

<h1>Agenda Item 7</h1>	
Report to:	Blackpool Town Deal Board
Subject:	Communications and Engagement
Relevant Officer:	Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director
Date of Meeting:	28/02/2020

Communications and Engagement

1. Purpose of the report:

To provide a background to the Towns Fund community engagement requirements and the My Town Initiative

2 . Recommendation

The Board is asked to review the information provided and consider options for supporting the #My Town initiative and communications with the local community generally.

3. Background

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have stated that is vital that Town Deal Boards undertake wide ranging community engagement activity, to find out directly from the public what they love about their place and how they want to see it grow. Community capacity building support may be required to support this.

In line with this, MHCLG have developed a communications and community engagement toolkit for Town Deal Boards. This will be complemented by an online media platform campaign called My Town which aims to:

- Inform people in the 101 towns of the opportunities of the Towns Fund
- Encourage local people to get involved and to generate ideas

The campaign, which was launched on Friday 25 October of the My Town campaign can be accessed here: [My Town website](#)

To support the campaign, Lead Councils were required to nominate a point of contact to work alongside government, as part of completing the December submitted “readiness checklist”. Kate Staley, Corporate Marketing & PR Manager in Blackpool Council was appointed.

It is up to each town to decide how best to involve their local community, building on the My Town campaign. Communities should have a meaningful role in decision-making and Town Deal Boards are encouraged to draw on the local knowledge and insight that communities can provide on the barriers to driving local growth and productivity.

Blackpool's Ton Deal Board membership includes community representatives from prominent local civic and faith organisations in its governance structure to aid in this activity.

Each Lead Council is asked to be 'open by default' about their Town Deal Boards, Town Investment Plans and outline business cases, while acknowledging that commercially sensitive information will need to be respected.

Town Deal Boards are required to make their governance structures, profiles on key stakeholders, meeting agendas and minutes (in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972), evidence and any supporting documents for Town Investment Plans publicly available and Blackpool Council's website is proposed as the vehicle for doing this.

MHCLG have stated that they will actively facilitate learning between towns for example by running regional events and thematic learning events. They will also be appointing officials who will support collaboration – strengthening existing connections between towns and creating new ones. They will also support Town Deal Boards to connect with local partners.

NB As part of the development of the Future High Streets Fund business plan a substantial event took place on February 27th at the Winter Gardens Open Day to seek residents views on their Town Centre – an oral update will be given at the meeting.