughborough were considered vital for future generations.

## Conclusions

The consultation results highlighted that residents, businesses and students were primarily pre-occupied with shorter-term measures, reflected in recovering from the associated impacts of COVID-19. However, many in the online survey also recognised the need to look to the future and felt the Town Deal should focus on the medium and longer-term. As such, to make Loughborough a ‘destination of choice’ for future generations, people felt the Town Deal needed to capitalise on the things that made the town unique, such as its University, location (proximity to other cities and rural areas) and long-standing heritage.

Respondents also highlighted the town’s weaknesses, suggesting the town centre was looking ‘tired- and run down, had little choice of retail and food outlets, and was considered by some to be unsafe at night. Several consultees also mentioned that employment opportunities were also limited (especially as the University was considered the only major employer in the town) and graduates typically moved away to find employment opportunities.

Another key element of the Investment Plan Proposition was the future ‘Vision’ for the town. This received mixed views with some stating they were in favour of the statement as it was ambitious but realistic. Others were less convinced and felt it needed to be shorter, more specific, and simpler to understand. Residents and businesses also questioned its focus and felt too much emphasis was placed on its sporting heritage, but too little on future economic growth and recovery.

When looking at the draft Investment Plan, it was clear that helping residents and businesses overcome the challenges of COVID-19 (e.g. redundancy support, lowering business rates etc) was key in the short term. However, looking to the future, people were also concerned about the environment (Smart, Green Loughborough) and making sure Loughborough was a more attractive plan to live, work and do business (physical regeneration)

Overall, most respondents support the plan. Those in the focus groups wanted to see the document written in ‘Plainer English’ as they felt it was too corporate and, because of the language used, much of it did not immediately resonate with them.

# Introduction

## Background

In late 2019, Loughborough was invited to submit an Investment Plan to bid for Town Deal funding from the Government's £3.6bn Town Fund. The Town Deal (TD) programme *seeks "to increase economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture"*. In total, 100 towns and cities around the country have been invited to bid for funding. The Town Deal offers an opportunity to shape the future of Loughborough by supporting local communities and businesses.

A Loughborough Town Deal Board has been formed and involves representatives from Charnwood Borough Council (CBC), Loughborough University, Loughborough College, Love Loughborough, Leicestershire County Council, the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Charnwood Together Economy and Skills Group, local businesses, and Loughborough MP Jane Hunt. The Board is responsible for drawing up a Town Investment Plan which will provide a vision for building on the town's unique strengths to transform its economic growth prospects.

M·E·L Research were commissioned to undertake a consultation with residents living in Loughborough and the surrounding areas (such as Leicester, Melton Mowbray etc) and local businesses. Their feedback will help the Council produce a full Investment Plan compliant with Government guidance and expectations by July 31, 2020.

## Methodology

Charnwood Borough Council commissioned M·E·L Research to conduct a mixed methods consultation using qualitative and quantitative methods.

### Qualitative research

We delivered the following six online focus groups between 16<sup>th</sup> June and 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020. To understand how views differed by life stage (and age), we organised separate sessions for each as shown in the following table.

Online focus group	Date and time
Group 1: Students	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 / 2:30pm-3:30pm
Group 2: Households with children	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 / 6:00pm-7:00pm
Group 3: Retired/'empty nesters'	17 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 2:30pm-3:30pm
Group 4: Singles/professionals	17 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 / 6:00pm-7:00pm
Group 5: Loughborough businesses	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 / 5:30pm-6:30pm
Group 6: Non-Loughborough residents	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 / 6:00pm-7:00pm

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, all focus groups were delivered virtually using 'The Clickroom' platform. Participants logged onto the platform using their PC or tablet.

In addition, CBC delivered a separate virtual session using Zoom on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. This session was open to everyone (including those who were not able to attend the online focus groups delivered by M·E·L Research). Please note: the findings from this session are not included in this report.



## Quantitative research

M·E·L Research designed an online survey to help quantify the key findings from the qualitative research. The online survey went live on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and closed at midnight on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020. In total, 258 responses were obtained (Please refer to Appendix C for profile of respondents). It should be noted that online survey was open to anyone with an interest in commenting on the Investment Plan. Therefore, the results should be treated as a 'snapshot' of views only and may not reflect the views and be representative of all residents and businesses living in Loughborough or surrounding areas.

The online survey included questions on the following topics:

- Future ambition (allocation of projects/activity to improve profile/reputation or support shorter term economic and social recovery from COVID-19)
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Loughborough
- Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Future vision of Loughborough
- How could the Town Deal Investment be spent?
- Views on the Draft Investment Plan's thematic areas (Physical regeneration, Equipping people, communities and businesses for the future, a 'Smart, Green' Loughborough and Loughborough as an 'innovation city, global national and regional destination)

## Recruitment – Online Focus Groups

To aid recruitment to the online focus groups, M·E·L Research leased email addresses and telephone contact data (with the exception of the focus group with students) from a GDPR compliant consumer database provider, Sample Answers. Students were recruited directly via Loughborough college and Loughborough University.

Charnwood Borough Council also promoted the focus groups on their website, via social media and by notifying their email subscribers that the focus groups were taking place.

A recruitment screener questionnaire was developed to ensure the right mix and number of participants were recruited for the focus groups and that participants were residents of Loughborough (with the exception of the non-residents group).

Recruited participants were sent an email to confirm the focus group details (e.g. time, background reading etc), that the focus group would be transcribed and a 'thank you' gift (£30 Love2Shop E-Gift card) would be sent out after the focus group. In total, 28 residents, 11 businesses and 11 students took part in the focus groups, plus 5 non-Loughborough residents. Please refer to Appendix C for a profile of participants.

This qualitative research was conducted with a small number of participants, in differing age groups and life stages. By its very nature, qualitative research does not necessarily provide representative views of the wider target audience as depth of understanding is more important than statistical robustness. As such the qualitative findings provide an indication of people's views and perceptions, which should be considered alongside the statistical results from the quantitative survey.

## Analysis and reporting

Transcripts from the six residents' focus groups were generated by the online Click Room software, with prior permission obtained from participants and with assurances provided on anonymity. These transcriptions have been reviewed alongside the moderator's notes, with key themes extracted and participant quotes used to highlight key points and findings.

For the quantitative survey results, owing to the rounding of numbers, percentages displayed visually on graphs and charts within this report may not always add up to 100% and may differ slightly when compared with the text. Where there are differences, the figures provided in the text should always be used. Where figures do not appear in a graph or chart, these are suppressed as equating to 3% or less. The 'base' or 'n=' figure referred to in each chart and table is the total number of respondents responding to the question with a valid response.

When looking at the analysis of the open-ended questions, a single comment could have contained more than one theme and as such the total presented in the table may be higher than the number of responses.

The consultation findings below are presented in the order they appear in the Loughborough Town Deal – Investment Plan Proposition May 2020. Therefore, they may not appear in the same order as the online survey or focus group topic guide.

# Findings

This section details the key findings from the six online focus groups and online survey. The findings are presented in following order:

- Ambition for the Town
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Future vision for Loughborough
- Draft Investment Plan (including how the funding could be spent)

## Ambition for the town

The first section of the ‘Loughborough Town Deal Investment Plan Proposition’ document asked residents, businesses, and students to provide feedback on their views about the ambition for the town. All participants who took part in the consultation (online survey or focus group) were presented with the following two statements and asked to state which one they felt was the most important to them.

- 1) Having the Town Deal build on Loughborough’s regional, national, and global county profile and reputation with a medium to long term outlook.**
- 2) Improving the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Loughborough communities and businesses – especially accelerating recovery and rebooting the economy and social life after the COVID-19 lockdown?**

The majority of focus group participants felt **statement two** was the most important, and when asked for their reasons, most participants felt the statement resonated with them more at this point in time. Uncertainty for what the future had in store was a key aspect here. Whilst most attendees recognised the need to plan for the longer term, their current focus was dealing with the short term (and overcoming the challenges associated with the COVID-19 outbreak). Typical comments included:

“At the moment, I don’t think people can make long term plans. The situation is very uncertain.”

“I think the second one is the most important. There will need to be a huge effort to help the town recover.”

“I think the second option relates more directly with the people of Loughborough. It means something to people.”

A number of participants felt the two statements were interlinked (but part 2 should come first) to help support economic growth and ultimately building the future profile and reputation of Loughborough.

Typical comments included:

“I agree we need a mix of both... short term to get things going, but medium term is vital if we are to have sustained success and growth.”

“I think option 2 needs to happen for there to be any chance of option 1 happening in the future.”

A similar question was also included in the online survey. Respondents were asked to state what proportion of activity, based on four activity bands, should be allocated to focusing on the ‘*global, national, regional and county profile and reputation for the medium and longer term projects*’ and what proportion should be allocated to focusing on ‘*shorter term economic and social recovery from COVID-19*’.

Interestingly, the respondents who completed the online survey took a more balanced view, with medium and longer-term projects achieving an average score of 54%. This compares to an average score of 46% for shorter-term projects. Figures 1a and 1b below also shows the distribution of scores for each of the two options.

**Figure 1a: Short term projects**

Activity Range	Count	Percentage
0-25%	55	21%
26-50%	115	45%
51-75%	65	25%
76-100%	21	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>AVERAGE:</b>		<b>46%</b>

**Figure 1b: Medium and longer term projects**

Activity Range	Count	Percentage
0-25%	25	10%
26-50%	110	43%
51-75%	83	32%
76-100%	40	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>AVERAGE:</b>		<b>54%</b>

## SWOT analysis of Loughborough

The second section of the proposition document focused on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Loughborough.

### Strengths

Participants who took part in the online focus groups were asked to discuss the strengths of Loughborough. The most common response across all focus groups was the ‘University’ as it is rated in the top 10 and is well-known for sports. It is also said to be one of the town’s largest employers and helps to create a more diverse population (e.g. more young people) in the town.

“Loughborough has a diverse population. There is a mixture of traditional locals, people who have moved here, current and ex-students etc.”

Another key strength of Loughborough, highlighted by participants, was its location. There were several mentions of its close proximity to other major cities in the East Midlands region (including Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham).

Some residents and local businesses also stated the relatively short journey time (80 minutes) and frequency of trains to Central London which they find beneficial for businesses but also for better employment opportunities. Despite its proximity to urban areas, some participants also found the green space of surrounding areas, such as Charnwood Forest and Hills, appealing.

Finally, a small proportion of residents also highlighted the heritage/history associated with the town as a strength. In particular, they cited the Great Central Railway, the Bell Foundry, and the market as popular visitor attractions.

## Weaknesses

The online focus groups also discussed the weaknesses of Loughborough.

Several participants felt the town centre was looking run down and untidy, with lots of graffiti and litter, and a lack of street maintenance and cleaning. They also mentioned that the retail mix in the town centre was a concern, with too many empty shops, limited variety of retail and food options, with too many charity or coffee shops, as shown in the following quotes:

*“The town centre is becoming unattractive with broken pavements and the usual chewing gum problem.”*

*“I would like to see more shops and less vacant buildings within the town centre.”*

*“The town centre is poor, there is next to no shopping.”*

*“There’s too many charity and coffee shops in the town centre. There’s nothing else.”*

A small number of participants also mentioned feeling unsafe at night in Loughborough town centre (particularly non-Loughborough residents). They felt that homelessness, drug abuse and other forms of ASB were particular issues that needed addressing. One of the non-Loughborough participants said, *“The last few times I went to Loughborough at night, it felt a little rough.”*

Some residents and businesses mentioned the lack of accessibility in the town centre as some roads were said to be cut off from others and the railway station was a 20-minute walk to the town centre. They also felt traffic congestion was an issue in some parts, such as Epinal Way. Others suggested that Loughborough town centre may benefit from a programme of works that are similar to Leicester Mayor’s ‘Connecting Leicester’ Scheme, which they said focuses on making Leicester City Centre a more accessible place for cyclists, pedestrians and those using public transport.

A few students and residents felt Loughborough needed a wider choice of major employers (apart from the University) to encourage more graduates to stay and not re-locate to other cities (such as London) for employment. A student who attended one of the focus groups said, *“Retaining University talent is the weakness I feel, we need to incentivise students to stay.”*

Whilst opportunities were not specifically covered during the focus groups, participants were asked to provide suggestions on how the Town Deal could be used to benefit the people and communities (including deprived areas) who chose to call Loughborough their home.

The most common theme that came out across the six focus groups was making the town a more attractive place to live, work and visit. They said this could be achieved by planting more greenery/trees, opening more upmarket and independent shops (rather than 'clone-town' high-street chains), developing its cultural and events offer (e.g. by holding an annual festivals, live music) and by creating social spaces (such as an eating quarter) where communities could congregate.

Some participants mentioned the Town Deal could help encourage new or more businesses to re-locate to the town. This would also help improve future job prospects for residents and students. The Town Deal may also help new or existing businesses build stronger links with the University or college by enhancing/creating Science or Technology Hubs for example.

Examples of the types of comments relating to the above themes were:

*“More greenery/colour is needed in the centre to liven the area up.”*

*“An expansion of businesses is important as it can also improve job opportunities.”*

Some participants also mentioned specific ideas to help the disadvantaged communities in Loughborough. These included: better schools, improved education on career paths/opportunities, funding initiatives to help get people back to work (such as free skills sessions/workshops, volunteering or subsidised business rents) and increased funding for local charities to help tackle homelessness and ASB issues.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of Loughborough was also explored in the online survey. All respondents who completed the survey were presented with a summary of the Council's SWOT analysis (see Figure 2 overleaf). It should be noted that the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats outlined below are recognised as not the only ones facing Loughborough, but the Town Deal Board has considered them to be the most significant in helping to develop their Town Deal strategy.

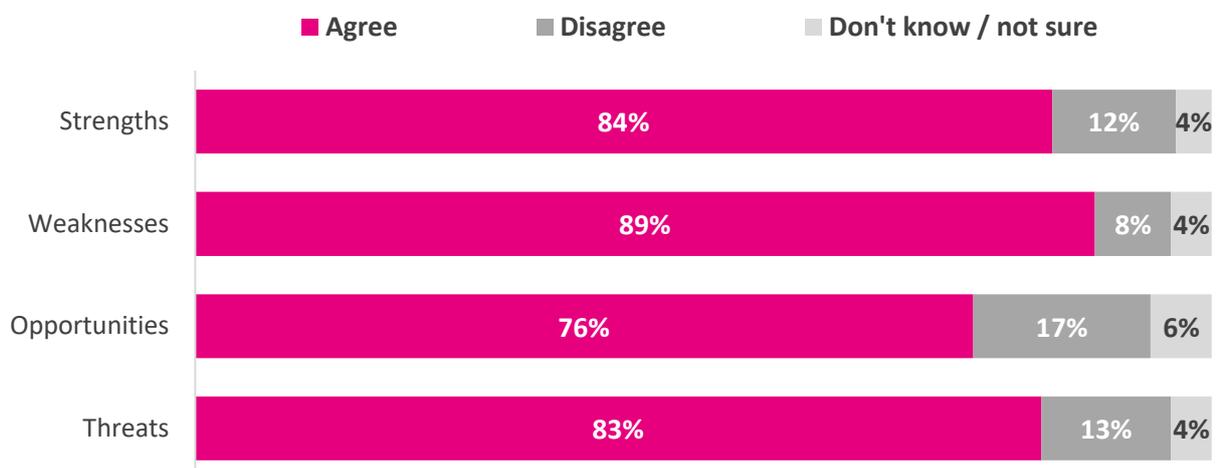
Figure 2: Summary of SWOT analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger, higher skills, better jobs and growing faster than regional and county averages</li> <li>• Global quality university with relevant assets and capabilities for future town development &amp; wellbeing</li> <li>• Superb international gateway, national and regional location and access</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of out-commuting for some higher earners, and of seasonality when university is closed</li> <li>• Town centre needs continual evolution and pace of development has sometimes been slow</li> <li>• Four central neighbourhoods on edge of town centre are among most-deprived 20% in England</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage University, Enterprise Zones and other assets and relevant capabilities to make Loughborough a genuine global, national and regional knowledge hub</li> <li>• Use Town Deal and associated opportunities to make Loughborough work well as a cohesive, inclusive place</li> <li>• Reasonable suite of long-standing plans and projects which can be made investment-ready relatively swiftly</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential national and regional post-lockdown economy reduces domestic demand, levels of private investment, and appetite for innovation – with specific university dimensions that particularly impact the town</li> <li>• Business closures and/or rationalisation increase need for reskilling and enterprise support beyond local capacity and resources to deliver</li> <li>• Social distancing and new public health requirements accelerate contraction of high street and reduces footfall in the medium term</li> </ul>

Figure 3 indicates that the majority of respondents agreed with the Strengths (84%), Weaknesses (89%), Opportunities (76%) and Threats (83%) that the Council identified in their draft Proposition document.

Figure 3: Agreement with SWOT Analysis

Base: 252-255



It is clear from the survey results that respondents recognised similar strengths (University), weaknesses (need for regeneration/development) opportunities (building stronger links with the University) and threats to those identified during the focus groups.

The online survey then asked respondents to suggest other strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that the Council may wish to consider. All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 46 respondents provided a valid comment. Please note, a single comment could have contained more than one theme and as such the total presented in the table may be higher than the number of responses.

Looking at the strengths first, the most common themes were related to the distinctive town heritage (19 mentions, 31%), this was closely followed by its location (15 mentions, 25%).

**Figure 4: Strengths of Loughborough**

Strengths - Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
Distinctive town heritage/town centre	19	31%
Location (access to green areas, other parts of region etc)	15	25%
University is an asset/strong educational offer	9	15%
Existing town planning/infrastructure (compact town, accessible etc)	9	15%
Culturally diverse community/community spirit	6	10%
Good transport links	3	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

Looking at the Loughborough's weaknesses, a total of 89 respondents provided a valid comment. The most common themes related to a lack of shops and things to do in Loughborough (17 mentions, 11%). This was closely followed by poor transport links (14 mentions, 9%) and lack of a community spirit particularly between residents and students (14 mentions, 9%).

**Figure 5: Weaknesses of Loughborough**

Weaknesses - Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
Limited variety of shops, leisure activities, facilities etc	17	11%
Poor transport links	14	9%
Lack of community spirit/poor cohesion and inclusion	14	9%
Lack of opportunities and jobs/lack of businesses	12	8%
Town not attractive enough (shortage of open spaces, empty shops etc)	12	8%
Issues with traffic and parking	11	7%
Too much reliance on the University, seasonality)	8	5%
Poor cycle paths/footpaths/transport infrastructure etc	8	5%
Poor town planning/infrastructure	8	5%

Do not agree with local policies and visions	8	5%
Lack of available/affordable housing	7	5%
Too much ASB	6	4%
Too much student accommodation/too many students	5	3%
Lack of support for homeless and vulnerable	5	3%
Over development/Loss or lack of green spaces/Environment issues	4	3%
Not enough support for local independent businesses	3	2%
Lack of school places/limited education opportunities	3	2%
Negative views/perceptions of the town	2	1%
Unable to retain graduates	2	1%
Other	4	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100%</b>

Looking at future opportunities for Loughborough, a total of 56 respondents provided a valid comment. The most common themes related to increasing investment/innovation in the town centre by partnering with the University (14 mentions, 15%). This was closely followed by developing or encouraging 'green' initiatives (13 mentions, 14%), improving the appearance of the town (12 mentions, 13%) and taking advantage of the town's location/proximity to green space (12 mentions, 13%). Each of these factors were also believed to help increase the popularity of the town during the focus groups.

**Figure 6: Opportunities for Loughborough**

Opportunities - Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
Invest/innovate/ partnering with University	14	15%
Develop and encourage more green initiatives/green transport	13	14%
Improve appearance of town/regeneration/infrastructure	12	13%
Taking advantage town's location/proximity to green space etc	12	13%
Encourage and attract new and diverse businesses	7	7%
Greater variety of shops, leisure activities, facilities etc	5	5%
Increased support for independent businesses	5	5%
Retain young highly skilled workforce	5	5%
Improve cohesion and inclusion	5	5%
Improve skills/education	5	5%
Build on town's heritage	4	4%
Other (e.g. using empty shops for hubs, working spaces etc)	7	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100%</b>

Finally, online survey respondents were also given the opportunity to comment on potential threats for Loughborough. A total of 59 respondents provided a valid comment. The most common themes related to overdevelopment/loss of green space (20 mentions, 19%). This was followed by people not finding the

town centre attractive or appealing to visit (8 mentions, 8%). Other concerns related to a ‘community’ divide particularly amongst students and local residents (7 mentions, 7%) and a lack of international visitors/students in the future (7 mentions, 7%).

**Figure 7: Potential threats to Loughborough**

Opportunities - Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
Over development/loss of green space	20	19%
Town not appealing (e.g. empty shops etc)	8	8%
Community divide/Poor cohesion and inclusion	7	7%
Lack of international visitors/students not coming back	7	7%
Limited variety of shops, leisure activities, facilities etc	6	6%
Inability to retain young highly skilled workforce	7	5%
Poor transport links/lack of green transport	6	6%
Reduction of jobs/employment	6	6%
Poor town planning/Infrastructure	6	6%
Issues with traffic and parking	5	5%
University is a threat (e.g. Over reliance, seasonality)	5	5%
Too much ASB	5	5%
Poor local policies/management	5	5%
Too much student accommodation/too many students	4	4%
Lack of available/affordable housing	3	3%
Too many bars/restaurants	2	2%
Other	2	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

In formulating a 2030 proposition for Loughborough, the Town Deal Board discussed the likely characteristics and challenges for leading towns through the 2020s. This included recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

All respondents who completed the online survey were asked to provide their ideas of measures the Council could take to support the recovery from the pandemic (which will also benefit the town’s long-term future). All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 208 respondents provided a valid comment.

The most common themes related to support for local people which included help in case of redundancy and encouraging residents to start up their own business (51 mentions, 11%). This was followed by attracting a wider variety of businesses (44 mentions, 10%) and promoting green technology and initiatives (43 mentions, 10%).

**Figure 8: Suggested methods to aid recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
Support for local residents (e.g. redundancy)	51	11%
Encourage/ attract new/greater variety of businesses	44	10%
Green technology and initiatives (e.g. more green space)	43	10%
Support most vulnerable (e.g. digital)	33	7%
Activities and events/ facilities	33	7%
Business support (e.g. business rates, loans, etc)	32	7%
Support cycling and walking	30	7%
Parking (free/subsidised etc)	24	5%
Reskilling courses/literacy classes/summer schools	21	5%
Improve IT infrastructure (to help online shopping, home working etc)	20	4%
Improve public transport / transport infrastructure	18	4%
More housing/transform unused retail space into houses	17	4%
COVID-19 safety measures, support, or information	16	4%
Address ASB and greater policing of COVID 19 measures	14	3%
More outside space for cafes, pubs, events etc	14	3%
Transform unused retail space into hubs, co-working spaces etc	11	2%
Improve appearance of town/make use of town's heritage	9	2%
Re-open the economy/Stop the pandemic panic	6	1%
Other	10	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Vision

All residents and businesses that took part in the consultation (either by participating in the online focus groups or completing the online survey) were provided with a copy of the draft vision statement, asked to read it, then give their initial views.

**"We consider Loughborough has the assets and capabilities of a leading small city. In the 2020s we can be globally known for both elite and participatory sports excellence; the Midland Engine's premier small city knowledge and science hub; at the centre of the region's tri-city area (of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham); and Leicestershire's county town. To make the most of those roles and functions, Loughborough should offer residents, communities, and business the opportunities, experiences and well-being to participate fully in Loughborough's life and development."**

The focus group participants had mixed views on the statement. Some, particularly students, were in favour of the statement, they felt it was sensible but ambitious. They also felt it covered everything it needed to, and they would not change anything. Typical comments included:

“I think it is fairly accurate.”

“I think it states everything it needs to.”

“It seems sensible, its playing to Loughborough’s strengths, particularly the location and University.”

The resident and business groups were less positive about the statement. They felt it needed to be shorter, more specific, with examples of how things would be achieved, and contain less jargon (several people were unsure what the ‘Midlands Engine’ was, for example). Others felt it was too generic and could be written about any English town or city. Example comments included:

“It was like word-soup.”

“I would be good to use simple language that people can relate to.”

“I think a couple of specific examples of the kinds of projects it would support would go a long way.”

“Anyone could write that about a lot of places”

Residents and businesses also questioned the focus of the vision. They felt it needed less emphasis on the sporting heritage and more on the things that would help drive the local economy, such as encouraging business to re-locate, raising awareness of the town’s cultural offer. Residents and businesses also disagreed with the use of the word ‘city’ and felt Loughborough should remain a town. This was reflected in the following comments:

“Let’s try to get away from the University - that will stay and look after itself. This needs to be about the town.”

“Loughborough is a town, not a 'small city.”

Respondents who completed the online survey were also asked to give their thoughts on the draft, including things they would add or remove.

All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 184 respondents provided a valid comment.

38 mentions (12%) related to positive feedback with residents stating they felt the vision statement was bold, ambitious, and comprehensive; similar feedback was given by students during the focus groups.

In terms of negative feedback, the common theme related to too much emphasis on the University (16 mentions, 5%) and the use of the word ‘City’ (12 mentions, 4%). This was also highlighted in the online focus groups with some participants stating Loughborough should remain a town.

A number of participants (including those who were largely happy with the vision) also provided some suggestions on additional things it could include or focus on. The most popular suggestion related the need for more activities/facilities to increase visitor numbers (25 mentions, 8%).

**Figure 9: Comments on the draft vision**

Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
<b>Positive/bold/ambitious/comprehensive</b>	38	12%
<b>Negative comments</b>		
Too much emphasis on University/insufficient focus on residents	16	5%
Disagreed with mention of 'City'	12	4%
Just marketing/nothing measurable or specific	11	4%
Hard to read/wordy	9	3%
The focus of the vision is too narrow (e.g. sports)	8	3%
<b>Mixed views</b>		
Agree with vision, but document hard to read	5	2%
<b>Suggestions</b>		
Activities/facilities to encourage town visits	25	8%
Encourage and attract new and diverse businesses (including manufacturing)	21	7%
Improve community links (e.g. residents and students)	20	6%
investment/innovation in sustainable technology	19	6%
Environmental / Green initiatives (more green space)	14	4%
Support cycling/walking/ wellbeing	14	4%
Establish better connections between the University/ businesses	13	4%
More focus on the town as a whole	13	4%
More focus on unique town heritage	13	4%
Make use of the town's location/proximity to rural areas	10	3%
Improve appearance of town/Regeneration	9	3%
Improve public transport / transport infrastructure	8	3%
Support vulnerable residents	7	2%
Parking/traffic issues	6	2%
Retain/train young highly skilled workforce	5	2%
Build more available/affordable housing	4	1%
Other	12	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Use of Town Deal funding

### Focus on large scale projects

If CBC's proposal for funding is successful, they will receive £25 million over a number of years to spend on the Town Deal programme. As part of the consultation, residents and businesses were asked for their views on how the funding should be spent.

Firstly, focus group participants were asked for their views on whether the money should be spent on a few larger scale investment projects or lots of smaller projects.

The majority of participants felt that most of the funding should be spent on larger projects as it yields a greater return on investment and likely to have a far greater impact on the whole community (particularly infrastructure projects).

However, there was some difference of opinion across the groups. Some residents and businesses felt as the budget was relatively modest, it would be better spent on the deprived communities/individuals who need it more.

*“Larger projects will make more of an impact, especially in the town centre.”*

*“Smaller projects will yield more widespread change.”*

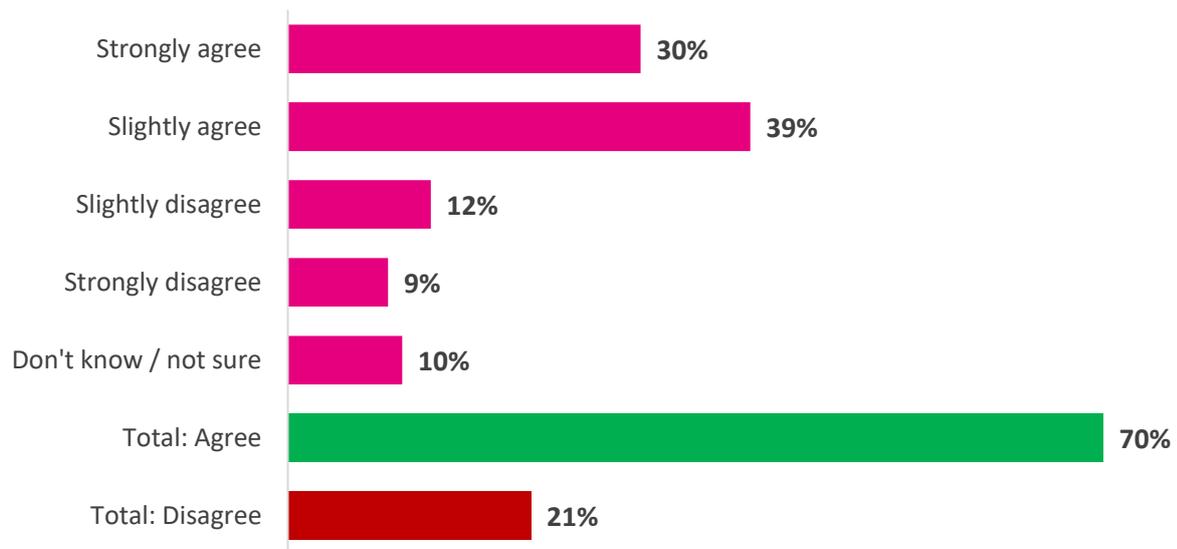
*“I think the money should be spent on smaller projects such as tackling the litter issues or installing CCTV. That would help the whole community”.*

In contrast, some businesses and residents (especially those living outside Loughborough) felt they needed more information to be included in the Proposition document, particularly relating to individual projects. One participant said, *“I think we need to understand more about the project and the benefit it will bring before we can comment”.*

The findings from the focus groups were further supported in the online survey results. Figure 10 shows that seven out of ten (70%) respondents agreed that the programme should focus on 3 to 4 schemes. This compares to around a fifth (21%) who disagreed and 10% who were unsure or did not know.

**Figure 10: Agreement with focussing on large projects**

Base: 246



### Focus on Town Centre and urban core

The majority of the participants across the six focus groups agreed that the Town Plan should focus on the town centre as it will help to attract visitors and inward investment to the area. Typical comments included:

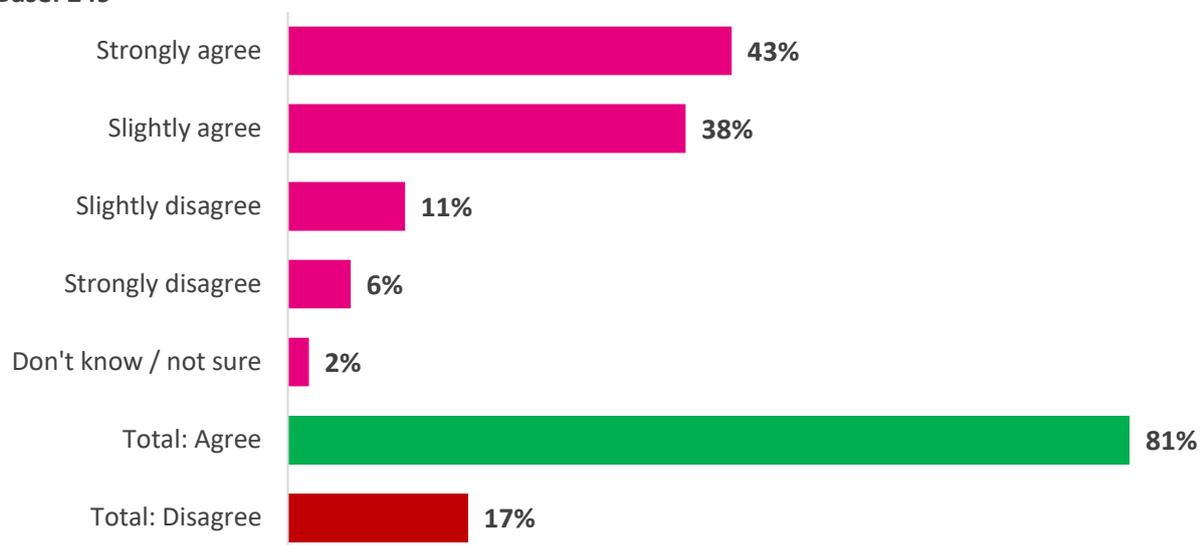
*"I think the town centre should be the main focus as everyone uses it so often."*

*"We need to use the opportunity to create an environment that attracts inward investment."*

The findings from the focus groups were further supported in the online survey. Figure 11 shows that over eight out of ten (81%) respondents agreed that the programme should focus on the town centre and urban core. This compares to nearly a fifth (17%) who disagreed and 2% who were unsure or did not know.

**Figure 11: Agreement with focussing on town centre and urban core**

Base: 249



## Balance between physical and people facing schemes

All focus group participants were asked how the Town Deal funding should be balanced between physical schemes and infrastructure, such as buildings, open spaces, etc, and people facing schemes (e.g. upskilling, re-training etc).

Most focus group participants felt most of the funding (50-60%) should be spent on improving the infrastructure. There were several mentions of increasing open space in the town centre and making sure buildings were COVID safe. They also felt that re-developing the town centre would help to encourage people to take more pride in their town. A few people also felt that there were already other funding pots which could be used for re-skilling or re-training residents. Typical comments included:

*“I think buildings and open spaces are the most important at the moment.”*

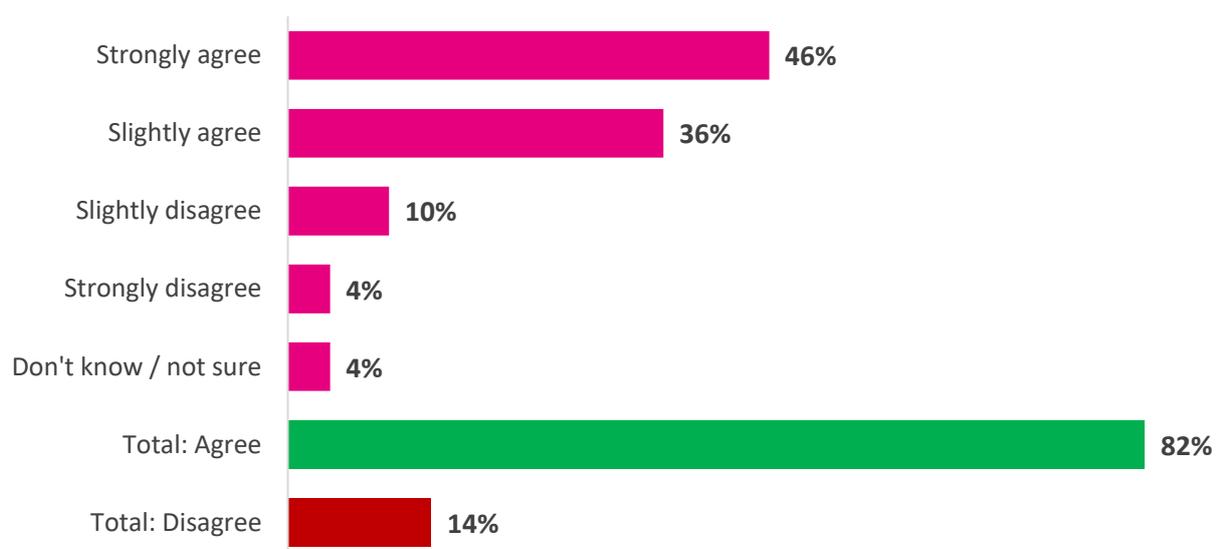
*“If people see regeneration, they take more pride and suddenly people have a better outlook.”*

*“I think there will be other money available for skills, training etc after COVID but less money for Infrastructure. That’s why I think more should go there”.*

Some participants felt a proportion of the funding (40-50%) should also be allocated to people-facing schemes to help residents re-train or find alternative employment if they have been made redundant as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding was further supported in the online survey with 82% agreeing that there should be a balance between physical regeneration and support for individuals and communities. This compares to 14% who disagreed and 4% who were unsure or did not know.

**Figure 12: Agreement with balancing physical regeneration and targeting individuals/communities**

Base: 247



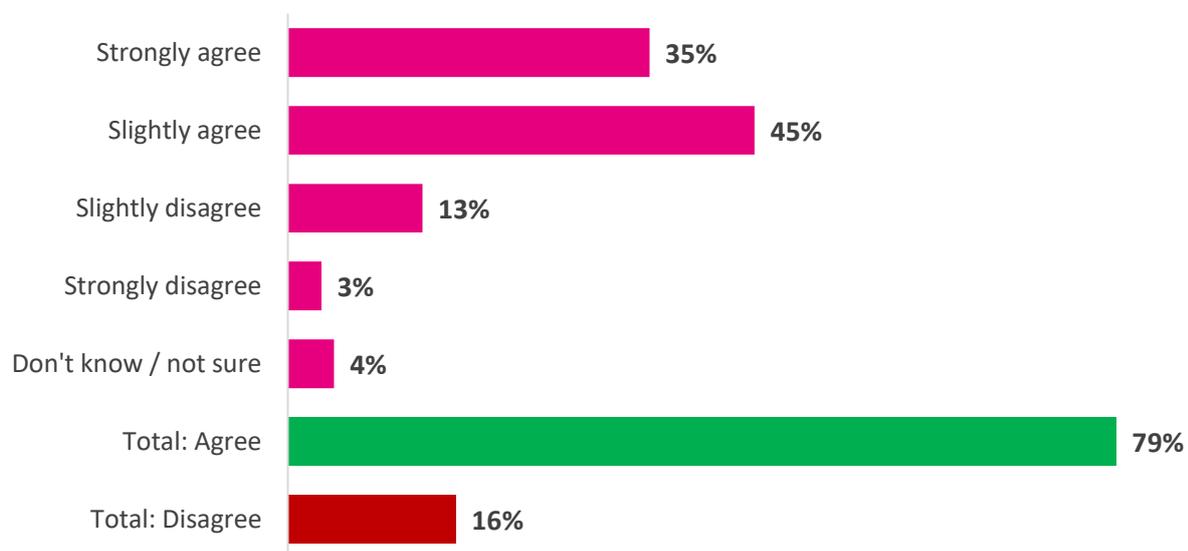
## Balance between existing and future facing projects

The majority of focus group participants felt that the funding should be prioritised on new projects to help the long-term future of Loughborough and make sure it is a thriving town for those who live, work and visit.

This was further supported in the online survey with nearly eight in ten (79%) stating that the criteria for investment and overall shape of the programme should focus on medium and long term initiatives. This compared to 16% who disagreed and 4% who were unsure or did not know.

**Figure 13: Agreement with focussing on medium and long term initiatives**

Base: 248



Online survey respondents were also asked for their suggestions about what should be included in the Town Deal investment criteria.

All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 134 respondents provided a valid comment. One response could have contained more than one theme and as such the total presented in the table may be higher than the number of responses.

It should be noted that the majority of comments provided for this question related to specific services or facilities where the Town Deal funding could be spent (as opposed to suggestions on the investment criteria).

The most common themes related environmental/green initiatives (31 mentions, 17%). This was closely followed by improving sport or exercise provision (16 mentions, 9%) and improving public transport/infrastructure (16 mentions, 9%).

**Figure 14: Suggestions for additional investment criteria/shape of the programme**

Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
Environmental / Green initiatives	31	17%
Improve sport / exercise provision (e.g. skatepark)	16	9%
Improve public transport / transport infrastructure	16	9%
More support for local shops / businesses / community groups and rejuvenate high streets	15	8%
Improve connectivity with other areas	14	8%
Support cycling/walking	12	7%
Sustainable support / service provision deprived communities / vulnerable/ younger residents	12	7%
Improve access to learning/ skills development/job creation	11	6%
Support permanent residents, rather than temporary student population	9	5%
Develop on the heritage and culture of the area	7	4%
Activities to encourage town centre visits	7	4%
Improve housing provision	6	3%
Need more detail on proposals	4	2%
Become a technological hub	3	2%
Happy/agreement with proposal	1	1%
Other	17	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Draft Investment Plan

The draft Investment Plan outlined the following four areas of focus:

- Physical regeneration and how Loughborough functions as a place
- Equipping people, communities, and businesses for the future
- A Smart, Green Loughborough
- Loughborough – ‘innovation city’, global national and regional destination

The focus group participants were asked to provide discuss what each of the four areas means and how important it was to them.

### Physical regeneration

Firstly, focus group participants were asked to discuss ‘physical regeneration’. Residents and businesses felt the physical regeneration was important for Loughborough to help encourage more people to visit, live and do busines in the town. In order to ensure Loughborough is more appealing, people suggested revitalising old buildings, constructing new ones, and looking at initiatives to help reduce the quantity of

empty shops. They also felt it needed more green space, an entertainment hub with more bars and restaurants and more activities for young people, such as a skate park.

Suggestions were also made to improve connectivity, with some residents suggesting they found the town difficult to navigate and access from the train station. They also suggested improved cycle lanes. Others found the town unsafe after dark, particularly the Market Square area. Typical comments from residents and businesses included:

“I would like to see more cycle lanes across the whole of Loughborough.”

“I suggest making the Market Square a nice place to be, after dark.”

“Town centre is very built up, brick, endless paving. It needs more green space.”

### **Equipping people, communities, and businesses for the future**

Focus group participants felt equipping people, communities and businesses for the future was important particularly for the deprived communities. Some of the suggestions mentioned related to:

- Developing a digital skills hub between the University and local employers (particularly as digital skills are becoming increasingly popular)
- Strengthening links between schools, Loughborough University, and local employers to ensure future courses are fit for purpose
- Attracting new/small businesses to help encourage innovation and networking. A few Businesses felt having a venue similar to Leicester Hackspace may be beneficial particularly for digital, electronic, mechanical, and creative projects/start-ups.

Some example comments from participants included:

“I think things like Digital Skills Hub is something that is only going to become more important.”

“Open workshops or drop in areas within the town, a friendly face rather than just webinar or online.”

### **Smart, Green Loughborough**

Having a ‘smart, green’ Loughborough was considered the most important of the four themes, particularly amongst students, younger residents, and those with children. Residents felt green transport, such as cycle lanes, electric cars, and park & rides, were particularly important. They also felt the town centre could be ‘greener’ both in terms of appearance by planting more trees and bushes, but also more environmentally friendly by encouraging people to work from home. Typical comments included:

“Green and smart technologies should be a top priority.”

“Charging ports and encouraging electric cars and e-bikes is a great idea.”

“Green transport very important if we are to reduce carbon emissions by 2050.”

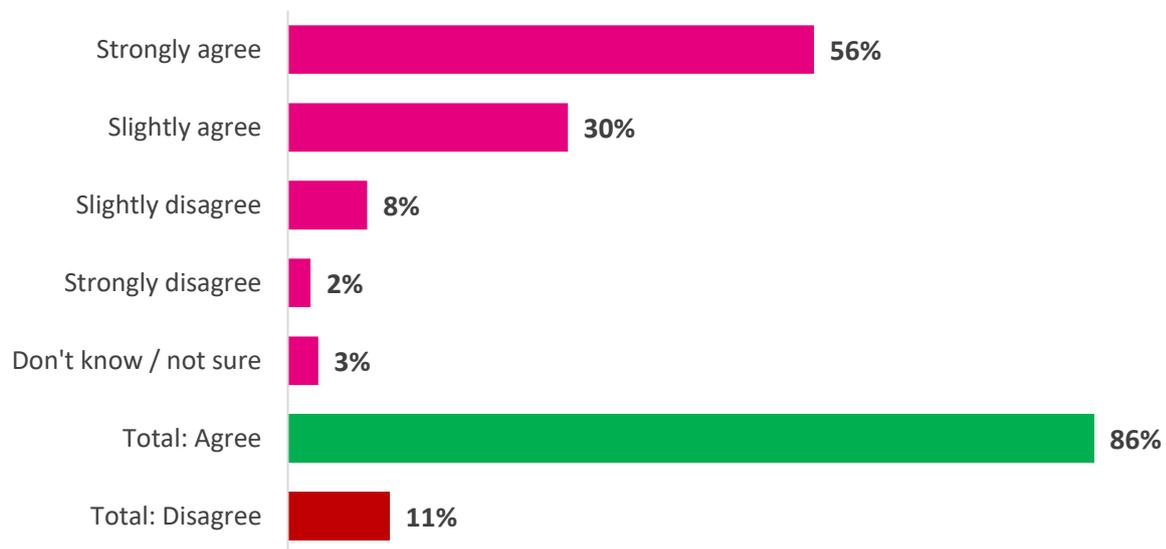
“I think especially with CV19, green travel is now even more important. Cycle paths, etc.”

“Loughborough town centre needs more trees lining the streets and walkways.”

The importance of adopting a ‘Smart and Green Loughborough’ was further reflected in the online survey. All respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the Council’s suggested approach for strengthening Loughborough’s digital capabilities and green credentials. Figure 15 shows that the majority of respondents agreed (86%) This compared to 11% who disagreed and 3% who were unsure or did not know.

**Figure 15: Agreement with strengthening Loughborough’s digital capabilities and green credentials**

**Base: 248**



### Loughborough ‘innovation city’, global national and regional destination

Focus group participants felt this theme was a key area of focus for the Town Deal. In order to encourage more people to live, visit and work in the town centre, more needed to be done to raise awareness of the town’s heritage and popular visitor attractions (such as the Carillon Tower, the Bell Foundry and the market). They felt whilst ‘Love Loughborough’ does a good job of promoting the town centre, what is needed is to publicise what makes it unique; to help give it its own identity. Typical comments included:

“Loughborough needs to promote itself as a unique area to live and work in.”

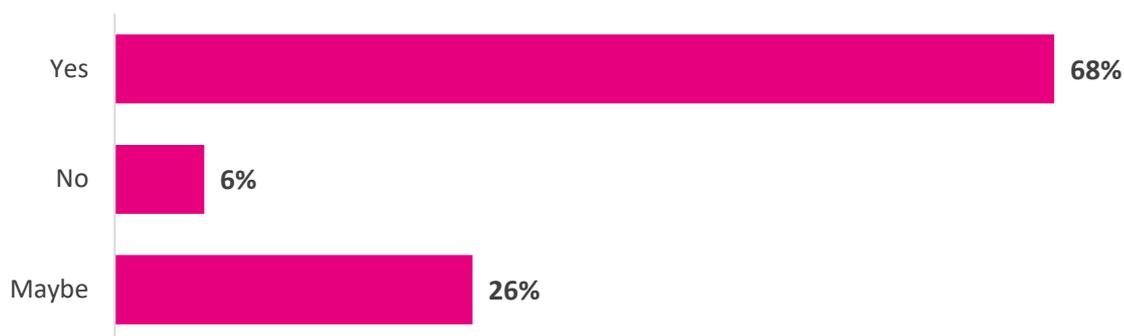
“It really needs to work on point 4. It doesn't have an identity beyond the sporting centre of excellence.”

“Loughborough needs to build on what it is known for.”

Respondents who completed the online survey were also invited to provide feedback on the above four themes. Firstly, they were asked if they agreed with the Council’s suggested approach (20 schemes which related physical regeneration, Smart, Green Loughborough etc). Figure 16 shows that nearly seven out of ten respondents (68%) agreed. 6% said ‘No’ and over a quarter (26%) said ‘Maybe’. This suggests that respondents needed more information on the projects to make an informed answer (also highlighted during the focus groups).

**Figure 16: Agreement with Council’s suggested approach**

**Base: 248**



Online survey respondents were subsequently asked if there was anything else CBC should consider when formulating the Investment Plan.

All valid comments (pertinent to the question and the purpose of the survey) have been analysed. A total of 141 respondents provided a valid comment.

The most common themes related to improving the area for younger residents (20 mentions, 13%) closely followed by improving transport connectivity within the town centre (and making it easier for people to get around (17 mentions, 11%)

**Figure 17: Comments on Draft Investment Plan**

Key themes	No of mentions	% of respondents
Improve the area for younger residents (e.g., entertainment)	20	13%
Improve sustainable transport connectivity within the town centre / make it easier for people to get around	17	11%
Green infrastructure, development, and technology	12	8%
Improve housing provision	11	7%
Increase / improve green spaces / areas for wildlife to flourish	11	7%
Not enough information / detail provided in documents	9	6%
Make it attractive for working professionals / job creation / students finishing University to stay in the area	9	6%
Improve transport infrastructure links	8	5%
Improve prospects of people / areas (deprived areas)	8	5%

More details on education provision / improve local skills / qualifications	7	4%
Improve parking provision	6	4%
Plan should be expanded / more ambitious	5	3%
Improve sporting / exercise provision	5	3%
Improve flood defences	5	3%
Happy with it	5	3%
Build on the town's heritage	4	3%
Encourage social value, volunteering with residents, ownership of local area	4	3%
Encourage buying locally / provision for local producers to expand/showcase	3	2%
Include development of the arts, cultural and creative sectors	3	2%
Improve health care / care for the elderly	3	2%
Include the wider area (not just the town centre)	2	1%
Other	16	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Conclusions

To conclude, the consultation indicates that residents, businesses, and students were currently pre-occupied with the short term and the associated impacts from COVID-19. However, they also recognised the need to look to the future with 56% of online respondents stating the Town Deal should focus on the medium and longer term.

To make Loughborough a 'destination of choice' for future generations, people felt the town needed to capitalise on the things that made it unique such as the University, its location (proximity to other cities and rural areas) and long-standing heritage.

Respondents also highlighted a number of the town's weaknesses which included the fact that the town centre was run down, had little choice of retail and food outlets, and was considered unsafe at night. Several consultees also mentioned that employment opportunities were also limited, especially as the University was considered the only major employer in the town and graduates typically moved away to find employment opportunities.

Another key element of the Investment Plan Proposition was the future 'Vision' for the town. This received mixed views with some stating they were in favour of the statement as it was ambitious but realistic. Others were less convinced and felt it needed to be shorter, more specific, and simpler to understand. Residents and businesses also questioned its focus and felt too much emphasis was placed on its sporting heritage, but too little on future economic growth and recovery.

When looking at the draft Investment Plan, it was clear that helping residents and businesses overcome the challenges of COVID-19 (e.g. redundancy support, lowering business rates, etc) was key in the short term. Although, when looking to the future, people were also concerned about the environment (Smart, Green Loughborough) and making Loughborough a more attractive plan to live, work and do business (Physical regeneration) for its future generations.

# Appendix A: Topic Guide

## Investment Plan proposition, June 2020

### Welcome

- Introduce self and M·E·L Research, an independent market research company
- Consent to take part, transcription, etc.
- No right or wrong answers
- No names given in the report or for quotes
- Discussion will last around 1 hour

CHECK ALL PARTICIPANTS HAVE ACCESS TO BACKGROUND MATERIALS THAT CLARE EMAILED.

### Loughborough's strengths

- So just to start, what would you say are Loughborough's strengths? Why do you say that?
- What is Loughborough known for regionally? And nationally? And what about globally?

#### PROMPTS FOR FACILITATOR:

- Globally significant for elite sports
- Host a UK top-10 University
- Renowned as a knowledge, science, and technology hub
- England's first Life Sciences Opportunity Zone
- Transport links – HS2, East Mids airport
- What about Loughborough's weaknesses? What would you say these are? Why is that?
- How could the Town Deal best use these strengths for the benefit of the people and communities who chose to call Loughborough their home?
- The town has two neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived in England. How could the Town Deal support those that are disadvantaged?

What sort of town is needed to build on its regional, national, and global strengths (**PROBE FOR: GLOBAL REPUTATION FOR ELITE SPORTS ETC LISTED ABOVE**)

- How do you think innovation and technology should play a part in any regeneration schemes? Why is that?
- Those born this year will be 30 in 2050 - What sort of place does Loughborough need to become to be the place of choice for living, working, and visiting for our next generations?
- Which is more important to you?

Having the Town Deal build on Loughborough's regional, national, and global county profile and reputation with a medium to long term outlook.

**OR**

Improving the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Loughborough communities and businesses – especially accelerating recovery and rebooting the economy and social life after the COVID-19 lockdown?

- Why is that? Where does the balance lie?
- How important is it to plan for the future?

## Future vision

**ASK PARTICIPANTS TO TURN TO PAGE 4 (FUTURE VISION) OF BACKGROUND READING FOR VISION.**

- What are people's initial views on the statement? Why is that?
- What, if anything, is missing from the vision?
- What would you change? Why?

Over the 2020s, to advance an ambitious vision, we believe Loughborough needs to deliver the following (NOT in any priority order).

**PLEASE ASK PARTICIPANTS TO REFER TO PAGES 4 & 5 (DRAFT INVESTMENT PLAN) OF BACKGROUND READING FOR MORE DETAIL.**

**TAKING EACH ONE IN TURN:**

- Physical regeneration and how Loughborough functions as a place (such as flood risk/drainage schemes etc)
- Equipping people, communities, and businesses for the future (e.g. skills, helping deprived communities etc)
- Smart, Green Loughborough (e.g. super-fast Broadband, smart green transport etc)
- Loughborough – 'innovation city', global national and regional destination (such as Midlands Connect rapid transit to Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Airport, HS2 etc)
  - What do you think it means?
  - How important is <<physical regeneration etc>> to you now? What about the future?
  - Is there anything missing?

## Use of the funding

**PLEASE ASK PARTICIPANTS TO REFER TO PAGES 4 (USE OF FUNDING) OF BACKGROUND READING FOR MORE DETAILS.**

- The current thoughts are that the £25m budget could be spent on undertaking two to three larger scale investment projects, rather than lots of smaller projects. What proportion of the budget do you think should be allocated to each? e.g. 90% or more to larger projects? Why is that?
- To what extent do you agree that the Town Plan should mainly focus on Loughborough town centre? Why is that?

- How important is it to you that it also connects to Leicester, Nottingham, Derby and the airport/HS2 hubs? Why is that?
- How should the fund be balanced between physical schemes and infrastructure (e.g. buildings, open spaces, transport, technology) and people-facing schemes (e.g. up-skilling, re-training for individuals impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown)? Why do you say that?
- Where should the majority of spend be based? Is it on new future-facing initiatives (medium or long term projects) or should it be used to help top up existing projects? Why do you say that?

**EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PROJECTS IF ASKED: THE GENERATOR ARTS FACILITY, THE BELL FOUNDRY IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCING THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY FACILITIES.**

- **IF TOP UP EXISTING PROJECTS:** How could the Town Deal identify projects/schemes to ensure they were viable longer-term?

## Any other comments

Lastly, is there anything else you wish to add that we have not already covered today? Do you have any further comments on the draft Investment Plan/themes?

Thank you. For taking part, your feedback is really valuable if you have not already, please can you let Clare Rapkins at M·E·L Research know your preferred incentive (Love2Shop or donation to charity).

**THANK & CLOSE.**

## Appendix B: Online Survey



### Loughborough Town Deal Survey June 2020

Charnwood Borough Council has been invited to submit a Town Investment Plan to access Town Deal funding for Loughborough from the Government's £3.6bn Town Fund.

The Town Deal programme seeks **"to increase economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture"** for each eligible place.

The Loughborough Town Deal Board involves representatives from Charnwood Borough Council, Loughborough University, Loughborough College, Love Loughborough, Leicestershire County Council, the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Charnwood Together Economy and Skills Group, local businesses and Loughborough MP Jane Hunt. The Board is responsible for drawing up a Town Investment Plan which will provide a vision for building on the town's unique strengths to transform its economic growth prospects.

Following a period of research and an initial consultation, a draft proposition has been drawn up, which outlines what a final Investment Plan might contain, both in terms of its objectives and the types of projects which might be included. We have summarised the key issues in the document to assist with the consultation process.

The draft proposition identifies Loughborough as a special and genuinely distinctive place. Alongside being a great place to live, work and visit, it has authentic global, national and regional roles that can help with economic and social recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as longer term benefits for our communities. The proposition prioritises investments in four thematic areas.

- 1) Physical regeneration and how Loughborough functions as a place
- 2) Equipping people, communities and businesses for the future
- 3) Smart, green Loughborough
- 4) Loughborough – 'innovation city', 'global national' and regional destination

The full proposition draft is contained here: <https://www.loughboroughtowndeal.co.uk/reports/336>. We strongly advise you read this information before making comments. Responses to this consultation can be submitted until **midnight on 5th July 2020**.

M·E·L Research, an independent market research company, has been commissioned to undertake the analysis and reporting of the survey results. All comments will be reported anonymously.

M·E·L Research Ltd is an accredited Market Research Society (MRS) Company Partner and abide by the MRS Code of Conduct and Data Protection Act 2018 (incorporating GDPR). All information you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence and you will not be personally identifiable in any research report. Details of how M·E·L Research process personal data can be found at <https://melresearch.co.uk/page/privacypolicy>. This includes your right to withdraw consent at any time. Please click 'next' below to indicate your consent to continue.

For more information or help completing this consultation, please contact:

Mike Roberts, Communications Manager, Charnwood Borough Council, Southfield Road,  
Loughborough, LE11 2TX  
01509 634705 / [Mike.Roberts@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Mike.Roberts@charnwood.gov.uk).

## 1. Ambition

Loughborough has an important, special and highly distinctive place in the UK's roll-call of large towns.

It is known and globally significant for elite sports. Loughborough hosts a UK top-10 university and England's first Life Sciences Opportunity Zone. In the Midlands Engine, Loughborough is unparalleled outside the metros and large cities as a knowledge, science and technology hub at scale.

Loughborough also hosts two Enterprise Zone campuses.

By the 2030s, Loughborough will be home to over 80,000 residents.

The Town Deal has to answer the questions, after COVID-19, 'what sort of town is needed to build on these global, national, regional and county strengths?' and 'how can it best leverage these strengths for the benefit of the people and communities who chose to call Loughborough their home?'

The Town Deal will focus on being an ambitious programme that builds on Loughborough's global, national, regional and county profile and reputation for the medium and longer term. However, the Town deal will also need to focus on shorter term economic and social recovery from Covid-19 as a priority within the context of an ambitious, outward-looking investment plan.

What proportion of activity do you think should be allocated to each. Please indicate a percentage out of 100 in the two boxes below.

Focus on the global, national, regional and county profile and reputation for the medium and longer term projects

% out of 100

Focus on shorter term economic and social recovery from Covid-19 as a priority projects

% out of 100

**% Total**

Should add up to 100%

**Your total from the above two boxes should add up to 100%**

## 2. Loughborough – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

Loughborough is the largest town in the Leicestershire with a population of around 66,000.

Near the centre of England, within 30 minutes of the three largest East Midlands Cities, close to the airport and regional HS2 station, and with over 50 trains a day to London, the fastest of which makes the journey in under 80 minutes

Our resident population is younger than county, regional and national averages with, in general, higher average skills levels, more senior jobs, and higher residential and workplace earnings per week than the region and county

Our population is forecast to grow at faster rates than county and regional averages surpassing 80,000 residents in the 2030s.

Loughborough University is a top 10 UK university with over 18,000 students enrolled and 3000 staff.

There is more background in the full proposition document but a summary of Loughborough's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats is outlined below:

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger, higher skills, better jobs and growing faster than regional and county averages</li> <li>• Global quality university with relevant assets and capabilities for future town development &amp; wellbeing</li> <li>• Superb international gateway, national and regional location and access</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of out-commuting for some higher earners, and of seasonality when university is closed</li> <li>• Town centre needs continual evolution and pace of development has sometimes been slow</li> <li>• Four central neighbourhoods on edge of town centre are among most-deprived 20% in England</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage University, Enterprise Zones and other assets and relevant capabilities to make Loughborough a genuine global, national and regional knowledge hub</li> <li>• Use Town Deal and associated opportunities to make Loughborough work well as a cohesive, inclusive place</li> <li>• Reasonable suite of long-standing plans and projects which can be made investment ready relatively swiftly</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential national and regional post lockdown economy reduces domestic demand, levels of private investment, and appetite for innovation – with specific university dimensions that particularly impact the town</li> <li>• Business closures and/or rationalisation increase need for reskilling and enterprise support beyond local capacity and resources to deliver</li> <li>• Social distancing and new public health requirements accelerate contraction of high street and reduces footfall in the medium term</li> </ul>

**Q1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the identified SWOT aspects?**

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / not sure
Q1a. Strengths	<input type="radio"/>				
Weaknesses	<input type="radio"/>				
Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>				

Threats



**Q2 What other strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats might there be?**

### 3. Recovery from Covid-19 pandemic

In formulating a 2030 proposition for Loughborough, the Town Deal Board has discussed likely characteristics and challenges for leading towns through the 2020s. This includes recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst there are no definitive answers and assured forecasts for this, we believe it is reasonable to assume implications of the crisis will include:

Long-term increased levels of home working and home learning

Need to give residents and visitors confidence that social distancing and other public health measures make trips in towns and neighbourhoods safe and secure

Continuation of the shift to online purchasing and deliveries seen during the lock down, with consequent acceleration of pressures on bricks and mortar retail

Enduring interest in green and active living improvements secured during the lockdown

Greater focus on resilience compared to growth in economic and social priorities

Reconfirmation of commitment to levelling up opportunities for communities not currently participating in or benefiting from Loughborough's success; and for those whose lives and futures have been seriously damaged during the lock down.

In broad terms, we are suggesting a Town Deal that lays the foundations for long run success of Loughborough as a leading town but also contributes quickly and tangibly to short term recovery – especially for those most at risk of enduring hardship.

**Q3 Please can you give us your ideas of measures we can take to support the recovery from the pandemic which will also benefit the town's long-term future?**

## 4. Vision

A vision for Loughborough is set out below:

**"We consider Loughborough has the assets and capabilities of a leading small city. In the 2020s we can be globally known for both elite and participatory sports excellence; the Midlands Engine's premier small city knowledge and science hub; at the centre of the region's tri-city area (of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham); and Leicestershire's county town.**

**To make the most of those roles and functions, Loughborough should offer residents, communities and business the opportunities, experiences and well-being to participate fully in Loughborough's life and development"**

NB: The Midlands Engine is a coalition of Councils, Combined Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Universities and businesses across the region, actively working with Government to build a collective identity for the Midlands, to present the Midlands as a competitive and compelling offer that is attractive at home and overseas.

**Q4 Please give us your thoughts on our draft vision (in particular what things would you add or remove for the vision outlined above).**

## 5. How could Town Deal investment be spent

The Board have carefully considered criteria for proposing Town Deal programme investments and the shape of the overall programme. The approach will combine projects that assist short-term recovery and rebooting of economic and social life, whilst building momentum for long-term success as a leading distinctive place of national significance and quality. It is currently being proposed that Town Deal funding could be invested in the following ways:

3 to 4 larger schemes but a sum (perhaps £3-£4m) for a number of small and micro-projects;

We expect government to confirm this as mainly a capital expenditure programme, but a revenue element for things like setting up town events and activity, or for re-skilling and re-training has merit;

The majority of the programme should focus on the town centre and urban core but there should be support for wider connectivity and relevant projects allowing access to Leicester, Nottingham, Derby and the airport/HS2 hubs;

We will top up existing schemes where these are viable long term and have been stalled by the lock down – but most of the programme should support prime future-facing, medium and long term initiatives;

There should be a balance between physical regeneration and investment and initiatives targeted at individuals and communities – especially for those communities that need greater support or who have suffered major lock down setbacks;

Successful places in the future will need advanced digital capabilities and strong green credentials. The programme should seek to mainstream this in its overall approach.

**Q5 To what extent do you agree with our suggested criteria for investment and the overall shape of the programme?**

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / not sure
Q5a. 3 to 4 large scale schemes	<input type="radio"/>				
Focus on Town Centre and urban core	<input type="radio"/>				
Focus mainly on medium and long term initiatives	<input type="radio"/>				
Q5d. Balancing physical regeneration and investment with that targeting individuals and communities	<input type="radio"/>				
Strengthening Loughborough's digital capabilities and green credentials	<input type="radio"/>				

**Q6 What else might you like to see included?**

**6. Draft investment plan**

There are currently 20 existing ongoing schemes and ideas that are in development and could be considered for the Loughborough Town Deal. For reasons of scale, it is clear the Town Deal will not be able to fund all of these. Some example projects are listed below. **They are NOT in priority order.**

**Physical regeneration and how Loughborough functions as a place:**

Core physical resilience – Environment Agency flood risk and drainage schemes  
Town Centre schemes:  
Opportunity sites (e.g. Baxter Gate, Aumberry Gap, Devonshire Square, Ashby Road)  
Public Realm – quality, public health aligned townscape, street scene and open spaces  
Town Hall/Markets Square events space and Love Loughborough Place Management  
Urban Living residential and lifestyle development  
Station Quarter – improving gateway areas and connectivity to town centre  
Limehurst Depot and Canal Side developments (including canal and rivers trust)  
Connectivity – particularly town centre parking, circulation, public transport interchange and mobility  
A rapid transit spine – station – town centre – college – university/LUSEP – West Loughborough

### Equipping people, communities and businesses for the future:

Skills  
Digital skills hub  
Reskilling and future jobs programme  
Business  
Business Support and accelerator  
Innovation and incubation centres in the town itself  
Communities  
Housing and living environment improvements in deprived neighbourhoods  
Youth Sports Trust

### Smart, green Loughborough:

Digital Loughborough infrastructure and services – superfast broadband, next generation networks, internet of things (IoT) sensors, observatory, open data centre and related apps  
Smart, green transport plan – including cycle and pedestrian priority corridors, greener public transport, e-bikes and EV charging points, canal and river side

### Loughborough – ‘innovation city’, global national and regional destination:

Sport and Active Healthy Living Exemplar  
Loughborough Area of Innovation, innovation eco-system and LATI+ – with strong linkages to tri-city eco-systems and Midlands Engine  
The Generator, Creative Loughborough and Charnwood Arts  
Industrial Heritage quarter  
Grand Central Railway restoration and education centre  
Bell Foundry  
Museum and memorial  
Midlands Connect rapid transit to Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Airport, HS2 and beyond

**Q7** Based on the information provided above, do you agree with the overall approach we are suggesting to formulating the programme?

- Yes  
 No  
 Maybe

**Q8** Is there anything else we should consider? What other opportunities would potentially compliment our long list of themes, projects and programmes?

## About you

**Q9** Which one of the following best describes how you are responding?

- Resident (lives in Loughborough)
- Resident (lives outside Loughborough in Charnwood)
- Resident (Lives outside Charnwood)
- Own a business based in Loughborough
- Work for a business based in Loughborough
- Work for a community or voluntary organisation (based in Loughborough)
- Own or work for a business, community or voluntary organisation (based outside Loughborough)
- Other

If other, please provide details

**Q10** If you are making a response on behalf of a business or community or voluntary organisation, please provide a name of the body you are representing. Please note, these responses will not be anonymised in our summary report.

**Q11** Please can you provide your home postcode:

**Q12** Please can you provide your business or organisation postcode:

**Q13** Where did you find out about this consultation?

- CBC website
- CBC Twitter
- CBC Facebook page
- Loughborough Echo
- Leicester Mercury
- Leicestershire Live
- Charnwood Borough Council email alert (i.e Charnwood Now / Business Bulletin)
- Local radio
- Local TV
- My organisation
- Business/Community business outside Loughborough
- Other (please specify)

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please click on the "Submit" button below.**

If you'd like more information about who we are and how we use the information provided please see our privacy policy at: [melresearch.co.uk/privacypolicy](http://melresearch.co.uk/privacypolicy).

# Appendix C: Respondent Profiles

## Focus group attendees

To provide further insight into respondent views, six focus groups were conducted. This qualitative element explored in greater detail views on the Loughborough Town Deal and how it could help Loughborough become a better place to live, work and visit in the future.

Table 1 presents the profile of participants showing a board mix of residents and businesses attended the focus groups.

**Table 1: Participant profile - residents**

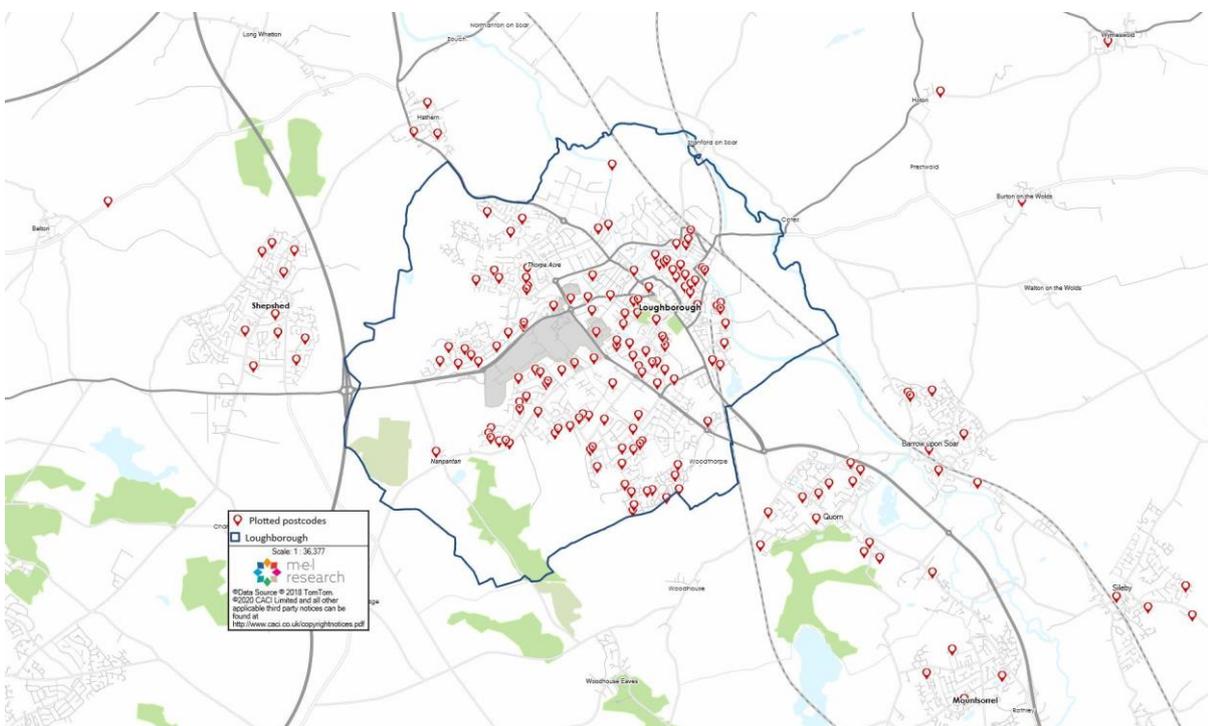
Age group	Count
18-24	12
25-34	4
35-44	10
45-54	5
55-64	8
65+	6
Gender	Count
Female	28
Male	17
Ethnicity	Count
White	39
BME	5
Prefer not to say	1
Tenure	Count
Buying on a mortgage	18
Owned outright	17
Rented from a private landlord	6
Rent from Housing Association / Trust	1
Student Accommodation	2
Prefer not to say	1
Working status	Count
Employed	18
Full time education	12
Retired	11
Unemployed	2
Prefer not to say	2
Total	45

**Table 2: Participant profile - businesses**

Size of business	Count
Micro/small business	10
Medium sized business	1
Length of trading	Count
<1 year	1
1 - 20 years	6
21+ years	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

## Online survey respondents

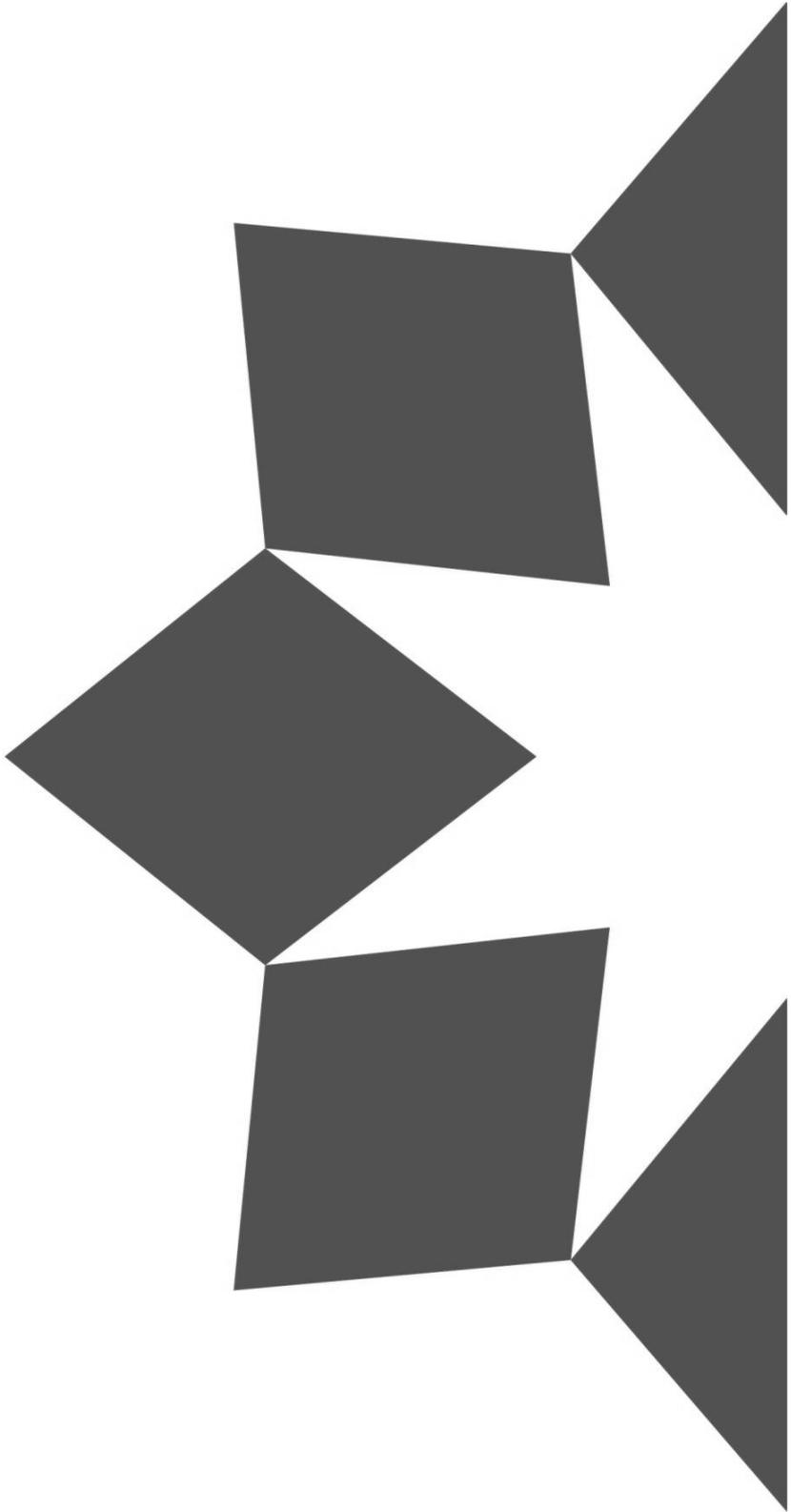
**Map 1: Geographical spread of online survey respondents**



**Table 3: Profile of online survey respondents**

Respondent type	Count	Percentage
Resident (lives in Loughborough)	165	64%
Resident (lives outside Loughborough in Charnwood)	68	27%
Resident (Lives outside Charnwood)	6	2%
Own a business based in Loughborough	13	5%
Work for a business based in Loughborough	14	5%
Work for a community or voluntary organisation (based in Loughborough)	10	4%
Own or work for a business, community, or voluntary organisation (based outside Loughborough)	7	3%
Other	7	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>100%</b>

How found out about consultation	Count	
CBC website	10	4%
CBC Twitter	15	6%
CBC Facebook page	61	24%
Loughborough Echo	12	5%
Leicester Mercury	0	0%
Leicestershire Live	4	2%
Charnwood Borough Council email alert (i.e. Charnwood Now / Business Bulletin)	85	34%
Local radio	2	1%
Local TV	0	0%
My organisation	13	5%
Business/Community business outside Loughborough	2	1%
Other (please specify)	46	18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>



From: communications@charnwood.gov.uk  
Sent: 08 July 2020 13:56  
To: Grace Christopher; Conway Nicky  
Subject: Fw: Town Deal Board - Open Letter to Members of the Loughborough Board

Hi Chris,

I know it's past the consultation deadline, but we have received the email below RE the Town Deal.

I'm not sure if you want to put it with the rest of the feedback/surveys or not, but thought I would forward it on.

Kind Regards,  
Daley

From: Andrew Dakin  
Sent: 08 July 2020 13:00  
To: communications@charnwood.gov.uk <communications@charnwood.gov.uk>  
Subject: Town Deal Board - Open Letter to Members of the Loughborough Board

Please forward this to all the members of the Loughborough Town Deal Board

As a member of the Town Deal Board for Loughborough I hope that you will ensure that the "Investment Plan Proposition" meets the scope of Government's programme by "increasing economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture".

I have taken a keen and active role in the events which have been laid on for interested parties in the town including the Chat Room Event, the Zoom call event last week and have completed the on-line survey.

When the Town Deal Board consider how the Town Fund would be used if the bid is successful I sincerely hope they will take into account the economic challenges Loughborough will face over the coming months and years. Of course the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown will be severe for many businesses and families. As we rapidly approach the end of the Brexit transition period additional pressure will fall on our economy and local businesses. Competition will intensify from other towns, regions and countries which are all striving to recover after months of lockdown. We should also anticipate a negative effect on The University, particularly student demand and the competition for research funding, both of which will impact Loughborough's businesses.

My experience in the Town Deal process has showed considerable self-interest amongst the participants in the chat room and Zoom events, promoting schemes which would not produce benefits for the majority. Unfortunately the Investment Plan Proposition for the Town Deal Fund doesn't use the SWOT analysis or inspire a dynamic vision for the future

that will focus an investment strategy designed to generate the local growth and opportunities we all desire.

Given the current economic uncertainty there is a real danger that Loughborough will suffer a similar fate to many regional towns in the UK. If you think this won't happen I suggest you visit some of the once thriving towns that have not responded to the economic challenges they have faced. We have an opportunity to avoid this here by creating a strategy with the Town Fund by encouraging, supporting and incentivising enterprise in the town, recognising this is the only way our economy will grow and make Loughborough an even better place to live. This economic success will generate additional revenue for further public and private infrastructure spending as well as housing and social amenities.

The schemes that are referred to in the Indicative Investment Plan should use separate funding based on their necessity and return on invested capital. We should not dilute the Town Deal Fund by scattering this around these schemes which will not have the impact on the local economy that an enterprising strategy will have.

I sincerely hope that The Town Deal Board devise a strategy that will build on Loughborough strengths and create a better place for us all to benefit from and enjoy. I urge the Town Deal Board not to waste this opportunity.

Andrew Dakin C.Eng, M.I.Mech.E

Retired Loughborough Resident

## LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN DEAL BOARD

24th July 2020

### Item 6 – Town Investment Plan

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the progress which has been made towards the production of Loughborough's Town Investment Plan. It also provides an update on project proposals which have been received from stakeholders and the wider public.

#### Recommendations

1. That the approach being taken to further develop the Town Investment Plan as described in this report and at Appendix 2 be approved;
2. That an evaluation of project proposals is carried out by Third Life Economics and sent to the Board for its comment, prior to a further draft of the Town Investment Plan being submitted to the next Board meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020;
3. That the Board comments and provides further shaping on the narrative they wish to see supporting the Town Deal and forming the contextual and strategic backdrop to specific project proposals;
4. That Lessons from Cohort One Town Deal proposals and subsequent advice from Government should be applied when developing the criteria which will be used to assess which projects should be included with the Town Investment Plan.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 In recent months significant work has been carried out which, ultimately, will lead to a Town Investment Plan being submitted to the Government as part of the town deal process. A draft proposition was considered by the Board on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and a period of public consultation has since occurred (see Item 4 on this agenda). Third Life Economics has been undertaking work which is feeding in to and will inform the final drafting of the Plan. This is outlined in the sections below and David Marlow will provide a presentation to the Board at the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

### 3. Town Investment Plan

- 3.1 Following the Town Deal Board's June 12<sup>th</sup> approval of a Town Deal proposition draft 'statement of intent', Third Life Economics has undertaken considerable development work to progress a Town Investment Plan (TIP). This has included detailed iteration of the Government Further Guidance and subsequent communication with an emerging TIP, discussions with the Government Delivery Team referred to elsewhere, and a range of project development activity (see below).
- 3.2 An initial Section One of the TIP has been drafted and this is attached at Appendix One. It does not anticipate specific projects within the TIP, rather it outlines the contextual and strategic sections of the document.
- 3.3 Loughborough's Town Investment Plan will be in two Sections which follow the guidance and template [for Section 2] provided by the Government. It will also be necessary to comply with the required word limits.

### 4. Project Proposals

- 4.1 Following Government Further Guidance on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, in order to receive project proposals that more closely met these requirements, a project proforma process was undertaken. The proforma was sent to potential applicants, the Community Engagement Group and placed on the Loughborough Town Deal website from 26<sup>th</sup> June, seeking submissions over the following two-week period ending 10<sup>th</sup> July.
- 4.2 As of close of play on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020 11 broadly eligible proformas had been received, seeking Town Deal support of £16.8m capital and £3.7m revenue. A further 2-3 were subsequently submitted. Some un-costed or most likely ineligible proformas have also been received.
- 4.3 Appendix Two reviews the lessons from this process – suggesting next steps, commissioning options and appraisal criteria for prioritising existing and further project submissions that may be received. In summary these are as follows:
  - Further project development work should be carried out across August and September
  - By commissioning projects there is an opportunity to ensure that strategic objectives of the Board and which are contained in the TIP are met
  - Appraisal criteria for projects will be used which reflects the experiences of Cohort 1 submissions, emerging Government guidance and advice from the Towns Hub.

## 5. Risks

5.1 The following risks have been identified:

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
1	Ongoing Covid-19 regulations prevent face-to-face meetings	Difficult to exchange knowledge and views	Increased use of emails, phone calls and video conferencing
2	Stakeholders do not submit good enough quality project proposals	Investment Plan is not as ambitious as originally intended	Utilise the support of the Towns Hub
3	Absences from work caused by Covid-19 related illness and / or self-isolation / quarantine	Delays in progressing project work	Ensuring close working between officers and consultants and sharing of access to documents where possible and appropriate
4	Covid-19 associated work draws capacity and focus away from Town Deal work	Poorer quality engagement with stakeholders and potential delay to progressing investment plan work	Town Deal to be a corporate and consultancy priority

## 6. Appendix

Appendix – Loughborough Town Investment Plan

## Appendix One: Loughborough Town Investment Plan (TIP) – July 2020

**Introduction and purpose of paper:** This report is intended to familiarise Town Deal Board (TDB) with the context and strategy (i.e. Section One) content that will be required of our eventual TIP submission; and to give TDB an opportunity to consider and assess the narrative to date.

**Content required by government:** The extract below is pasted directly from the MHCLG guidance. The guidance makes clear that precise TIP format is a local choice, but that it should include the following material, cannot exceed 10,000 words and a pdf file size of 20MB.

### **“Context analysis**

- *Map of agreed town boundary and related context*
- *The main challenges facing the town*
- *Evidence of need, relevant to proposed projects*
- *The town’s assets and strengths*
- *Key opportunities for the town*

### **Strategy**

- *Town vision, and headline outcomes and/or targets for 2030 or beyond*
- *Short summary of all projects, including the total Towns Fund funding requested*
- *Strategic plan, including:*
  - *Underlying evidence*
  - *Analysis and rationale*
  - *Objectives, targets, and priority areas for the short, medium and long term*
  - *Spatial strategy, including the recognition of the distribution of impact across town geography and demographics. If the total bid is for over £25 million, impact at a regional and/or national scale must also be analysed and demonstrated.*
- *Mapping of all strategies, partnerships, programmes and investments relevant to the vision and strategy, and how they will be aligned (including the accelerated capital funding, Covid-19 recovery and clean growth).*

### **Engagement and delivery**

- *Clear evidence of buy-in from local businesses and communities, description of have been engaged throughout the development of this plan, and how this engagement will continue*
- *Demonstration of commitments from private-sector players, and ambitions for private-sector investment going forwards (clearly showing the total private-sector funding leveraged to date)*
- *High-level plan of business case development and appraisal for each project including the identification of the Accountable Body*
- *High-level delivery plan with justification of deliverability”*

**Narrative to date:** Bearing in mind that preferred projects are yet to be selected, and the consultation final report is yet to be produced, the remainder of the report takes TDB through a potential narrative of, principally, the context and strategic sections of our prospectus.

**TDB feedback and comment will be particularly useful prior to further work in August/September.**

## Executive Summary

Loughborough's Town Deal (TD) proposals seek to unlock a literally unique opportunity for local, regional and national role players. Loughborough can become the Midlands' premier technopole of global quality. We are anchored by the only UK top-10 research-intensive university in any Town Deal invitee, two Enterprise Zones at scale, in one of the best located, most accessible centres in England.

However, these underlying assets and capabilities will only realise Loughborough's full potential if the town can be made to work better as a post-COVID19 place, with all town communities and many more businesses being able to participate in its growth and development, and if this is progressed through smart, green and innovative intervention strategies.

Our proposals seek £xxm capital and £yym revenue over 2021-25 from the Towns Fund to kickstart this transformation and accelerate post-COVID19 lock down recovery. These investments connect the global and national growth drivers and access corridors that tend to sit towards the edge of the town with the town centre and Loughborough's existing and new residential communities. They will renew the town centre's rich heritage and make it relevant to the future. They will help to repurpose and upgrade core retail areas and the user/visitor experience. Town Deal projects will reboot the economy and address low job and enterprise densities in the town; and will reskill and upskill the labour market and the employability of young people not currently fully participating in the town's vitality.

Underpinning the Town Deal's yy projects described in greater detail in Section Two is Loughborough's USP as an UK '**active living capital**' for approaching 70,000 current residents growing to over 80,000 in the 2030s. Active living post-COVID19 is about healthy, green and smart communities – old and young, prosperous and those at risk of being left behind. It is about innovation and delivering change effectively in order to improve wellbeing, inclusion and civic pride.

We believe our proposals offer the Midlands and UK a credible testbed for how places can adapt in the 2020s. There are experimental, pilot and demonstrator components to our approach which will strongly differentiate Loughborough from many other Town Deals. These can provide important and relevant urban models for other UK places, and economic and commercial opportunities for Global Britain.

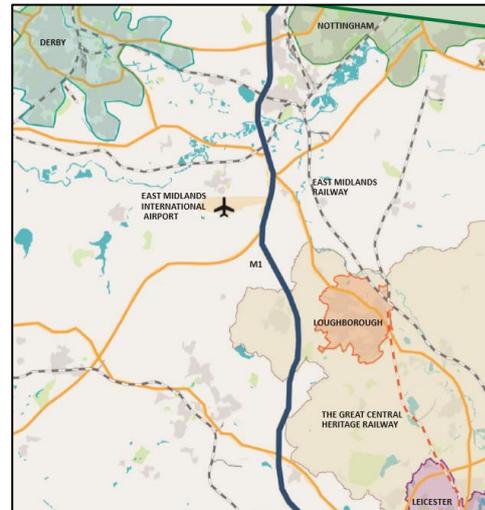
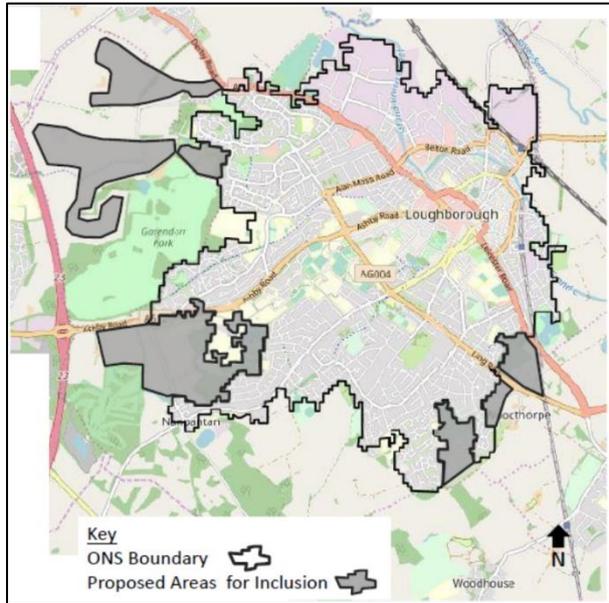
A Town Deal may be no more than a transaction between government and 100 towns to approve and deliver an investment programme that helps those towns better manage the challenges of the early 2020s. To be clear, this dimension is immensely helpful and valuable for Loughborough.

However, for some towns, the deal can be the launching pad for repositioning a place to play nationally and regionally significant roles and functions through the decade and beyond. This is the essence of the Loughborough Town Deal. Our TIP is an invitation to Government to embrace the UK and Midlands most credible 'active living capital' testbed. We seek Government commitment above and beyond investment funding. A whole government, combined with our whole-place, approach will improve the town, but also achieve exceptional value for Global Britain and the Midlands.

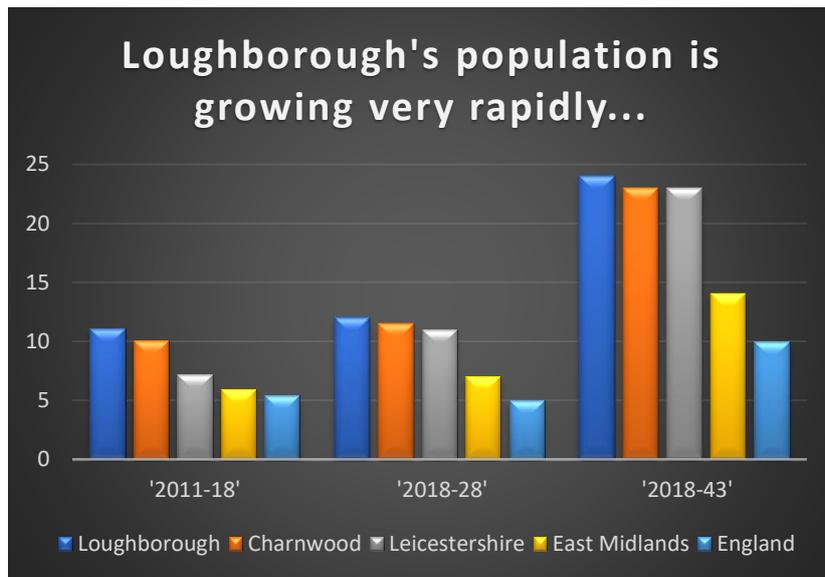
We hope the propositions below will enthuse Government as much as they have energised the town. We look forward to working with Government and other partners to bring them to fruition.

## Context Analysis

### Map of agreed boundary and Loughborough in its wider setting



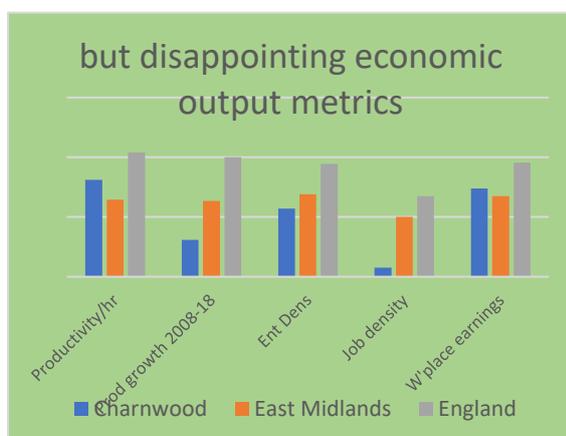
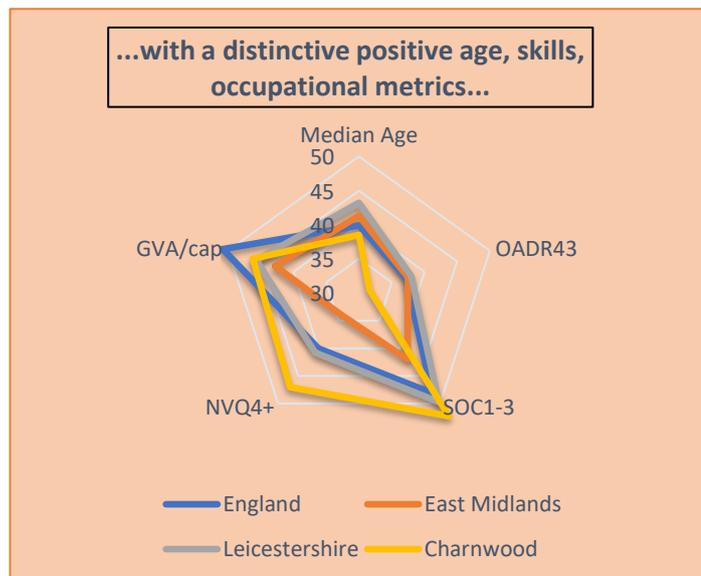
Headline economic and demographic statistical context



Loughborough's 2018 population (67,000) is growing rapidly. It is forecast to continue to grow at over double England averages and faster than East Midlands, Leicestershire and even Charnwood rates through to 2043, and exceed 80,000 during the 2030s.

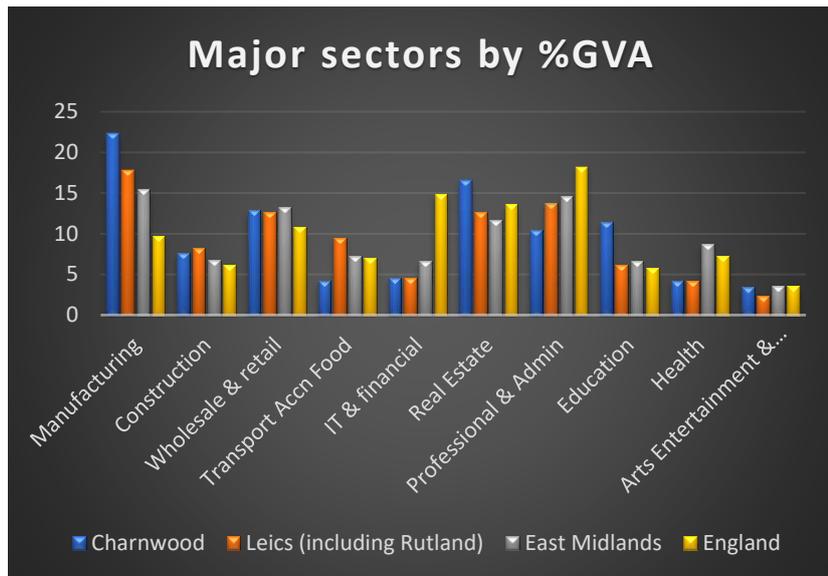
With a built-up area of 1450 hectares, the town has a density (46/ha) of city character – very similar to Nottingham and Derby.

Loughborough is younger and has a stronger skills and occupational profile than county, regional and even England averages. By 2043 its Old Age Dependency Ratio will still be below the England average today! This youthful, skills-rich profile is epitomised by the University with over 17,000 enrolled students and the College with over 11,000. This is augmented by typically over 1,000 net internal migration pa which is likely to increase further as out-migration from metros increases post-COVID19; and slightly lower (+/-800) net international immigration which may decline in the 2020s.



Yet, despite this demographic dynamism, Loughborough is far from fulfilling its economic potential. GVA per capita and economic metrics like productivity are much more typical of Midlands averages (so well below England); job and enterprise densities are even lower; and the gap between residential and workplace median earnings is very high. Loughborough's self-containment is only around 50% (53% in 2011 census) with up to 40% of economically active residents commuting to outside the borough (principally Leicester and the North West Leicestershire area around the airport).

The economic structure of the town is similarly distinctive and different to the rest of the Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEEP) and the regional geography. Strongly dominated by manufacturing and education, perhaps by virtue of proximity to the three major East Midlands cities, Loughborough is less strong in ICT, professional and business services that often drive local growth – and, perhaps surprisingly, in health and care.



Finally in terms of core metrics, Loughborough has two neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) and a further two in the bottom 20% - the only such neighbourhoods in Charnwood including the most deprived in Leicestershire outside the city. All four are adjacent to the town centre itself.

**The town’s assets and strengths:** The statistical profile above can only be interpreted and understood with reference to the qualities of Loughborough as a place.

*It genuinely is one of the best located and most accessible towns in England* – and arguably the best located in the East Midlands. Loughborough is at the centre of the East Midlands’ three major cities – Derby, Leicester and Nottingham – with a 2m+ population within 30minutes drive time. It is very close to East Midlands Airport, the proposed HS2 station at Toton and East Midlands Development Corporation prime sites. It is on the M1 Motorway and Midlands Mainline railway with regular services to London in 80 minutes. How could there not be low levels of self-containment with this type of accessibility? But this is also a huge opportunity to access all the strengths of Midlands labour and residential markets, business services and industrial supply chains, adding value to but also drawing value from them.

*Loughborough University (LU) is a top-10 UK university* with widely recognised global quality capabilities and at the apex of a rich education eco-system.

Loughborough University student enrolment on its 440-acre single site Loughborough campus is +/- 18,000 (including close to 3,000 international enrolments), with an employment headcount approaching 4,000. With annual turnover of +/-£300m, the latest economic impact study suggested a national impact approaching £1bn GVA pa and 14,400 FTE jobs – with over half of this accruing to the LLEP area. With a TEF Gold teaching rating and a top-10 England REF research rating Loughborough ranks near the very top of UK universities – 4<sup>th</sup> in the 2020 Guardian league table, 5<sup>th</sup> in the Times Good University Guide and 8<sup>th</sup> in the Complete University Guide. The QS World Rankings places LU as the world’s best university for sports-related subjects whilst it is first nationally on a number of other subject areas including Building, Communications, Information Management etc.

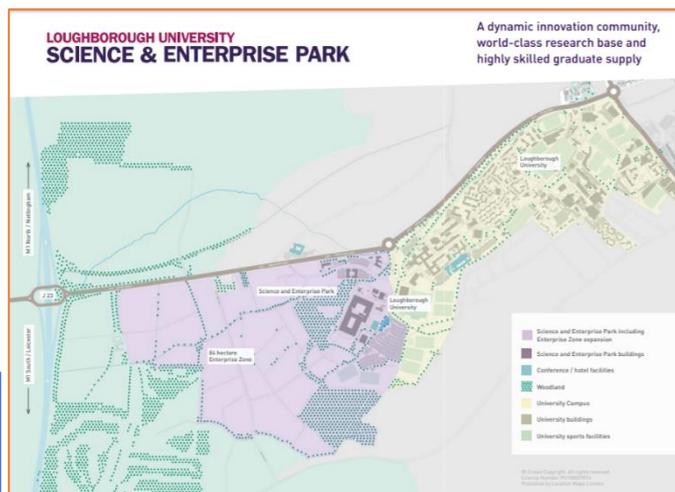
Loughborough College (LC) – on a campus opposite LU in West Loughborough – is similarly ranked gold in TEF degree teaching ratings. However, its main functions in the town and region is as one of the leading colleges in the UK for further education college, sixth form and apprenticeship delivery.

LC has around 11,000 learners and 900 staff. It produces strong metrics in learning outcomes, employment progression and staff performance. It is currently enhancing its core offers with both T-Level and Institute of Technology developments – and will be a key role player in post-COVID19 economic and social recovery planning.

Beyond LU and LC, Loughborough has some distinctive qualities in education provision, albeit alongside a more typical distribution of performance at all levels. Of particular significance, the independent Loughborough Schools Foundation brings together four schools and a nursery on a major campus adjacent to the town centre. Drawing from a wide catchment, they offer provision from six weeks to 18 to over 2500 school age pupils and nursery enrollees.

*Loughborough is an important Midlands and LLEP centre for high value, knowledge-based growth and manufacturing.* It hosts two large LLEP Enterprise Zone sites, the UKs first Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, and has a very strong manufacturing sector of national significance.

Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP) on over 260 acres adjacent to LU is one of the largest science park designations in the UK. Already hosting over 80 organisations from start ups to global businesses and national HQs, together employing over 2500 staff, it is one of two LLEP Enterprise Zones (EZ) in the town.



Charnwood Campus – formerly a major Astra-Zeneca research facility – is the other EZ. On 70 acres in the north of the town, it is designated the UKs first and currently only Life Sciences Opportunity Zone – offering a range of laboratories, office spaces and development opportunities in a tailored life sciences and pharmaceutical research eco-system.

Together, the EZs are around 50% larger than Oxford and Cambridge Science Parks put together! Over their development lifecycles they can potentially have at least a similar impact in terms of jobs, business growth and economic multipliers for Midlands Engine and UK.

More widely, Loughborough hosts major large national and global manufacturers – 3M Healthcare (pharmaceutical), Fisher Scientific (scientific instruments), Intelligent Energy (fuel cells), GL Industrial Services (engineering and scientific), Brush UK (power generation) are all based in Loughborough. It hosts a range of strategic company role players like Morningside Pharmaceuticals, and also niche specialists like the UKs only remaining Bell Foundry – an important, iconic part of the Town Deal.

*In summary*, Loughborough is the largest town in Leicestershire – young, dynamic and growing rapidly. It has superb accessibility, a world class research-intensive university, major development sites focused on high value, knowledge-based enterprise at scale, and a strong manufacturing base.

**Major challenges facing the town:** Just as the statistical portrait suggested key strengths, it also signals significant weaknesses which are further elaborated here. As is often the case, each strength has a related down-side – but there is perhaps a more fundamental part of the narrative that merits explanation and elaboration.

*Loughborough as an archetypal struggling Midlands sub-regional centre* – the very reason Towns Fund was created – but sitting alongside and within a place with global and national strengths.

Aggregate socio-economic performance is at or around Midlands averages – so well below national averages, let alone levels in the higher performing areas of London and Greater South East. This underperformance is sustained and exacerbated by three major divides – looking outwards, separation of opportunity from tackling disadvantage, and acute seasonality.

**Looking outwards:** Loughborough's strengths cluster towards the outskirts of the town rather than in a vibrant centre – so key components of Loughborough's current success look outwards from rather than inwards to the town. LU, the College and LUSEP are to the West on the way to Junction 23 of the M1, an area which will also host the large Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) of 3,200 new homes. Charnwood Campus is just off the A6 on the road to the Airport. Even the railway station – with its excellent connectivity – is 10-15 minutes walking distance east of the town centre – making a long east-west primary spine from there through the centre to the college, university, LUSEP and SUE.

**Separation of opportunity from tackling disadvantage:** A second big divide is between those that participate in and benefit from these strengths, and those that do not. To some extent this is shown in the high resident-workplace earnings gap. The average resident surplus of almost £70 per week above workplace earnings is 40% more than the borough figure, 50% above Leicestershire and over five times the regional gap of £12. Yet workplace earnings remain over £40 per week below the England average. Those with better qualifications and occupational capabilities more easily access the wider regional labour market – driven at least partly by low local job and enterprise densities.

Those outside the premier education, manufacturing, and other high value business eco-systems, or who are less likely to commute outwards, have a more normal distribution of skills levels compared to regional and national averages with some areas of acute low participation and attainment.

At its most extreme, this shows up in the four neighbourhoods in the most deprived 20% of England's LSOAs – the only such neighbourhoods in Charnwood and the worst performing in Leicestershire. These are all on the edge of or adjacent to the town centre itself, with physical as well as social and environmental domain-level deprivation.

**Seasonality and the day/night divides:** Finally in terms of the great divides, the preponderance of the education sector – LU, College and schools – means there are acute changes of character out of term time when students are on holiday (although clearly LU and College are open throughout the year). In similar terms, the way the town works as a place for living and working means there is a definite gap between day and night-time economies – especially given the attractions of neighbouring cities.

*A town centre with dynamics towards hollowing out:* The three divides described above are perhaps most brought to light in the current challenges facing the town centre.

The most recent health check for the town centre recognises reasonable levels of vitality, some 'jewels' particularly in townscape and open space, recent improvements, and a strong 'Love Loughborough' BID. The town was described as discharging its roles as a 'provincial market town' and the largest retail centre in Leicestershire after the city and its adjacent centres.

However, overall and confirmed by our consultation responses, the town centre looks dated and jaded in parts. Several of the heritage areas are in need of repair. It suffers from problematic access and circulation especially at peak times and along east-west and north-south corridors. The route from station to the centre is quite lengthy and through a weaker area of the town's offer. There is also an imbalance between the north and south parts of the centre. Vacancy rates – especially in secondary and peripheral areas are high – and might be expected to increase post-COVID19.

Whilst it can be argued that, pre-COVID19, Loughborough was holding its own as a provincial market town (our emphasis), none of the recent analyses suggest that it is well-placed to play a full town centre role for a rapidly growing town with global, national and Midlands roles and functions.

The town's drivers of growth and development are outside the centre. Threats to commercial and retail cores from accelerated post-COVID19 contraction and increased home working, and adjacent deprived neighbourhoods are clear threats. With relatively vibrant local town/village centres nearby, three major cities and regional out-of-town motorway-accessible centres like Fosse Park, without proactive intervention the town centre is as likely to suffer increasing hollowing out over the 2020s as continuing to perform satisfactorily.

*Slow pace of development and change:* The weaknesses above have been exacerbated by the relatively slow pace of attracting and delivering investment, especially transformational investment at scale, in the town. The two EZs are large and will take perhaps a generation to reach their full potential. Progress since designation has been patchy. Similarly, the town centre had a new masterplan adopted as recently as 2018, but, to date, the opportunity sites identified are proceeding in a piecemeal way – with definite lock down hiatuses.

A key challenge is to use the launch of the Town Deal agreement, and the resources available to implement it, to kickstart and accelerate what has hitherto been an unremarkable pace of delivery.

*A disproportionate post-COVID19 risk:* Finally, in terms of challenges, all towns will face major post-COVID19 recovery risks. These are potentially particularly acute in Loughborough. As the narrative explains, Loughborough's dependency on education and manufacturing – the two most impacted sectors by breakdown according to the OBR April 2020 base scenario – means the town is likely to have a GVA and employment impact significantly worse than the rest of the country. Add to this the second lockdown in Leicester – extending into Charnwood in July 2020 – and the recovery bounce back is even more precarious. In more tangible terms, the University – as with other universities – is facing genuine existential threats; and the manufacturing sector has both a major post-COVID19 and a post-Brexit rebooting to deliver.

This makes the Town Deal as an instrument of recovery even more important and decisive over the coming period.

**Key Opportunities for the town and evidence of need:** Building on the narrative above, the Town Deal Board produced a high-level SWOT in June 2020 on which we consulted fully (see below).

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger, higher skills, better jobs and growing faster than regional and county averages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of out-commuting for some higher earners, and of seasonality when university is closed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global quality university with relevant assets and capabilities for future town development &amp; wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town centre needs continual evolution and pace of development has sometimes been slow</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superb international gateway, national and regional location and access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four central neighbourhoods on edge of town centre are among most-deprived 20% in England</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage University, Enterprise Zones and other assets and relevant capabilities to make Loughborough a genuine global, national and regional knowledge hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National/regional post-lockdown economy reduces domestic demand, levels of private investment, and appetite for innovation – with amplified university and manufacturing dimensions that highly impact the town</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Town Deal and associated opportunities to make Loughborough work well as a cohesive, inclusive place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business closures and/or rationalisation increase need for reskilling and enterprise support beyond local capacity and resources to deliver</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasonable suite of long-standing plans and projects which can be made investment-ready relatively swiftly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social distancing and new public health requirements accelerate contraction of high street and reduces footfall in the medium term</li> </ul>

Many place-based strategies are founded on leveraging the strengths and opportunities whilst mitigating weaknesses and managing threats. How this is addressed by our Town Deal is described in greater detail in the following sections of this document. However, as is appropriate for a contextual chapter, an illustration of our approach is given in the table below:

Evidence of Need relevant to proposed projects	Key TIP Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major changes to manufacturing and other industries requires rapid, high quality and tailored reskilling and business development - especially in areas such as digital and technical skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use town’s rich education and enterprise assets – especially LU &amp; College – to address structural and post-COVID19 economic and employment changes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loughborough does not work as well as a place as it should – particularly on major corridors and within the town centre itself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop sustainable transport corridors, accelerate town centre repurposing, and make the centre a more pleasant user/visitor experience</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst having a number of iconic, important heritage sites and highly valued open spaces in the town centre, these are in poor condition and/or are not being used as much or as well as they might be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish key parks and buildings to improve both the user experience and to add new important assets and capabilities to the town’s local and national offer</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town is set to grow to over 80,000 population in the 2030s with 5,000 new homes – and also has major development sites with a continuing high flood risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring forward flood risk management schemes to make existing and development sites safer and reduce costs and risks of flood damage</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All towns need to contribute to UK carbon reduction commitments and to the public’s ambitions for environmental and ecosystem vitality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the Town Deal to accelerate and add value to a smart, green theme as integral to Loughborough’s future vision and priorities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of communities are not participating in or benefitting from Loughborough’s strengths &amp; success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Deal to prioritise interventions which link strengths with tackling disadvantage, inclusive growth and social mobility</li> </ul>

The table above illustrates our approach and is elaborated more fully in the following section on our Town Deal Strategy.

Finally, for this section, however, we wish to present the key opportunities for Government – your ambitions for post-pandemic recovery, Global Britain, levelling-up, and more specifically the Towns Fund that a Deal with Loughborough presents.

**Loughborough presents the only Town Deal opportunity to test how a global research-intensive university can assist drive growth, recovery, resilience and levelling up agendas in a town at scale**

Of the 100 Town Deal applicants, only 13 have an indigenous university. Of those thirteen, Loughborough is by far the highest ranked nationally, globally and in key research areas for relevant post-COVID19 recovery capabilities – sport and active living, health and life sciences, engineering (including smart urban systems). Only seven of the thirteen universities are in free-standing towns (the others are in multi-university conurbations), and Loughborough University is the largest of these.

**If the Midlands Engine (ME) & Government wishes to create a non-metropolitan, high knowledge-based, globally connected and renowned technopolis with an impact similar to Oxford and Cambridge, Loughborough is probably the only place in ME where this can be done successfully.**

Loughborough's rapid population growth, with a younger stronger skills and occupational profiles, two EZs – one on one of the three largest Science and Enterprise Parks in England and the other designated as the UK's first Life Sciences Opportunity Zone, have development potential to be 50% larger than Oxford and Cambridge Science Parks combined. This is in a location at the centre of the East Midlands' three major cities, with a 2m+ population 30 minutes drivetime catchment, very close to East Midlands Airport, the HS2 station and East Midlands Development Corporation prime sites, on the M1 Motorway and Midlands Mainline railway with regular services to London in 80 minutes.

**In summary, we believe that a Loughborough Town Deal is a key opportunity for Government – with national and Midlands Engine benefits well beyond the intrinsic outcomes for the town itself.**

The Town Deal process should be used as the hook on which a discussion about this narrative can proceed – and we have included elements in the TIP which will ensure those discussions can be evidence-based and robust. Ambitious Town Deals are premised on a whole-place approach. We hope and request that the deal also includes a whole-government contribution – policies and programmes beyond the specific financial ask of the TIP will be as crucial as the specific ask if Loughborough is to make its optimal contribution to Midlands and Global Britain's future success.

## Strategy

**Town vision, headline outcomes and targets for 2030 and beyond:** Our Town Deal has been the catalyst for a major re-visioning exercise for the town. This is quite distinctive from and sits above the TIP – which is the portfolio of interventions to progress the town towards our vision.

Prior to Town Deal, Loughborough's orthodox identity was presented as a provincial market and university town. The Town Deal Board discussed and then consulted on whether the 2020s post-COVID19 ambitions should be primarily about seeking to successfully return to this orthodoxy, or whether the town should be more forward and outward facing.

Although there are a breadth of opinions and perspectives, ultimately the Board are proposing the town is more ambitious and futures-oriented than hitherto; that Loughborough should seek to achieve its full potential; and that, in any event, the pre2020s provincial market town is neither unique enough, nor likely to provide a viable, resilient equilibrium over the coming period.

Rooted in our analysis, therefore, we are engaging locally to popularise, and wish to discuss with Government, a vision of:

***“Loughborough as a leading technopolis – globally known for active living excellence; the Midland’s premier specialised knowledge and science hub; at the centre of the tri-city area of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham; playing regional services roles as Leicestershire’s largest urban centre. To deliver these functions well, Loughborough has to be a great place to live, work and visit – offering residents, communities and business the opportunities, experiences and well-being to participate fully in the town’s life and development.”***

The headline outcomes for indicating progress towards this vision include:

- Sustaining population growth at least at twice England averages and achieving a population above 80,000 in the 2030s
- Delivering improvements in a basket of indicators measuring ‘good growth’ performance over the 2020s (e.g. productivity, enterprise density and dynamism, skills, environment, health and health inequalities, social mobility and income distribution) which demonstrate convergence of performance with selected more advanced Town Deal and comparator locations to be agreed (for instance, Milton Keynes, Swindon, Norwich, Northampton as Town Deals; Oxford, Reading, Brighton, York as comparators).
- A range of specific outcome indicators whose quantities will be modelled, including:
  - Exceeding Local Plan housing and employment growth projections
  - improving relative performance of the four Loughborough most deprived 20% LSOAs
  - Charnwood’s ranking on the UK Competitiveness Index
  - Loughborough University retaining its global #1 ranking for sports related subjects – at least insofar as UK national and Europe regional rankings are concerned
  - Increased occupancy of LUSEP and Charnwood campus in accordance with their respective phased EZ development plans
- We wish to discuss and agree the appropriate outcome baskets with Government and the delivery group during Town Deal negotiation of Heads of Terms – but are suggesting five-yearly review periods in 2025 and 2030

**Towns Fund request and short summary of projects:** Loughborough Town Deal Board is requesting a Towns Fund contribution of £xxxm capital and £yyym revenue over the 2021-25 period. It also recognises expenditure of £750,000 capital as a 2020/21 quick win precursor to the main programme.

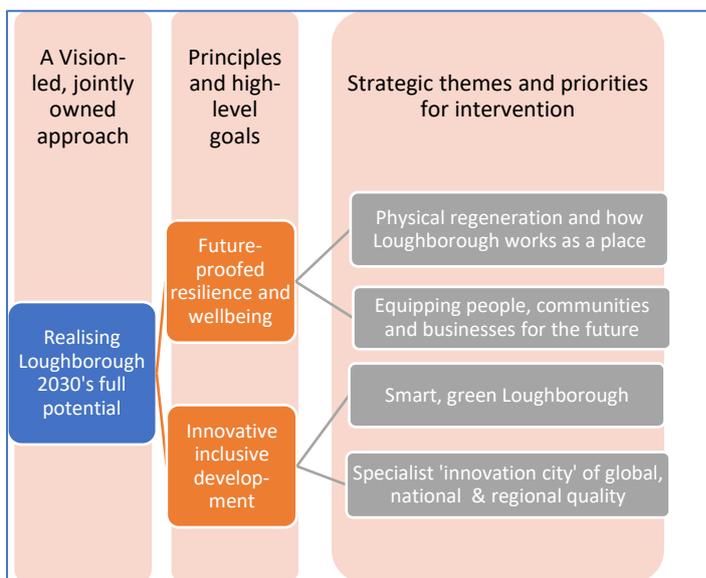
***This section will be completed when projects have been further worked up and selected, but should include (and could include on the basis of the most credible candidate proformas received):***

- Contributions to all the major headings in the Government’s own intervention framework
- How projects are directly related to the Loughborough strategy’s four pillars
- An amended and completed table akin to:

Title	TD Capital £000s	TD Revenue £000s	Thumbnail description
<b>Govt Intervention Framework (GIF) theme: Local Transport</b>			
Connected Loughboro’	Xxx	yyy	Smart, green sustainable transport corridor exemplar – station – TC – College – LU – LUSEP – SUE. Should attract further match
<b>GIF theme: Digital Connectivity</b>			
See Connected L’boro			Part of a wider, digitally connected intervention for the town
<b>GIF theme: Urban regeneration</b>			
EA flood risk managem’t	Xxx		Protects key areas and enables further developments
Canal & River Trust	Xxx		Canalside improvements – could go in 2020/21 (tbc)
Loughborough Lanes	Xxx		Public realm TC vitality scheme – links other opportunity sites
Bedford Square	Xxx		Contribution to close funding gap to enable project to proceed
TD Observatory		Yyy	Policy and evidence hub exemplar. Should be able to reduce costs with UKRI and other (Leics/Midlands Engine observatory) match
<b>GIF theme: Arts, culture and heritage</b>			
Taylor’s Bell Foundry	Xxx	-	Multi-theme project which can be expanded and is of potentially huge national as well as local estate regeneration significance
Generator	Xxx	-	Home for Charnwood Arts and creative space in refurb TC building
Grand Central Railway	Xxx	-	An apprentice hub and visitor facility
<b>GIF theme: Skills infrastructure</b>			
College Digital Hub	Xxx	-	New T-Level centre and digital hub on college campus
Youth Services Trust	-	Yyy	Youth employability pathway & life skills for disadvantaged YP – brings Sports Park occupants into town life (5 years x £200kpa)
<b>GIF theme: Enterprise infrastructure</b>			
SportsPark Pavillion 4	Xxx	-	Attract further National HQs to LU. On DCMS relocation radar. Should be able to reduce TD amounts with other HMG/LEP match
LU Wayfinder	Xxx	Yyy	Town centre-based incubator and innovation centre/accelerator
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>Xxx</b>	<b>yyy</b>	

**Strategic Plan:** Based on the contextual analysis, ambitions and headline objectives described above, the Town Deal Board has developed the following programme-level Theory of Change:

	SUMMARY	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS
<b>GOAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realising Loughborough's full potential in the 2030s as an 80,000+ population premier regional centre in the Midlands Engine with consistently high levels of resilience, sustainability, wellbeing, inclusion and innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loughborough's 'triple bottom line' performance improvement will match and exceed that of relevant high-performing comparator places (e.g. Oxford, Bath) by 2030</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bespoke index will be assembled – drawing on 'good growth', 'thriving places' and other relevant indicators</li> <li>ONS, Government, regional and local statistics assembled in a composite basket of indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National, regional and local policy contexts enable and support Loughborough's triple bottom line ambitions – in a scenario where UK broadly recovers from COVID19 and other major shocks and disruption</li> <li>CBC has powers, resources, capabilities and commitment to deliver change effectively</li> </ul>
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loughborough functions well as a place – with a vibrant centre and cohesive communities and neighbourhoods</li> <li>Loughborough's people, communities and businesses are well equipped for post-lockdown recovery and long-term success</li> <li>Loughborough is a smart (digitally enabled) sustainable regional centre known for its innovation and adaptability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Plan housing and job projections customarily exceeded</li> <li>Town Centre Health Check consistent performance improvements</li> <li>LLEP LIS &amp; recovery programmes fully delivered in Loughborough/CBC area</li> <li>Consistent improvement against selected indexes – e.g. Sustainable Cities, IMD, UK Competitiveness Index</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Loughborough and Charnwood 'mini-Observatory' will be established as part of Town Deal &amp; CBC recovery plan to track local, regional and national statistics relevant to the outcome indicators specified</li> <li>Where necessary specialist exercises will translate regional/nat'l data into Loughborough-specific intelligence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resident, Business and government confidence in Loughborough Town Deal and Recovery Plans is high and sustained</li> <li>UK and regional recovery plans, US, Local Plan and TD are approved promptly, resourced properly and delivered managed effectively</li> <li>Strong local resilience established to manage future economic, social and environmental shocks</li> </ul>
<b>OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Deal investment projects delivered on time and budget and achieve agreed outputs</li> <li>Complementary and related changes are also delivered effectively</li> <li>Local community and business confidence in the TD and recovery process is high and sustained throughout the TD period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TD gateways approved 2020-26</li> <li>Local, regional, national and other relevant policies and programmes meet their own targets/requirements</li> <li>Periodic qualitative and quantitative market research of resident and business sentiment is positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TD reporting requirements</li> <li>TD Board, Stakeholder and other sub-group self assessment and periodic market research/community consultation exercises</li> <li>CBC, County, LLEP, reports required for other policies and programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong TD proposition and final TIP approved promptly and resourced adequately</li> <li>Counterpart project funding available</li> <li>Project sponsors/delivery bodies perform well</li> <li>Community involvement/ownership sustained</li> <li>Related and synergistic interventions can be identified and progressed satisfactorily</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TD/TIP proposition submitted by 31/07/20, authorised during Autumn, and proceeds to full sign off within 12 months</li> <li>TIP projects progress design, development and secure counterpart funding in 2020/21</li> <li>Ways found for potential early win and shovel-ready schemes to start activity</li> <li>TIP2021-26 proceeds as envisaged in TD agreement with government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TD/TIP approved by TDB, submitted by 31/07/20, authorised during Autumn 2020, formally launched within 12 months, with complete programme delivery thereafter</li> <li>Some projects and initiatives are supported to proceed prior to formal TD approval and launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TD/TIP documentation – including required reports 2021-26</li> <li>CBC, County, LLEP, regional and national impact and recovery reports</li> <li>Regular meetings of TDB, stakeholder and sub-groups, with updating of TD web site and other community involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TD/TIP Submission meets government requirements and is authorised for timely development and delivery</li> <li>Wider national, regional and local recovery plans enable a relatively smooth turnaround which allows TD/TIPs to be approved</li> <li>TIP projects able to develop compelling full business cases securing counterpart funding</li> <li>No further existential national/local shocks</li> </ul>

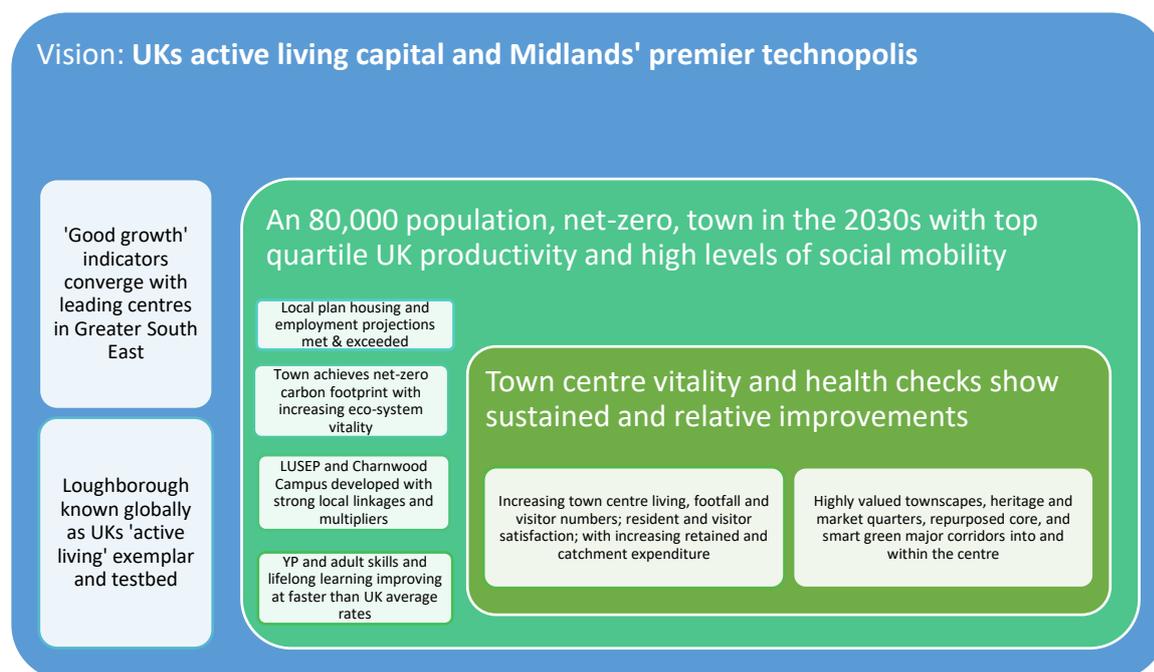


Our strategic plan framework is shown opposite.

To progress an ambitious, nationally significant vision, the town needs to work well as a place; an increasing number of businesses, communities and residents need to be equipped to play a positive role in the town's development; and change needs to be smart, green and innovative. The off-centre positioning of key assets and access corridors needs to be mitigated; low jobs and enterprise densities with modest workplace productivity should be turned around.

Although majority of TIP funding will be deployed in the town centre and adjacent neighbourhoods, the strategy is built-up area wide because connectivity between key assets on the periphery and the centre is crucial. There is also a particular focus on the key east-west spine [station – centre – College – University – SUE – M1 and Shephed] for similar rationales.

**Objectives, targets and priorities:** Headline outcomes and targets were outlined above. How these are positioned in the most ambitious Town Deal option are shown in the following figure:



Self-evidently, this high ambition hierarchy of objectives, targets and priorities is both generational in timescales, and requires much more than a Town Deal in stimulus. For example, were Loughborough, by the mid 2030s, to be an 80,000 population town achieving UK top quartile productivity with average UK jobs and enterprise densities (they are currently well below average) this might amount to an economy of the order of £3bnpa in 2018 prices which is an uplift of over £1bnpa from 2018.

Our TD targets and priorities, therefore, are much more about kickstarting this process with a focus on the green intervention priorities in the figure above. For instance:

- Delivering local plan housing and employment projections will be assisted by flood resistance and mitigation works, the Town Deal enabling urban living in repurposed town centre properties, and by progressing a green transport corridor from the centre to the station to the east and the major employment areas and new sustainable urban extension to the west.
- The net-zero ambitions will benefit from Town Deal green interventions – the aforementioned corridor, electric vehicle infrastructure and services, and renewable energy improvements
- The LUSEP/Charnwood Campus local linkages and multipliers include bringing incubation, careers and job shop services into the town centre; as well as stronger links between LUSEP and Charnwood Campus tenants and young people training and employability.
- Young People and adult skills, and lifelong learning densities, will be supported through digital skills provision and a range of apprenticeship opportunities in key town centre organisations
- All of these intervention strategies can be designed to improve town centre vitality. Upgrading townscape and distinctive architecture are integral to the town centre physical regeneration projects proposed

One of the distinctive features about the proposal will be our Policy and Evidence Hub. Our approach in this regard may have major read-across for other Town Deals and place-based strategies more widely.

With the support of the University, and hopefully the UKRI COVID19 open call for ideas, we intend to establish a Loughborough Observatory to ensure Town Deal and TIP intervention strategies are evidence-based and their impact reviewed and evaluated robustly. One of the first tasks of the Hub will be to firm up the targets and indicators of achievement of the Town Deal theory of change – including a bespoke ‘good growth’ index that can form an integral part of the Heads of Terms and eventual agreement.

More broadly, we consider this exercise has regional and national relevance – both for testing and developing mini-Observatory solutions for Towns Fund and other smaller places; and for elaborating menus for targets and indicators for other place-based strategies including Towns Fund recipients.

**Synergies and alignment:** The Town Deal TIP need to be part of and a catalyst to a whole town approach. Our proposals have a leverage and match public funding ratio that varies across individual projects, but which delivers at least a 1:1 public match. The public funds seek to leverage at least a similar level of developer and investor interest – meaning a minimum Town Deal leverage of 1:4.

In particular, Government referenced a number of relevant funding streams in the further guidance, and our portfolio of schemes relates to these in the following ways:

Govt alignment	Town Deal major schemes										Comments
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	
One Public Estate											
DCMS											
DfE											
DEFRA											
DIT											
DfT											
DWP											
MHCLG											

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In addition, Loughborough’s two Enterprise Zones and the UK’s first Life Sciences Opportunity Zone are already major considerations for LLEP and Midlands Engine programmes. The M1 Motorway J23 and A512 major road schemes are key enabling investments for the development of LUSEP and the town’s 3,200 home Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). As a research-intensive university, LU is well tied in with UKRI and departmental research programmes – and indeed our Observatory project is a specific match-funded contributor to a current UKRI priority.

In summary, the Town Deal is both a catalyst and enabler for major new initiatives – especially from the business sector – and also well-aligned to realise the benefits of complementary existing public investment strategies particularly at LLEP and Midlands Engine levels.

Whilst some dimensions of Government’s place-based approaches to post-COVID19 recovery planning remain work-in-progress, and pre-lock down strategies like the LIS or the Shared Prosperity Fund should be progressed during the Comprehensive Spending Review, we are confident that synergies and alignment are strong features of our Town Deal.

**Engagement and delivery** – [to be inserted following receipt of final consultation report and follow up activities in August/September]. This will include government requirements on:

- *“Clear evidence of buy-in from local businesses and communities, description of have been engaged throughout the development of this plan, and how this engagement will continue – **progress to date summarised in accompanying consultation and update reports**”*
- *Demonstration of commitments from private-sector players, and ambitions for private-sector investment going forwards (clearly showing the total private-sector funding leveraged to date) – **see proposed approach in Appendix Two paper***
- *High-level plan of business case development and appraisal for each project including the identification of the Accountable Body – **CBC with business case development schedules to be drawn from preferred project proformas in due course***
- *High-level delivery plan with justification of deliverability – **see above**”*

## Appendix Two: Town Investment Plan (TIP) – next steps and project appraisal criteria

**Introduction and purpose:** This paper provides advice on projects received to date, options for appraisal of these and for generating other potential schemes which may seek support from the Town Deal Town Investment Plan (TIP). It then suggests further steps in the TIP formulation process in August and September 2020.

**Background and Context:** Loughborough has been working to draft a +/-£25m Town Investment Plan (TIP) by the end of July 2020 for an expenditure period of up to five years from early 2021. The Government Further Guidance of 15<sup>th</sup> June specified requirements of a TIP in much greater detail than hitherto. It also gave options for submission dates of July 31<sup>st</sup>, October 31<sup>st</sup> and January 2021. It explained Towns Fund is 90% capital and 10% revenue – emphasising an expectation that Town Deals are predominantly capital. It suggested an option for exceptional proposals up to £50m – subject to greater scrutiny.

In order to receive project proposals that more closely met these government requirements a project proforma process was sent to potential applicants and placed on the CBC web site from 26/06 seeking submissions over the following two-week period ending 10/07.

**Project proformas received:** As of close of play on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 11 broadly eligible proformas had been received, seeking Town Deal support of £16.8m capital and £3.7m revenue. A further 2-3 were subsequently submitted. Some uncosted or most likely ineligible proformas have also been received.

Preliminary assessment of projects received concluded a number of positives and some concerns:

- The total amount sought (over £20m) is a credible amount for a programme with a maximum £25m ask – BUT it is well short of an amount that would enable TDB to have a level of choice in schemes to be selected, and amounts of TIP contribution to be allocated.
- The 18% revenue funding sought is not unreasonable, but is well above the 10% Towns Fund capital/revenue split – and will need further work on justification
- Levels of leverage (over £40m of total spend) and the spread across Government intervention themes and our own proposition draft is reasonable – BUT much of the leverage and spread relies on further public spending decisions (e.g. departmental, HLF etc) yet to be confirmed
- Some key partners and direct business-led proposals were less prominent than sought

These considerations were material in the decision to submit in Cohort Two. They need to be addressed and resolved over the coming period.

**Further project development work – August & September:** In order to firm up the TIP project portfolio the following next steps are suggested:

- Existing proposals should be supported to progress their business cases and increase alignment with and contributions to Government and TDB investment priorities
- The project proforma process should be extended to indicate further proposals will be welcomed – with bespoke discussions progressed with key partners whose involvement is particularly relevant to TD purposes and priorities. TDB advice is sought on an extension date.
- A Developer and Investment Forum should be convened to encourage more direct business engagement either as partners in public projects or in their own right

**A commissioning approach:** Beyond encouraging development of existing proposals and submission of new ones, the period to the Cohort Two deadline offers TDB the opportunity to consider whether to proactively commission new projects that have a strategic role in the achievement of Town Deal outcomes.

A number of ideas have emerged in the June/July period from potential applicants that may merit further investigation and collaborative work. Among the most strategically significant of these are:

1. Town Centre economic hub – A scheme for repurposing a town centre retail unit to house economic and skills purposes (e.g. employment and skills assistance, business growth support etc.) which could assist with bringing major role players like LU and the College directly into the town centre. This could potentially be one of the early win CBC 2020/21 projects
2. Low Carbon, Green Loughborough – a proposal which includes electric charging points, vehicles, taxi adaptation scheme, bundled with solar and renewable energy investments has been mooted and could be firmed up over the summer
3. Developer Accelerator – A number of developers have expressed an interest in TD but have wanted flexible, novel support from TD that was difficult to secure in the June/July period. Preliminary indicators are that a Town Deal contribution of +/-10% would bring forward and accelerate private sector investors to deliver relevant major schemes of £20-40m over the TD period. It may make sense to consider how a TD capital investment of £2-£4m over 2021-25 might enable this level (i.e. £20-£40m) of private sector involvement.
4. Active Living Capital – having floated this as a potential distinctive Loughborough USP of national/international quality, there may be an opportunity to further develop the idea into an exceptional programme for either TD or a portfolio of public support
5. Microprojects scheme – We might float a small capital projects scheme – to be run by CBC, Love Loughborough or another third party with some overview from a sub-committee of TDB – to support small capital projects (e.g. up to £100k) for town deal aligned purposes. At, say, £400kpa x 5 years, this equals £2m. Government might well reject it, but there is a case to be made – especially given COVID19 distractions can be argued to have delayed development of these types of schemes.

TDB are requested to consider both the principle of adopting a commissioning approach to new proposals – and the relative attractiveness of the five types of scheme outline above.

**Appraisal criteria:** If we wish to get into a position where there are more proposals for TIP support than there is likely to be TIP resources, then TDB will need to set out appraisal criteria by which projects will be prioritised.

Government has informed us of criteria it will use to assess Section Two (i.e. project) TIP submissions and provided an excel template to be completed for each project. Their latest explicit criteria are:

- *“Alignment with [the Government] intervention framework*
- *Strategic, evidence-based, place-focused rationale*
- *Scale of outputs and outcomes, realism of theory of change*
- *Deliverability, risks and match funding*
- *Cost comparison [i.e. value for money presumably compared to other TD TIPs]”*

These criteria are an evolution of those announced in the June Further Guidance. We should anticipate that the possibility that these will evolve further when Government considers its experience of Cohort One TIPs. Nor does Government ascribe weightings to the criteria.

It is suggested that the Government criteria are adopted by TDB on an interim basis in order to give actual and potential applicants a clear steer as to what is expected of them – with slight additions of:

- Alignment with Loughborough’s four pillars made explicit in Government’s “*strategic, evidence-based, place-focused rationale*”
- An explicit criterion of contributing to post-COVID19 recovery plans and mitigating specific Loughborough risks to that recovery (e.g. our high manufacturing/education footprints) should be a sixth criterion

Whilst all six criteria may be weighted equally – there should be minimum thresholds beneath which a project will be rejected however highly it has scored on the other criteria.

These criteria should be kept under review and amended if Government issues new advice.

If TDB wishes to establish explicit criteria, there should be a process for determining scoring. It is suggested that this should be a technical exercise of the CBC TD project team – reporting to a TDB sub-group prior to final TIP drafting and sign off.

**Exceptionality:** The draft Section One makes a case that Loughborough is an exceptional TD opportunity. All of us who know and are passionate about the town recognise our exceptionality. If it is the case that, following further project development work, quantum of TD proposals significantly exceeds £25m, then TDB have the option of considering whether to make an exceptional TD bid – up to £50m. This can be considered as further work proceeds in August/September.

**Concluding remarks:** The decision to progress Loughborough’s Town Deal in Cohort Two gives TDB an opportunity both to develop the detail of existing proposals, broaden the portfolio as a whole, and to ensure the development and appraisal processes are fair and robust. This paper outlines next steps, an approach to commissioning, and an appraisal framework for this activity.

TDB advice and feedback on the suggestions are sought to shape our work in August and September.

David Marlow, July 2020

## LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN DEAL BOARD

24th July 2020

### Item 7 – Upfront Projects Funding

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides information about a new government grant available for town deal locations. The Board was notified on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, by email, of the Government announcement.

**Recommendation:** That the Board welcomes the availability of the grant and asks the Borough Council to consult closely with the Board in deciding which project or projects should potentially be eligible for the grant funding.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 As part of the Government's response to the impacts of Covid-19 on the economy it announced that town deal locations should benefit from upfront funding which will help kick-start recovery and enable the delivery of 'shovel-ready' schemes.

#### 3. Details of the upfront Funding for Town Deal Locations

- 3.1 The Government has announced that all 101 town deal locations will receive 'upfront' grant funding to help them kick-start economic recovery and get shovel-ready projects underway. The amount of grant received is based upon population size which means that Loughborough will receive £750,000.
- 3.2 The grant will be given to the Borough Council to spend in consultation with the Town Deal Board. Any project on which the grant is spent must be completed (i.e delivered rather than started) by the end of March 2021. Feasibility and strategy work are ineligible.
- 3.3 The Council must inform the Government that it wishes to accept the grant and what it will spend the money on by 14<sup>th</sup> August.
- 3.4 Any project which benefits from upfront funding should be able to demonstrate a link to Loughborough's town investment plan. It should be consistent with thematic priorities and / or be a pre-cursor to enablement of a larger scale project and / or unlock and facilitate delivery of something which is 'shovel-ready'.
- 3.5 Council officers and Third Life Economics are actively liaising with stakeholders about projects which can realistically be completed by the end of March 2021. It is suggested that priority should be given to

projects which create jobs and encourage enterprise or skills because of the ever-increasingly severe negative impact of the pandemic on the economy and employment.

3.6 Once a long-list of potentially suitable – and importantly deliverable in a short period of time – projects has been drawn-up, the Council will share that list with the Town Deal Board and seek its views. It is proposed that if there is more than one suitable project for this funding, any which do not make the ‘cut’ for the money available will automatically then be included within the main Town Investment Plan.

3.7 A copy of the letter informing us of the grant award is attached below at the Appendix.

#### 4. Risks

4.1 The considered risks are:

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
1	The number of suitable projects total more the £750K	Not all projects receive funding	a) Transparent evaluation of projects’ merits b) Projects that do not receive upfront funding are put in to the main town investment plan
2	Nil projects are considered suitable and / or deliverable in the spending timeframe	The government would not release the grant.	CBC and the TD Board liaise immediately with project sponsors to identify projects.

#### Appendix

Letter received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Jenny Dibden  
Co-Director, Cities & Local Growth Unit  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local  
Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

Rob Mitchell  
Charnwood Borough Council

1 July 2020

Dear Rob,

Yesterday the Prime Minister announced that government is bringing forward £5bn of capital investment projects, supporting jobs and the economic recovery.

The Towns Fund is central to the government's ambition to level up the country – creating jobs and building stronger and more resilient local economies and communities. In recognition of the importance of this fund and the pressing need in the towns that have been selected to benefit, government is bringing forward funding to this financial year to support projects that will make an immediate impact in towns.

We are therefore offering Loughborough a grant of £750,000 now to fund capital projects that can be delivered this financial year. Funding is being allocated according to population size from the 2011 Census, using the Office for National Statistics' categorisation of small, medium and large towns. This grant will be used to support capital spend within the intervention framework as set out in the Towns Fund Further Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-further-guidance>.

We are particularly encouraging projects that will support towns in responding to immediate challenges, including:

- Improvement to or new parks and green spaces and sustainable transport links
- Improvements to town centres including repurposing empty commercial properties
- Demolition or site remediation where this will have an immediate benefit

The next step in releasing this money is for you to write to us at [towns.fund@communities.gov.uk](mailto:towns.fund@communities.gov.uk) to confirm what you will do with the grant. You will need to include confirmation from your S151 officer that this spending is in line with the Towns Fund intervention framework, will achieve good value for money and that the project can be delivered this financial year. **Please send your letter by 14 August.** Following receipt of your letter we will review your proposal to ensure it satisfies the requirements above, before releasing the funding.

When your town submits their Town Investment Plan in their agreed cohort, we will ask you to confirm how you are building on this initial investment.

Please get in touch with your named Towns Hub lead if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing your projects and continuing to work with you as you develop your Town Investment Plans.

*Jenny Dibden*

**JENNY DIBDEN**

## LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN DEAL BOARD

24th July 2020

### Item 8 - Project Resources Update

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper provides an update on the Town Deal Project budget and sets out project management resources required to year end.

#### Recommendations:

1. That the commitments and expenditure against the budget are noted;
2. That an additional £8k of capacity funding, to extend the secondment of the current post holder in the role of Town Deal Project Manager from 31 July 2020 to 31 March 2021, be approved;
3. That the intention to extend the contract period for Third Life Economics beyond 31 July 2020 be noted.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1. At its meeting on 29 January 2020 the Board was advised the Council had received an initial £162,000 towards capacity funding to support the development of a Town Deal Board and Investment Plan.

- 2.2. The Town Funds prospectus anticipated the funding will be used for:

- Convening the Town Deal Board
- Running business and wider community events
- Developing town investment plans
- Providing Technical expertise for business case development

- 2.3. The report summarised expected expenditure as follows:

Item	Budget allocation
Consultancy support for Investment Plan	£75,000
Town Deal Project Manager	£45,000
Communications Plan	£30,000
Miscellaneous operating costs	£12,000
<b>total</b>	<b>£162,000</b>

- 2.4. The prospectus said further support may be available from MHCLG, other relevant government departments or further sources to be announced and Board were advised further guidance from government was expected early in 2020. That guidance was issued on 15 June 2020.
- 2.4 On 1 July 2020 government wrote to the Council advising it was to receive £750k of forward capital funding to support schemes that can be implemented before end of March 2021 in accordance with the intervention framework in the latest guidance. We have until 14 August to write back with the S151 officer's confirmation of what we propose to use the grant for. The Council has been advised that the allocation cannot be used for capacity support.

### **3. Resources update**

- 3.1. Board will be aware that a Town Deal Project Manager was appointed in February 2020. That appointment was intended to guide the Board and the preparation of a Town Deal Investment Plan until it was submitted on 31 July 2020, at which point the officer reverts to his substantive post. The allocation of capacity funding was made to cover the additional costs of this secondment and also the appointment of an agency worker to backfill the post for a six month period.
- 3.2. Third Life Economics Ltd were appointed to support the preparation of the Town Deal Investment Plan on 18 March 2020. Their contractual obligations stipulate engagement in the project for four months between 1 April and 31 July 2020. A budget of £75k was set aside for this work strand and the contract price was £64k plus travel and disbursements (but including £20k contingency for specialist/expert consultancy support).
- 3.3. The guidance issued by government on 15 June has now shone a light on the work required from the Council and the Town Deal Board in order to progress the Investment Plan following its submission. It is now clear that the Town Deal Project Manager post will need to continue until at least the the end of the financial year 2020/21 to provide support to this process as well as that for forward funded projects. The cost of this extension will be £8k and can be met from the underspend in consultancy support in the capacity funding budget.
- 3.4. It is also prudent to consider amending the consultancy contract for Third Life Economics, to extend its reach beyond 31 July. This proposal would support the further consultancy work required as may be necessary to coordinate forward funded and Investment Plan projects to meet government objectives, up to the limit of the agreed contract value of £64k. Flexibility for such an eventuality was included within the contract wording.
- 3.5. Board also agreed in January 2020 working revenue to cover anticipated expenditure for hospitality, printing, room hire as well as contingency. A budget of £12k was suggested for this and approved. In the event, the Covid Pandemic has meant so far this has not been utilised as intended. However it

is sensible to retain this as contingency beyond 31 July to meet any future demands arising from the Project

- 3.6. Government guidance issued to date does not provide any sign that there will be any further capacity funding for project delivery. Although there is always a possibility this position will change, the Board may wish to invite a paper to a future meeting setting out options for how this resource gap can be bridged in the new financial year 2021/22.

#### 4. Budget summary

Item	Budget allocation	Committed to 1 July
Consultancy support for Investment Plan	£75,000	£64,000
Town Deal Project Manager	£45,000	£45,000
Communications Plan	£30,000	£30,000
Miscellaneous operating costs	£12,000	£0
<b>total</b>	<b>£162,000</b>	<b>£138,000</b>

#### 5. Risks

	Risk	Impact	Mitigation
1	That unforeseen costs arise that exceed the remaining budget	Negative impact on bidding process Potential reputational damage	Maintain dialogue with CLGU/MHCLG
2	Failure to engage in line with Government guidance	Negative impact on bidding process Potential reputational damage	Ensure guidance is followed and liaise with MHCLG when necessary, taking advantage of any support available