

NELSON TOWN DEAL

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 2019 the Government invited 101 Towns, including Nelson, to develop proposals for a Town Deal, each one potentially receiving up to £25million investment from the £3.6 billion Towns Fund.

The Towns Fund Prospectus recognises that with the right support, investment and strong local and community leadership, towns can unlock their full growth potential, helping to raising living standards and productivity across the country.

In order to secure a Town Deal, each town must establish a Town Deal Board. In Nelson this is made up of representatives from local businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations, the Youth Council, the MP and public sector bodies such as Pendle Council, Lancashire County Council and Nelson Town Council.

The Board is responsible for drawing up a Town Investment Plan. This is an ambitious plan to transform the town's economic growth prospects. This Plan must demonstrate a clear understanding of the area in terms of its needs, the challenges it faces and the opportunities to improve the future of Nelson. It will set out a clear vision and strategy for the economic growth of Nelson over the next decade, including recovery from the current COVID crisis.

The Towns Fund guidance is clear that stakeholder and community engagement must be integral to the development of Town Investment Plans. The level and quality of community engagement will be a key factor when assessing and agreeing Town Deals. Each Town Investment Plan should include a **stakeholder engagement plan** outlining the approach to engagement. This is the first iteration of the engagement plan for Nelson, developed by the stakeholder engagement sub-group of the Board.

2. THE AIM OF THIS PLAN

The aim of this stakeholder engagement plan is to outline our approach to stakeholder engagement, focussing primarily at this stage on the development of the Town Investment Plan for Nelson. Its purpose is to outline the WHO, WHAT, HOW and WHEN of our approach, that is:

WHO are the key stakeholders and target audience that we wish to engage with,

WHAT do we want to know,

HOW best to engage, recognising different methods of engagement will be required to suit different audiences,

WHEN are the key stages of engagement and communication in the development of our Plan.

This plan will be considered a live document that can change and evolve over the course of the development and delivery of the Town Deal.

The plan has been created in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into account the need for social distancing measures and restrictions around public meetings and events. The engagement programme will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in light of any changes arising in these restrictions.

3. WHO – OUR TARGET AUDIENCE

It is recognised that everyone who lives and works in Nelson will have an interest in the future of the town. The population of the town is relatively young, with an above average number of people in the age 0-15 category. It also has a large BAME population and a growing Eastern European community.

Given the nature of the Towns Fund, and its focus on skills, enterprise and economic growth, businesses and employers also have an important part to play. It is crucial that all of these groups are engaged in the process.

The perceptions of Nelson from the surrounding areas are generally poor. If Nelson is to grow and prosper, these negative views must be overcome and therefore the views of people living in the wider areas should also be considered.

The table below summarises our key audience/target groups, the existing networks and locations we can use to communicate with them, and the potential barriers to engagement that need to be considered.

Audience/groups	Existing networks / places to target engagement activities for each group	Potential barriers to engagement for these groups
Residents, incl BAME and Eastern European Community	Homes, public / community buildings. Places of worship.	COVID restrictions. Lack of time. Language barriers. Disabilities, e.g. mobility difficulties, hearing or visual impairments.
Businesses and Employers and intermediaries/trade bodies	Town centre businesses, industrial estates and protected employment sites Pendle Vision Board Business in Pendle Facebook Group	COVID restrictions. Lack of time. Engagement must be relevant and focussed. Digital platforms help to make information accessible at all times.
Young People	Youth Council / Youth Groups Colleges Schools	COVID restrictions. Lack of interest. Appropriate channels of engagement.
Community and Voluntary Sector Groups	Established networks and partnerships amongst Town Deal Board members Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale CVS	COVID restrictions. Time/capacity to engage in current COVID crisis.
Public service providers	Established networks and partnerships amongst Town Deal Board members	COVID restrictions. Time/capacity to engage in current COVID crisis.
Residents and others outside of Nelson	Public buildings. Council newsfeeds.	COVID restrictions. Lack of interest and time. Language barriers. Disabilities, e.g. mobility difficulties, hearing or visual impairments.

4. WHAT DO WE WANT TO KNOW?

Throughout the process of developing and delivering the Town Deal, we need to be clear about what we are asking / what we want to know.

The development of the Town Investment Plan has several key stages and these are identified in the table below. At each stage, we have set out what it is that we want to know and understand to help inform the next phase of development.

Key Stage of work to develop the Town Investment Plan and Town Deal	Why engage? What do we want to know?
Early data gathering	Identifying issues and opportunities, likes and dislikes about Nelson to feed in to the context analysis and early identification of projects.
Draft vision, strategy and emerging project proposals	<p>Testing the draft vision and objectives – do they have broad agreement and support? Is there a clear read across from the issues and opportunities identified?</p> <p>Sharing information on the potential long list of projects to identify broad areas of support</p> <p>Sharing information on the process by which a short list has been derived, and encourage stakeholders to have their say on project proposals</p>
Draft Town Investment Plan	<p>Project level stakeholder engagement – working up project details with relevant stakeholders/delivery partners and carrying out bespoke project-specific consultation.</p> <p>Sharing information on the emerging Town Investment Plan and continuing to invite stakeholders to have their say</p>
Post submission of Town Investment Plan	Communicating updates regarding submission, next steps and the outcome of the assessment of the Town Investment Plan
Once Heads of Terms are agreed	<p>Engagement in developing detailed projects and business cases.</p> <p>Engagement in project delivery.</p>

5. HOW WILL WE ENGAGE?

There are many different forms and methods of engagement available to us, particularly in light of the growth of digital communications. In drawing up this plan, the stakeholder engagement sub-group discussed many possibilities, but agreed that the methods used to support the development of the Town Investment Plan should be fairly limited in number and focussed. This to help establish key lines of communication which people will become familiar with, so that they know where to go to for information, updates and to provide their views.

These preferred channels of engagement and communication are outlined in the table below.

MEDIA	Detail
Digital – written	<p>Dedicated Town Deal website – this will be the main online source of information and the principal online engagement/consultation portal.</p> <p>Dedicated Town Deal Facebook page. Providing information and updates, encouraging comments through the website. When necessary, targeted Facebook ads could be used to capture the views of key groups.</p> <p>Email updates and key messages communicated through existing networks/venues/organisations, facilitated by Town Deal Board members</p>
Digital – face to face	Facilitated one-to-one consultations and focus group meetings with key groups using Zoom/Teams/Whats App, e.g. ‘Digital Talking Society’ type events
Physical / Face to face	<p>A dedicated space for ‘physical’ information and face to face engagement at Building Bridges offices on Scotland Road and other suitable venues, as long as this can be managed in a COVID safe environment.</p> <p>‘Let’s Talk’ style events – face to face discussions/focus groups for people who may not use/have access to digital tools. These could only be done in a COVID safe environment.</p> <p>Telephone – a telephone number to enable non-internet users to ask questions and request a printed copy of consultation materials and feedback forms.</p>
Print media	<p>Postcards left in key places around the town or mailed out with questions on the back for people to respond to and send back. This would be a ‘one off exercise’ and will need to be used at the right time. The postcard can also signpost people to other sources of information.</p> <p>Regular slot in the Nelson Leader regarding the Town Deal.</p>

Barriers to engagement

In terms of overcoming the barriers identified in section 3, the methods outlined above will ensure accessibility and reach by using both digital and non-digital formats. Digital information can be accessed at any time of day, offering greater scope for those who may be time poor, have mobility difficulties, etc, to get involved. Language barriers can be overcome through the support of family members or with the assistance of multi-lingual staff from the Council and other partners on the Board. Digital platforms will be key to overcoming COVID 19 barriers and restrictions.

Traditional print media will be used in case people are unable, or do not wish to access information online. The provision of a telephone number means that it is still possible to speak to someone, given that face to face contact will be limited by COVID restrictions.

6. WHEN WILL WE ENGAGE?

The table below sets out the key stages of developing the Town Investment Plan / Town Deal, the timeframe for consultation/engagement at each stage and the methods of engagement that will be used to engage our audience and targets groups, subject to COVID restrictions at the time.

Stages of developing the Town Investment Plan / Town Deal	Consultation / Engagement Timeframe	Methods of Consultation/Engagement
<p>Early data gathering. Identifying issues and opportunities, likes and dislikes about Nelson.</p>	<p>Oct 19 – Aug 20</p>	<p>Stakeholder workshops & Community consultation events held in late 2019 as part of the development of the Nelson masterplan.</p> <p>One-to-one engagement with key stakeholders</p> <p>Government #MyTown campaign – an online national portal launched in early 2020 capturing community views on how their towns can be improved.</p>
<p>Draft Vision and emerging project ideas</p>	<p>Sept 20 (provisional)</p>	<p>Information presented and feedback sought through Town Deal Website.</p> <p>Promotion and constructive dialogue through Town Deal Facebook page.</p> <p>Raising awareness of the opportunity to ‘Have Your Say’ through existing networks- led by Town Deal Board members.</p> <p>Facilitated focus group meetings with key groups as appropriate (virtual or face to face depending upon COVID).</p> <p>Digital talking society type events.</p> <p>Use of dedicated space(s) for ‘physical information’ (COVID permitting).</p> <p>Postcards signposting to further information and to prompt feedback on questions.</p> <p>Promotion and availability of telephone ‘helpdesk’.</p> <p>Regular information in the Nelson Leader.</p>
<p>Draft Town Investment</p>	<p>Oct 20 (provisional)</p>	<p>Project stakeholder engagement – engaging specific stakeholders in the development of projects via e-mail and virtual meetings.</p> <p>Updates provided through Town Deal Website and Town Deal Facebook page.</p> <p>Use of dedicated space(s) for ‘physical information’ (COVID permitting).</p> <p>Promotion and availability of telephone ‘helpdesk’</p> <p>Information in the Nelson Leader</p>
<p>Post submission of Town Investment Plan</p>	<p>tbc</p>	<p>Publish the Town Investment Plan on the website as per the guidance</p> <p>Keep the Town Deal website up to date, including details of all Town Deal Board meetings, agendas etc.</p>

		Inform people of the outcome of our submission through digital media (website, Facebook, etc) and press releases to local media.
Once Heads of Terms are agreed	tbc	Iterative updates to Engagement Plan for next phase of work involving the development of detailed projects.

FEEDBACK

It is essential that all comments are collated and analysed at each stage. The results of the consultation will be summarised and feedback provided at a high level on how they have informed the development of the Town Investment Plan. The main methods of providing feedback will be through reports to the Town Deal Board and via the Town Deal website. A Communication and Engagement Report will also be submitted as part of our Town Investment Plan.

EVALUATION

The stakeholder engagement sub-group will monitor and review the success of the methods of engagement considering the number of responses received. Action will be taken to encourage increased involvement if required. The group will provide updates to the Town Deal Board.

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