Bilston Long Term Plan for Towns
2024 - 2034

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

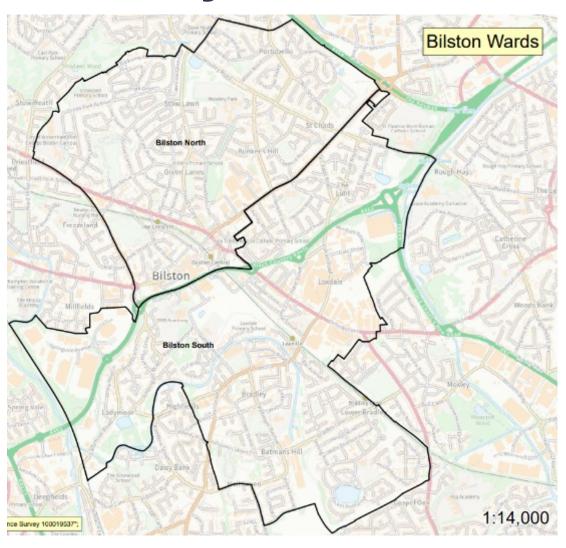wolverhampton.gov.uk

What is the Long Term Plan for Towns?

- Long Term Plan for Towns was launched in late September 2023.

- Fifty-five towns given £20 million over 10 years to invest in local people's priorities.

- £5m towards services and resource (revenue)

- £15million towards physical build projects (capital).

- Bilston one of the towns, as is Darlaston, Dudley and Smethwick, in the West Midlands.

- Under the new approach, local people, not Whitehall-based politicians, will be put in charge, and given the tools to change their town's long-term future.

- To ensure towns achieve their potential, Government are establishing a Towns Taskforce, reporting directly to the Prime Minister and Levelling Up Secretary.

Its aims and objectives

A 10-year Plan should be produced no later than Summer 2024. The Plans to include:

- Community led

- A clear articulation, evidenced by local engagement, of the priorities of town residents;

- How local authorities, community groups and businesses are using their existing assets and resources to support these priorities;

- How the Town Board intends to attract additional private and philanthropic investment to support these priorities; and

- How members of the Town Board are using their existing powers and flexibilities to support these priorities.

Proposed Boundary

Priorities

- Three core investment themes:
  - **Safety and Security**
  - **High Streets, heritage and regeneration**
  - **Transport and connectivity**

- There is a list of high-level choices for activity.

Priorities – Safety and Security

Ref	Intervention	Commentary – might include
S1	Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to "design out crime".	• promoting the active use of streets and public spaces throughout the daytime and evening • improvements to streetlighting • Installation of new cctv
S2	Engage with Police Force and together consider interventions to focus on visible crime prevention in defined areas places.	• hotspot policing • problem-oriented policing
S3	Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime and reduce reoffending.	• sports programmes designed to prevent crime and reduce reoffending • mentoring • police-led pre-charge diversion models for young offenders • focused deterrence strategies • halfway house programmes
S4	Measures to reduce repeat burglary.	• Neighbourhood Watch • provision of crime prevention advice • property marking • target hardening (increasing the security of a property) • cocoon watch (provision of crime prevention advice, support and guidance to neighbours and surrounding addresses of burgled properties) • alley gating

Priorities – High Streets, Heritage and

Ref	Intervention	Commentary – might include
H1	Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements, which could include better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.	• regenerating a town square or high street • public realm improvements, for example street furniture or other decorative improvements • the delivery of outreach, engagement and participatory programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries
H2	Funding for new or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects and assets including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding, and support for decarbonisation of facilities, energy efficiency audits, and installation of energy efficiency and renewable measures in community buildings (including capital spend and running costs).	• building new or updating existing defences to increase communities' resilience to natural hazards like flooding or costal erosion
H3	Creation of and improvement to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments. Improvements to the natural environment and the incorporation of more of these natural features into wider public spaces.	• development of a new park, particularly in areas with the least access to greenspace • development of a new park or community garden • improvements to a canal towpath, particularly in more deprived neighbourhoods • urban or riparian tree planting • changes to management of green spaces and verges • regeneration of existing parks or community gardens, particularly in areas with poor quality parks and gardens • improving access to existing parks
H4	Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.	• the delivery of events programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries • the development, restoration or refurbishment of local natural, cultural and heritage assets and sites
H5	Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.	• funding for maker spaces • funding for local art galleries, museums, libraries for exhibitions • support for displays for artists to showcase work • locally led music and theatre performances, tours, author events and film screenings • funding for cultural, heritage and creative events • support for outreach, engagement, participatory programmes as part of wider local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities • support for the establishment and development of cultural, heritage collaborative networks to share knowledge locally

Priorities – High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration

Ref	Intervention	Commentary – might include
H6	Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.	• campaigns promoting the local area and its culture, heritage, leisure and visitor offer to residents and visitors • campaigns to encourage visitors from further afield to visit and stay in the region, collaborating with other places where appropriate
H7	Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.	• funding for local volunteering groups, such as youth charities and carer's groups • support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally
H8	Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.	• renovation and maintenance of existing sports facilities • support for community sports leagues • regeneration of an unused area to build sports facilities • creation of new 3G sports pitches and other sports facilities
H9	Investment in capacity building, resilience (which could include climate change resilience) and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.	• funding for community spaces, such as village halls, libraries or community centres for local civil society and community groups to use • support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally
H10	H10: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.	
H11	Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.	• funding to support the establishment and ongoing running of a new open air market business support activity for entrepreneurs
H12	Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally	• development of local visitor trails and tours • grants for the development, promotion and upkeep of local tourist attractions • development of other local visitor experiences based around the local offer
H13	Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors.	• grants to bid for, secure and hold a conference for a leading sector locally

Priorities – Transport and connectivity

Ref	Intervention	Commentary – might include
T1	Support for active travel enhancements in the local area	• creation of new foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need or social inequalities upgrading of existing foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need or social inequalities
T2	Funding for bus infrastructure and connections to speed up journeys.	• traffic signalling improvements bus lanes and corridors improved passenger information
T3	Additional revenue funding added to the Bus Service Improvement Programme Plus (BSIP+) funding model from June 2024 - that would award funding to LTAs based on a connectivity scoring so they could undertake activities that would boost economic growth.	
T4	Funding for new, or improvements to road networks to improve access within and to the town.	• traffic management improvements to relieve congestion • road safety • highway maintenance (including potholes)
T5	Funding to improve rail connectivity and access	• adding stations along existing lines • improved accessibility and journey quality at and around stations • improved passenger information
T6	Reducing vehicle emissions.	• EV charging facilities • procuring zero emission buses
T7	Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.	

The investment plan – what is it?

2 parts: a 10-year vision and 3-year delivery plan.

The Town Board's 10-year vision should be a long-term, strategic document. It should be backed by insights gained through engagement with local people, to create buy-in with the public.

It should include:

1. A 250-word vision statement that articulates, at a high level, the vision for the future of the town and how success will be judged.
2. The strategic case for change, building on the evidence in the pack provided by DLUHC with, where relevant, more granular local data and stories.
3. The outcomes and objectives the town is trying to meet and how these align with the priorities of the local community, including what local people think needs fixing, the opportunities the investment offers over the decade, and priority outcomes for 2034 and beyond.
4. The planned direction of travel for the regeneration of the town, across the 3 investment themes. It should detail the interventions that are available to achieve this:
   a) The Town Board should seek to draw on the list of interventions and can also consider other, 'off-menu' interventions, provided they sit within the 3 investment themes.
   b) The Long-Term Plan does not need to go into detail on specific investments as part of the 10-year vision. Detail on investment and interventions only need to focus on the first 3 years and should sit within the 3-year investment plan annex.
5. Clear evidence that the Town Board is community led, including through its membership, ways of working and distinction from the local authority, and evidence of buy-in from local businesses, civil society and communities. It should describe how these stakeholders have been engaged to date, and how that engagement will continue going forward.
6. How the Town Board will attract and combine new and existing private, public and philanthropic investment, setting out the existing commitments and ambitions to secure further support going forwards.
7. High level delivery milestones over the 10-year lifespan of the programme, with an overview of potential future interventions and how the powers in the policy toolkit will be used in a way that best suits the town across the 3 investment themes.

The investment plan – what is it?

3 year delivery plan annex plan which should set out:

- the interventions and powers the Town Board wishes to use over the 3 years for each investment theme
- whether the interventions are from the list of interventions or are 'off-menu'
- how the Town Board will use the interventions locally and how much they will cost
- how the interventions will address the outcomes set out in the 10-year vision, grounded in evidence and data.

The Board and its role

- While the Council remains accountable body for funding and executing plans – Town Board are responsible for the LTP, working closely with local people.
- The independent chair of LTP Board should be invited by the Council – considering who is best paced to convene partners and is a respected figure in the community with an obvious passion for the pace.
- The local MP should be engaged.
- Succession planning needs to be considered due to 10-year duration.
- Town boards must be chaired by a local community leader or local business person and ensure it is community led and embedded in local area.
- They can be anyone who holds a prominent role:
    - a local charitable organisation
    - A philanthropist
    - The head of a Further education College
    - A director for the NHS Board or trust
    - A director of a football club

The Board and its role

- The local authority, or an alternative organisation such as a community group if that is agreed between the chair and local authority, should act as secretariat to the Town Board.

- **Compulsory members:**
    1. **Parliamentary representatives.** The relevant local MPs, for example, those MPs whose constituencies sit within the boundary of the town must sit on the Town Board.
    2. **Local councillors.** In unitary authorities, there should be 2 councillors from the authority. Where relevant for the town, the chair may wish to invite parish, town, or community councillors, noting that total numbers of elected representatives should be limited to promote community leadership.
    3. **A senior representative from the police.**
        - Town Boards must have a senior representative from the police. In England and Wales, it is expected that this will be the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), though, subject to the agreement of the chair, a local senior representative from the police can act as an alternative.
        - Where combined authority mayors exercise PCC functions, it is expected that the Mayor or their Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime should be the representative, though, subject to agreement with the chair, a local senior representative from the police can act as an alternative. Should Town Boards feel that they require further contribution from the police, noting particularly the different skills and input that could be provided by an operational representative, then it is within their discretion to invite whomever they deem appropriate to sit on the Board.

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The Board and its role

- Other membership should be tailored to local context and is at the chair's discretion, but might comprise:

  - Community partners, such as: community groups faith groups local charities neighbourhood forums youth groups the local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS).
  - Local businesses and social enterprises, such as: the chair or board members for the Business Improvement District (BID) where these exist key local employers or investors in the town Community and smaller businesses have been shown to be able to support regeneration and improve investment at a local level, and property owners have a major stake in how towns are repurposed.
  - Cultural, arts, heritage and sporting organisations, such as: local sports club directors local heritage groups
  - Public agencies and anchor institutions, such as: local schools, higher education and further education institutions relevant government agencies for that area, for example Integrated Care Boards.

The Board and its role

- The Town Board should publish membership and governance arrangements (including, terms of reference, minutes of meetings and decision logs) on the lead council's website.
- Town Boards to meet quarterly and to publish:
  - a documented decision-making process outlining the voting rights of the board profiles of board members all board papers in advance of the meeting within 5 working days
  - draft minutes of meetings following the meeting within 10 working days
  - final minutes, once approved by the board within 10 working days
  - any conflicts of interest reported, within the published minutes
- All Town Board members should sign up to a code of conduct There should be clear processes for managing conflicts of interests (both commercial, actual, and potential) in decision making, which apply to all involved with the work of the Town Board.
- Town Board members are responsible for declaring their interests before the Town Board considers any decisions.