

# Project Prioritisation Report - Sift 1 - Nelson

A Draft Report by Hatch  
15 September 2020

# Nelson Town Deal Board

## Project Prioritisation Report - Sift 1 - Nelson

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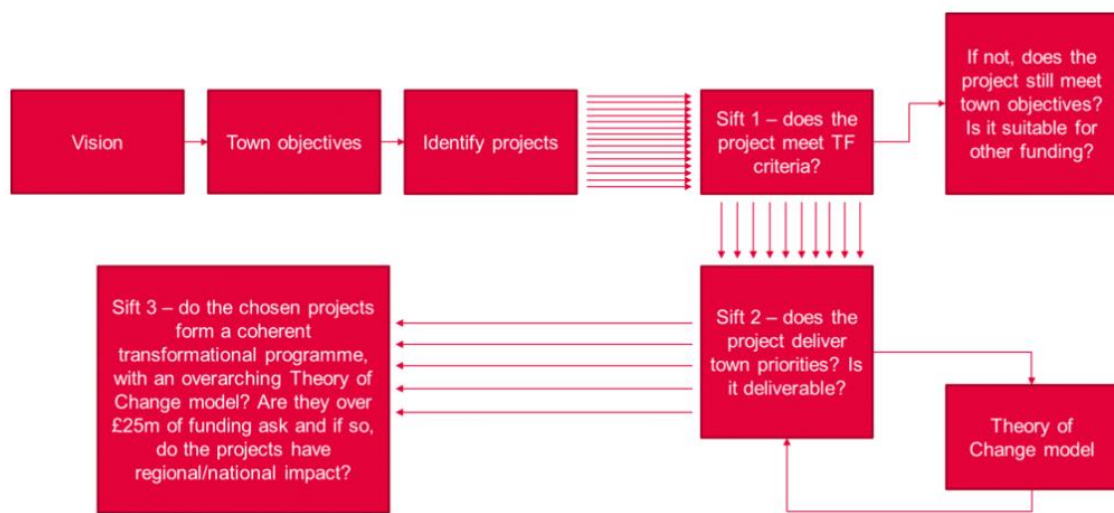
# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Nelson Town Deal Board has been developing an initial long list of potential projects which could be put forward for Town Deal Funding as part of the Town Investment Plan. The long list has been established through:

- Stakeholder engagement and suggestions
- Consideration of the relevance of historic pipeline schemes
- Assessment of potential new projects against eligibility criteria

1.2 The process for prioritising projects will follow that established by the Towns Fund.

Figure 1.1 Project Prioritisation Process



Source: [www.townsfund.org.uk](http://www.townsfund.org.uk)

1.3 This report considers whether each long list project meets Town Fund criteria through 'Sift 1'.

## Sift 1 – does the project meet Town Fund Criteria?

1.4 This initial sift considers the long-listed projects against an initial pass or fail test which considers the extent to which the project fulfils **all** the Towns Fund key requirements. The prioritisation tool requires each project to provide a description and total cost which can enable it to be assessed against each of the key requirements on a 'Yes' or 'No' basis:

- 1) **Capital:** is the project capital? If the project is revenue, could it form 10% or less of the overall revenue ask in your Towns Fund ask?
- 2) **Geography:** does the project fit within the Towns Fund town boundary?
- 3) **Ask:** is the project ask within the Towns Fund financial limit (cost of all projects proposed within £25m or £50m through MHCLG route)
- 4) **Vision & Strategy:** does the project broadly fit with the town's vision and strategy?

- 5) **Project Status:** is the project in a position to be fast-tracked after heads of terms agreement to be delivered within the 5-year spend timeframe?

1.5 Each project should also consider:

- 6) **Funding:** does the project present opportunities for co-funding or match funding?
- 7) **Town Fund Intervention Theme:** Does the project meet at least one of the Towns Fund Intervention Themes?
  - Local Transport
  - Digital Connectivity
  - Regeneration, Planning & Land Use
  - Arts, Culture & Heritage
  - Skills Infrastructure
  - Enterprise Infrastructure

1.6 This process will identify whether the project can advance to the next stage of the assessment process. Where a project has not made it through but does meet the Towns Fund objectives, consideration should be given to whether the project is suitable for other sources of funding.

## 2. Long List Summary

### Alignment with Towns Fund Intervention Themes

- 2.1 There are 20 projects on the Nelson Town Investment Plan draft long list identified as requiring Towns Funding. These fit with the following Town Deal themes:
- Connectivity - 6 projects
  - Urban regeneration (community facility) - 10 projects
  - Skills and enterprise – 4 projects
- 2.2 The projects can also be sorted between the following Town Fund intervention themes:

Table 2.1 Number of projects by primary Town Fund Intervention Theme

| Theme           | Local transport  | Digital connectivity  | Urban regeneration, planning and land use  | Arts, culture and heritage  | Skills infrastructure   | Enterprise infrastructure   |
|-----------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Projects</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improve walking and cycling routes, including increased opportunities to connect to the Canal towpath</li> <li>-Enhancing Key Gateways</li> <li>-Strategic Route Review</li> <li>-Development and implementation of a traffic flows strategy</li> <li>-Development and implementation of a car parking strategy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enhance Digital Connectivity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pendle Rise Shopping Centre and old Bus Station redevelopment</li> <li>-Reduction or re-use of vacant office/retail space</li> <li>-Housing refurbishment and 2 into 1 diversification programme</li> <li>-Review of Public Service Provision and Assets in Nelson</li> <li>-Riverside Mill, Bradley</li> <li>-Re-use of vacant/underused sites and buildings</li> <li>-Business improvement initiatives</li> <li>-Parks and Play Areas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improve the Arts and Culture Offer</li> <li>-Wavelengths Leisure Quarter</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improve skills to meet future business needs and support the manufacturing sector</li> <li>-Improve infrastructure for delivery of Skills, Education including the Development of a Digital Skills Hub and Academy</li> <li>-Improve educational attainment</li> <li>-Youth Employment Service (YES) Hub</li> </ul> | <p>Nb. It is worth noting that some projects under the urban regeneration, planning and land use theme will deliver <u>some</u> outputs and outcomes associated with this theme, e.g. new commercial floorspace</p> |
| <b>Count</b>    | 5  | 1   | 8  | 2   | 4   | 0   |

## Considering the Long List against Evidence of Need

2.3 The Evidence of Need report provides areas of focus against which to consider the long list.

| Table 2.2 Evidence of Need              |   |
|---|---|
| Thematic Area                           | Evidence of Need & Opportunity  |
| Urban Regeneration, Planning & Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing population requiring support infrastructure</li> <li>• Struggling town centre characterised by falling rents, voids, footfall and viability challenges</li> <li>• Poor physical environment in areas detracting from image and perception</li> <li>• Gaps in housing choice, with 63% terrace and only 8% detached. Nelson is an affordable location, with a affordability ratio of 2.9</li> <li>• A stock condition survey identified that 36% of the borough's private housing stock failed the Decent Homes Standard</li> <li>• Low property values, which in turn impact upon the viability of redevelopment/new development</li> <li>• Gaps in leisure offer, evening economy, retail choice and modern housing detracting from Nelson's offer to young people</li> <li>• Competition from larger towns of Burnley, Blackburn and Preston for commercial occupiers</li> <li>• Heritage value and access to natural assets in the surrounding area as an opportunity</li> </ul>  |
| Skills & Enterprise                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependence on the manufacturing sector (55% of Pendle's GVA and 33% of Nelson's employment) requiring support to facilitate resilience and competitiveness</li> <li>• Growing economy (pre COVID) characterised by growth in manufacturing, wholesale and retail, construction, administrative and support services and education</li> <li>• Steady level of business births across Pendle and high levels of self-employment however supporting these businesses to start and grow in a challenging economic climate is vital</li> <li>• Strategic employment site at Lomeshaye presenting an opportunity for growth</li> <li>• Under-representation of higher level skills amongst residents and above average representation of no or low skills</li> <li>• Strength of Nelson &amp; Colne College as an anchor institution supporting economic growth</li> <li>• Low income households feature characterised by 'Modest Means' or 'Young Hardship' facing socio-economic challenges however a more aspirational catchment surrounds the town in rural areas</li> <li>• Low paid jobs feature, with 30% of jobs in Pendle paying less than the Living Wage</li> <li>• Impact of Covid on ways of working and rising unemployment</li> <li>• High levels of deprivation with parts of the town featuring in the 10% most deprived in England</li> <li>• Poor health outcomes including obesity, higher rate of emergency admissions and shorter life expectancy</li> <li>• Lagging participation in sport and exercise and arts and culture</li> </ul> |



| Thematic Area | Evidence of Need & Opportunity  |
|---------------|---|
| Connectivity  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to M65 but the motorway causes severance between the town centre and residential suburbs and rural areas to the north and south</li> <li>• Connections to a network of centres including Colne, Burnley, Blackburn and Preston</li> <li>• Limited rail connectivity and low quality rolling stock detracting from the travel experience</li> <li>• Limited strategic road connectivity – being positioned at the end of the M65 corridor</li> <li>• Scope to better connect Nelson to walking and cycling routes in the wider hinterland</li> <li>• Good coverage of broadband and mobile but speeds are low and there is a need to secure investment in Full Fibre connectivity to maintain competitiveness</li> </ul> |

- 2.4 This analysis suggests there is scope for long listed projects to explicitly target areas of need in the town to support a robust case for intervention. However, there are several aligned initiatives underway in Nelson which will form part of the Town Investment Plan but are not actively seek Town Deal funding which respond to these issues including:

| Thematic Area                           | Aligned Initiatives   |
|---|---|
| Urban Regeneration, Planning & Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring forward sites for housing</li> <li>• Extra Care housing</li> <li>• Improve health inequalities</li> <li>• Marsden Park Golf Club</li> <li>• The Edible East</li> </ul> |
| Connectivity                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase electric car charging points</li> <li>• A56 Villages Bypass</li> <li>• Colne-Skipton Rail Link</li> <li>• Improving the existing rail service</li> </ul>            |

## 3. Recommended Next Steps

- 3.1 The Board should consider reducing the long list to a more manageable size through consolidation and amalgamation to facilitate project development and ensure the resultant shortlist aligns strongly with Town Fund funding objectives, including:
- An integrated and coherent set of projects
  - Responsiveness to economic recovery through adaptations which increase resilience and prosperity
  - Ability to drive sustainable economic regeneration to support long-term economic and productivity growth
  - Clear project ownership and delivery structures
- 3.2 To develop a compelling funding submission the project needs to be more than an idea, it needs to be capable of being developed into a robust and compelling project between October-December 2020 and, if funding is secured, for the funding to be spent by March 2026 which underlines the importance of deliverability.

### Strengthening the Long List Pipeline

- 3.3 Hatch suggest the following project groupings are considered. Suggestions on the project concept aligned to the evidence of need are also proposed.

| Table 3.1 Long List Project Concepts      |  |  |                                       |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Intervention Theme                        | Project Concept  | Potential Project Proposals  | Potential Concept Lead/Partners       |
| Digital connectivity                      | Investing in enhanced connectivity to increase broadband speed and access to full fibre and roll-out of 5g   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Enhance Digital Connectivity</li> </ul>  | PBC & LCC                             |
| Local transport                           | Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure including increased opportunities to connect to the Canal towpath and enhancement of key gateways through wayfinding, greening, traffic calming and pedestrian and cycle measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Improved walking &amp; cycling routes' 'Enhancing Key Gateways'</li> </ul>   | Pendle BC & LCC /Canal & Rivers Trust |
| Local transport                           | Interventions to improve access and movement of traffic within the town, including the provision of longer term parking through the creation of new parking and upgrade existing including consideration of EV charging points     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Strategic Route Review' 'Development &amp; implementation of a traffic flows strategy' 'Development &amp; implementation of a car parking strategy'</li> </ul> | PBC & LCC                             |
| Urban regeneration, planning and land use | Refurbishment/redevelopment of Pendle Rise Shopping Centre, old Bus Station and environs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Pendle Rise Shopping Centre'</li> </ul>  | PBC                                   |
| Urban regeneration, planning and land use | Property renewal programme to improve housing condition, appearance and efficiency, including 2 into 1 diversification programme to meet modern housing needs in addition to commercial properties in targeted neighbourhoods      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Housing refurbishment' 'Business improvement initiatives'</li> </ul>   | PBC / Registered Providers & owners   |
| Urban regeneration, planning and land use | Review of Public Service Provision & Assets in Nelson  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Review of Public Service Provision &amp; Assets' 'YES Hub'</li> </ul>  | PBC                                   |
| Urban regeneration, planning and land use | Identify and bring into use key vacant/underused buildings and sites for residential and commercial uses   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Riverside Mill, Bradley' 'Re-use of vacant/underused sites and buildings'</li> </ul>   | PBC                                   |

| Intervention Theme                        | Project Concept   | Potential Project Proposals   | Potential Concept Lead/Partners             |
|---|---|---|---|
| Urban regeneration, planning and land use | Business improvement initiatives targeting larger employment areas to improve quality of premises and environment including frontages, parking, greening  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Business improvement initiatives'</li> </ul>  | PBC   |
| Urban regeneration, planning and land use | Improvements to open space including parks and play areas to increase use and support healthy living  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Parks and Play Areas'</li> </ul>  | PBC   |
| Arts, Culture and Heritage                | Improve leisure centre offer and surrounds to improve quality of life and health and well-being   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Wavelengths Leisure Quarter'</li> </ul>   | PBC   |
| Skills infrastructure                     | Capital investment in response to identified need to improve educational attainment, digital inclusion and upskill/reskill the labour force. This could include investment in schools, a new 'Digital Skills Hub' in the town centre and repurposing and modernising facilities within the main college site to include incubator provision and business support. This will be informed by a 'Skills and Employment Strategy' for Nelson. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Improve infrastructure for delivery of skills' 'Improve skills to meet future business needs' and 'Improve educational attainment' 'YES Hub'</li> </ul> | Nelson & Colne College & LEA/ LEP & PBC     |
| Skills infrastructure                     | Youth Skills Hub supporting skills development, advice and guidance, digital access to facilitate progression into further education and employment   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'YES Hub' 'Improve infrastructure for the delivery of skills'</li> </ul>   | PBC & N&CC / Lancashire Adult Learning, DWP |

- 3.4 This approach will result in a long list of 12 concepts for development, with the primary theme identifying coverage as follows:
- Digital connectivity – 1 project
  - Local transport – 2 projects
  - Urban regeneration, planning and land use – 6 projects
  - Arts, culture and heritage – 1 project
  - Skills infrastructure – 2 projects
  - Enterprise infrastructure – 0 projects
- 3.5 There are some projects however which will provide multiple roles, i.e. the Digital Skills Hub proposes to include enterprise infrastructure in the form of incubator units.
- 3.6 Notable gaps in the long list considering the evidence include:
- Arts culture and heritage – can more be done to extend the cultural offer of Nelson to meet local need and attract visitors leveraging the cultural diversity of the town? i.e. a food market/attraction?
  - Arts culture and heritage – are we making the most of the potential to tap into the rural and visitor economy outside Nelson’s boundaries?
  - Connectivity – what about other modes of public transport i.e. modern buses?
  - Connectivity – how can we better connect Nelson to employment and higher education opportunities in nearby centres?
  - Urban regeneration, land use and planning – do the existing projects tackle the poor physical environment in prominent areas to improve image and perception?
  - Urban regeneration, land use and planning – Is there a need to protect and enhance conservation areas and listed buildings and maximise heritage value?
  - Urban regeneration, land use and planning – will the existing projects address gaps in the leisure offer and evening economy to attract and retain young people?
  - Enterprise infrastructure – is there more which could be done to support entrepreneurs to start and grow their business in Nelson?
- 3.7 Opportunities to ensure the long list projects respond to identified need should be sought.

HATCH



[www.hatch.co.uk](http://www.hatch.co.uk)

London: 0207 336 6188 Manchester: 0161 234 9910