

Update from MHCLG on the Long-Term Plan for Towns

Purpose

Chief Executive Officers from the relevant councils were invited to an online meeting on 28th November with Jack Rampling, Head of Long-Term Plan for Towns, for an update following the announcement on the Long-Term Plan for Towns in the Budget.

This paper provides a summary of that update. The Board are asked to note that further information will be available in the New Year

Key point summary:

- It was announced at Budget that the Long-Term Plan for Towns will be retained and reformed as part of a new regeneration programme. MHCLG confirmed that this announcement can be taken as formal confirmation of funding.
- As under the previous government it will still benefit the 75 places originally selected, with a package of up to £20 million of funding and support over the next decade.
- The name of the programme is likely to change, and this will be confirmed in due course.
- The Government plan to publish a revised prospectus in the New Year, with associated timelines including revised payment timings. (Exact timing wasn't confirmed just that they would publish it "as soon as they can in the New Year").
- This will include new strategic objectives aligned with Government's missions, to be delivered by a broader range of 'on-menu' policy interventions, affording places greater flexibility in how they improve their areas. The prospectus will be supplemented with a comprehensive technical note.
- The reforms will be additive and will seek to build on & improve the previous programme, i.e. the prospectus will have new criteria and interventions to reflect the new objectives, but these will be in addition to the previous programme.
- Ministers have been clear that progress on plans and engagement so far should not be undone & communities should continue working on those plans.
- When asked they also added that additional engagement next year will be worthwhile, as it will be in the context of a broadened scope of possible interventions.
- The Government acknowledged that places felt squeezed for time previously – so they will be providing a further capacity payment in FY2025/26 to support engagement and planning. The prospectus will make clear that this can be used to undertake scoping and preparatory activity to support delivery.

- Delivery grant funding will now begin in FY2026/27. The capital/revenue split of 75/25 will remain the same, and there won't be flexibility in this.
- They expect governance arrangements to be broadly the same, details will be set in out the forthcoming prospectus. (They ask that we do not make any new board appointments before the new prospectus comes out though.)