



TOWNS FUND COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PLAYBOOK

Towns Fund[®]

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INTRODUCTION

This resource guide provides a comprehensive overview of the resources available to you on communications, consultation, community and stakeholder engagement through the Towns Fund Programme.

These resources can help you develop your Business Cases and enhance project delivery to support you in this next stage of the programme.

As you finalise your Business Case and look ahead to delivery, we know that you will need to engage communities about your plans and keep them informed as your project progresses.

In this resource guide, you'll find links to a range of documents to help you do just that.

We know that as your project evolves, so will your needs. We're currently developing a range of further guidance, but please let your Town Coordinator know if you have specific questions or challenges about communication and engagement that you would like help with.

To access our full resource library, follow this [link](#)



THESE RESOURCES FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:



Engagement



Community



Consultation



Creative Content



Blogs

RESOURCE – ENGAGEMENT**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
PLAN GUIDANCE**

This document provides you with initial guidance when developing your approach to stakeholder engagement, and a template that can be followed to establish a stakeholder engagement plan. The approach to stakeholder engagement can and should differ according to local objectives, challenges and other specific characteristics of your Town.

You can access the guide on this [link](#)





RESOURCE – ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO SUPPORT BUSINESS CASES

This guide provides information to help support you when developing Business Cases. It outlines the process in more detail, the key role of engagement and includes examples of what a strong Business Case should look like. Although specific to Business Cases, this guidance is also a useful guide for further engagement and consultation you will need to carry out through delivery stage.

You can access the guide on this [link](#).

ENGAGING WITH BUSINESSES

From sole traders to multinationals, businesses are the lifeblood of a community. While some may have a long history in your town, others may be relative newcomers to the area. They can be contributors to the Towns Fund, or beneficiaries, as it seeks to galvanise local economies. Businesses should be at the heart of shaping and delivering Towns Fund projects and their legacies. Good community engagement presents itself through relationship building, idea generation, long-term support, community participation and projects that gives people a sense of ownership and pride. This guidance unpicks how to understand your community, design an effective engagement approach, generate interest and gather support and finally how to monitor, evaluate and report engagement.

You can access this guide [here](#)

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY AUDIT GUIDANCE

This guidance is to assist Towns to identify what is of importance for stakeholders in developing and delivering their project. Being able to demonstrate a shared vision and commitment from a range of stakeholders, particularly in terms of the input they've had to developing your projects, goes a long way in securing buy-in from the local community and puts you in a good position to deliver successful projects.

You can read this guide [here](#)

ENGAGEMENT EVIDENCE

A community and stakeholder engagement plan is a key requirement of the Town Investment Plan and will be critical in demonstrating how you will manage stakeholders during your project delivery and beyond. It needs to show how you have engaged with people, how their views have influenced your proposals, and how you will continue to engage as you develop your Business Cases for your projects and go into the delivery phase. This guide gives you some tips on what to include, and how to present it.

You can read the guidance [here](#)



RESOURCE – COMMUNITY

ENGAGING YOUNGER AUDIENCES

Every young person is unique with different needs and circumstances. Youth participation in projects is essential - now more than ever, young people are central to the economic recovery and stimulation of towns. By engaging young people, you can connect with a wider audience and make sure your projects have a long-term appeal.

You can read this guide [here](#)

ENGAGING WITH HARD TO REACH GROUPS

Rather than viewing people you want to engage with as 'hard to reach', think of how you can make project communications and information more accessible. It is important to remove any potential barriers to engagement and be clear about what we are asking from groups identified as hard to reach. Projects should be designed with everyone across the community in mind. Diverse views are needed to make a project's design as responsive to these views as possible.

You can read this guide [here](#)

GUIDE TO GOOD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Good community engagement presents itself through relationship building, idea generation, long-term support, community participation and projects that gives people a sense of ownership and pride. This guidance unpicks: how to understand your community, design an effective engagement approach, generate interest, gather support, and how to monitor, evaluate and report engagement.

You can read this guide [here](#)

THE POWER OF COMMUNITIES AND TRANSITIONING TO ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

A connected community can act as a powerful tool for project delivery, and you should plan a wider range of engagement methods that include both online and face to face to inform, include and engage.

Read this blog [here](#)



RESOURCE – CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION TOP TIPS

This document serves as guidance for towns who are seeking to consult stakeholders and the public during the planning process. Its purpose is to provide practical advice and ideas on the consultation process, as well as providing valuable information regarding the differences between statutory and non-statutory consultees.

You can read the guidance [here](#)

RESOURCE – DELIVERY

PLANNING AND EIA REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this pack is to set out some of the planning and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) considerations that you might face during development of your Business Case and whilst progressing your projects. Projects may interface with the planning system and EIA requirements in different ways, and it will be important to understand what might be required to deliver such projects.

You can read the guidance [here](#)





RESOURCE – BLOGS

VISUAL TIPS TO BRING YOUR PROJECT TO LIFE

Telling your Town’s story with pictures as well as words can give your Town Investment Plan (TIP) greater impact. Visual communications can help square this circle by conveying complex data in a simple and effective way.

You can read the blog post [here](#)

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

COVID-19 has brought the digital divide into even sharper focus, further exacerbating the risk of social exclusion for those unable or hesitant to embrace new technology. The constraints created by our response to COVID-19 could act as a catalyst to accelerate digital inclusion efforts and encourage more people to take their first steps online.

You can read the blog post [here](#)

BOLD AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR YOUR TOWN’S VISION AND STRATEGY

The Towns Fund provides a real opportunity to bring forward bold and innovative ideas and projects to help transform the economic prospects of your town, its people and businesses.

You can read the blog post [here](#)



RESOURCE – BLOGS

COMMUNICATING MILESTONES TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

From Heads of Terms to completion of Business Cases, there are numerous opportunities to share your progress with local people through a range of communication channels. Bringing the public and stakeholders with you through the process serves to build excitement about projects and the overall vision and help to manage delivery timescales.

You can read the blog post [here](#)

MAKING THE MOST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is one of the most regularly-used and popular forms of communication. Using social media effectively means that you can share information about projects, ideas and content such as videos and infographics, to engage and build advocacy amongst your local community.

You can read the blog post [here](#)

THE POWER OF PLACE-BASED STORYTELLING

Vision and strategy continues to be key pillars in the development of Towns Deals. Storytelling is a powerful way of bringing together communities with diverse experiences of where they live, and to reflect together on the town's past, present assets, and future potential.

You can read the blog post [here](#)



Visit the [Towns Fund website](#)
for more resources