

# SCUNTHORPE TOWNS FUND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Version 1.0

## INTRODUCTION

### What is the Assurance Framework?

This 2021 Assurance Framework sets out the governance and decision-making structure of the Scunthorpe Town Fund Board (the board) in relation to the Towns Fund. Its purpose is to:

- Enable accountable decision-making
- Ensure value for money
- Provide for effective monitoring and evaluation

The Framework is underpinned by a suite of documents, including terms of reference, policies and procedures which apply to all the activities in which the Scunthorpe Town Fund Board are involved.

The Board works closely with North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) as the Accountable Body for the Scunthorpe Town Fund Programme in fulfilling its Assurance Framework.

The Framework is divided into five parts:

Section 1 - Introduction

Section 2 – Scunthorpe Board

Section 3 – Governance

Section 4 - Appendices

This Framework will be reviewed annually and will be approved by the Accountable Body.

Any in-year changes will be made within one calendar month or following the next Board meeting if changes require Board approval.

## SCUNTHORPE BOARD

### Board Role

The Board will adopt the role of a senior strategic body working in partnership with NLC. It will provide strategic direction to the development and implementation of the Towns Fund programme for Scunthorpe.

Specifically, it will be the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town is defined. It will produce a Town Investment Plan (TIP) to drive long-term transformative change and inform the Town Deal, including the amount of investment secured through the Towns Fund. The Board will sign off each stage of a Town Investment Plan and Town Deal ensuring diversity in its engagement with local communities and businesses.

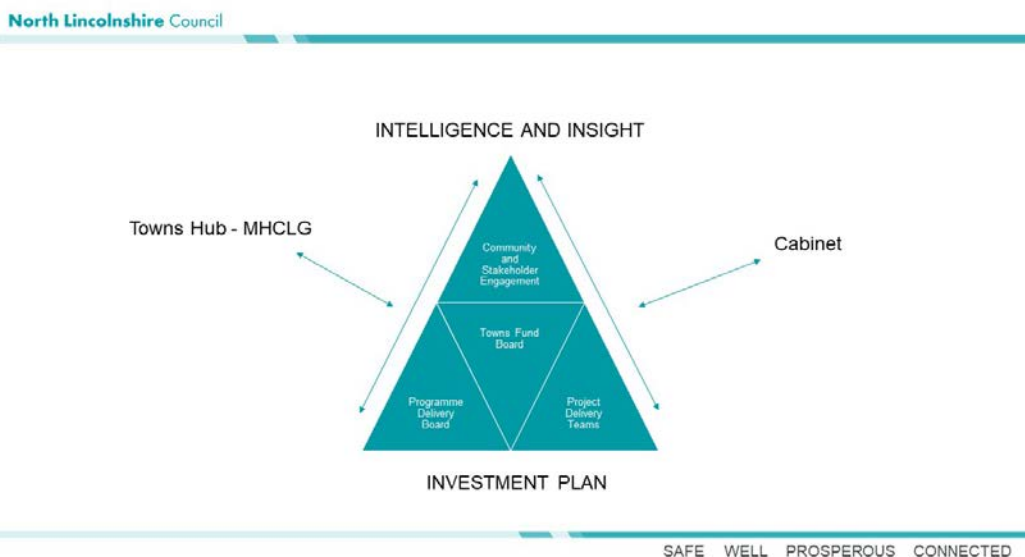
The North Lincolnshire Programme Board, a Council board consisting of senior managers from different Council disciplines, including the deputy S151 Officer will have oversight of the programme delivery on behalf of the accountable body – NLC.

The Senior Responsible Officer, the Head of Economy and Growth will manage programme information and activity between the Board, its sub-groups and panels and the Council delivery teams, Portfolio Holders and the Council’s Cabinet. The Towns Fund Programme Manager will have day to day responsibility for the delivery of the Towns Fund projects on behalf of the Board.

Overarching responsibility for steering and overseeing Town Deal and the 2020 Towns Fund programme lies with the board. As the Towns Fund progresses, some work may be delegated to specific sub-boards or panels.

These sub boards will be chaired by a member of the Board who will report to the main Board on the sub-board activity.

The diagram below describes the board structure and relationship between the Board and the Council.



## Membership

The Board membership will comprise of a private sector chair and representatives from local government for North Lincolnshire, local MP's, the Local Enterprise Partnership, local businesses and investors, community and local voluntary community sector representatives.

The current membership of the Board is listed below:

Name	Organisation

## The Chair and Vice-Chair

The role of the Chair and vice-chair is to lead the Board in defining vision and direction, and in delivering the desired outputs, whilst ensuring that appropriate procedures for governance and management of resources are in place.

The key responsibilities are to:

- Provide strategic leadership and direction to ensure that the Board achieves its goals
- Lead the efforts of the Board to agree a Town Investment Plan for Scunthorpe and business cases funding.
- Effectively chair meetings of the Board, leading it towards decisions that ensure the strategic vision and key objectives of the Board are delivered.
- Be an effective influencer and “ambassador” for Scunthorpe at local, regional and national levels working with appropriate partner organisations and individuals.
- Be an effective advocate on behalf of the Board, NLC and the businesses and people of Scunthorpe, in particular at conferences and events/meetings with
- Ministers, MPs and key civil servants.
- Reflect the agreed policies of the Board and its members in all discussions with partners, stakeholders, government and its agencies.
- Ensure that the Board adheres at all times to high standards of ethics and governance in public life and is an exemplar to other organisations.
- Ensure that all Board members participate actively in the work of the Board, encouraging their attendance and engagement and keeping regular contact with all members.
- Have a casting vote in Board decisions if circumstances so require.

If the Chair resigns during the year, the Vice Chair will become Interim Chair and an interim Vice Chair will be nominated by the Board until the formal elections are held. If the Vice Chair indicates they do not wish to become the Interim Chair, then the Board will nominate an interim Chair until the formal elections are held. If the Vice Chair resigns during the year, an interim Vice Chair will be nominated.

## Board Members

Board members have a responsibility to uphold high standards of integrity and probity. They should support the Chair in instilling the appropriate culture, values and behaviours in the boardroom and beyond.

Board members should take into account the views of other stakeholders, because these views may provide different perspectives on the Board and its performance.

The duties and responsibilities of a Board member are to:

- Attend meetings of the Board and to nominate an appropriate named alternative where attendance is not possible, subject to the prior agreement of the Chair and Lead Council.
- Reflect the agreed view of the Board and its members in all discussions with partners, stakeholders, government and its' agencies.
- Support the Chair by leading on activities relevant to their knowledge and experience by representing the interests of the Board in meetings with partners, stakeholders, government and its' agencies.
- Actively develop an effective partnership.
- Contribute knowledge and expertise to the development of Scunthorpe.
- Investment Plan and business cases for funding. Formally represent the Board in meetings with other bodies and partner organisations.

## The Board's Relationship with North Lincolnshire Council

The Board is not an incorporated body and NLC will remain the accountable body for the Town Deal and any work that is commissioned.

The Scunthorpe Town Deal Board may make recommendations to North Lincolnshire Council's Cabinet from time to time and prior to the submission of the Scunthorpe Town Deal Investment plan if required.

## Role of the accountable body

- Develop a delivery team, delivery arrangements and agreements
- Ensure decisions made by the board are made in accordance with good governance principles 7 –
- Ensure transparency requirements are met through publication of information on their website

- Develop agreed projects in detail and undertaking any necessary feasibility studies - undertaking any required Environmental Impact Assessments or Public Sector Equalities

#### Duties

- Develop detailed business cases for projects
- Liaise with potential private investors in identifying local projects
- Agree and Sign the Heads of Terms Agreement with government
- Lead and manage the delivery of public sector projects within the TIP
- Work with partners on the delivery of joint private and public sector projects
- Monitor and evaluate the delivery of individual projects
- Submit regular monitoring reports on all TIP projects to the Towns Hub
- Receive and account for any project funding including Towns Fund monies

The Cities and Local Growth Unit (a partnership between the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) Area Lead will attend board meetings in an observer capacity

## Member Conduct

All Members of the Board, sub-boards or Panel or any other Group will be required to sign up to and act in accordance with the Board Members Code of Conduct, which incorporates the Nolan Principles as show in the Town Board Terms of Reference.

If any Member's conduct falls short of the standards set in the Member's Code of Conduct they may be dismissed from any or all, of their roles by a majority vote of the Board.

The member in question will not be allowed to participate in this vote. This will also apply if there has been any proven misconduct in a non-Town Fund role or illegal activity that may bring the Town's Fund activity into disrepute.

## Communication and Engagement

The Board will operate in a transparent and objective way for the benefit of Scunthorpe and its communities. It will publish all information on the Councils Website.

The Scunthorpe Towns Fund Communication Plan, developed to support the Town Investment Plan, describes a programme of engagement which will be supported by the Communication Team.

It outlines the methods of engagement the Board and the Council delivery teams plan to use to engage with communities and organisations to maintain a regular two-way flow of communication during the delivery of the Towns Fund programme.

It explains how information will be shared and how further consultation exercises and events will be scheduled to take place across the lifetime of the programme. The Communication Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Board.

## Data Protection and Information Governance

The Board Assurance Framework will comply with the Council's Information Governance Framework which is aligned to requirements of the General Protection Data Regulation (GDPR) 2015 and Data Protection Act 2018.

The Council's Governance Team will support the Board in dealing with any data protection questions.

The Council framework can be found at: [www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)

## Whistleblowing

If a Board member considers any suspicion of any fraudulent or corrupt act this should be reported in line with the Councils' whistleblowing policy found at – [www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)

## GOVERNANCE

### Managing Public Money

The accountable body for the Towns Fund activity is NLC:

- We will work in partnership with the Board in developing and implementing our economic growth plan for the town, with the Board offering strategic direction to these plans.
- We will take receipt of and defray any programme funds and will provide the executive who will support the Board and any sub-boards or panels.
- We will also provide the programme delivery teams along with the services of its legal, human resource, and financial departments, in the development and implementation of the proposals within the Town Investment Plan.
- We will ensure that staff adhere to the NLC's policies and procedures and the Section 151 Officer will take responsibility for ensuring the Board adheres to the Assurance Framework.

NLC will ensure proper management of any public money relating to the Towns Fund. These considerations include:

- All funding decisions being made on merit taking into account all the relevant information available at the time
- State Aid implications
- Overseeing the development and application of any procurement process - Ensuring any funding agreements reflect the conditions that need to be in place and that these are upheld
- Retaining copies of all relevant documentation as required
- Ensuring transparency of quarterly and annual accounts
- Maintaining the official record of the Board proceedings and documents
- Reviewing Board decisions are lawful and follow the correct procedures

### Decision Making

#### Stage 1 Town Investment Plan

The Board will be responsible for signing off each stage of the development of the TIP, this includes the decisions relating to the project prioritisation process and final selection of projects for inclusion in the TIP.

#### Stage 2 Heads of Term Agreement /Town Deal

The Board will be responsible for decisions relating to the agreement of a Town Deal with government and the subsequent development of the detailed business cases for TIP projects.

The Board will oversee each step of this process and along with NLC, will have responsibility for reaching a final Heads of Term Agreement with government.

#### Stage 3 Full development of TIP projects



The Board will oversee the development of full business cases for all the TIP projects. The business case development will be carried out by an accountable lead, a project manager appointed within the Council and a project delivery group comprising of all stakeholders including any external partners.

This process will be managed by a Programme Manager who will provide progress reports to the Board.

Further consultation will take place during full business case development to ensure the community and stakeholders remain active in shaping the projects. Independent appraisal of the business cases will be carried out prior to submission to government to give the necessary assurance to the Board.

Once the business cases have been approved by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Towns Fund Team, the projects will move onto the delivery stage.

#### Stage 4. Delivery of TIP projects

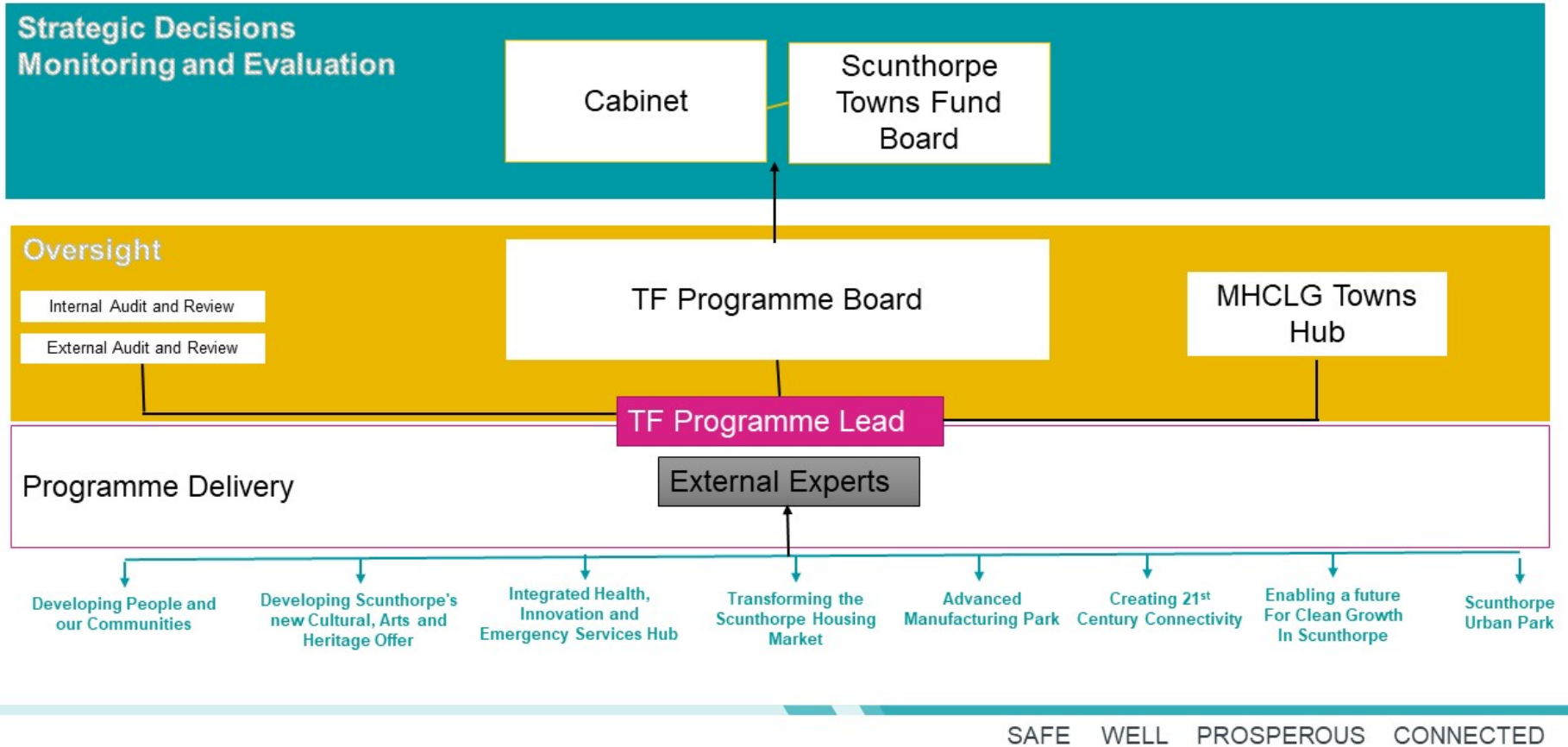
The Board will delegate authority to the Council for the day-to-day delivery and operational decisions for the Towns Fund programme. The Board will be responsible for strategic programme decisions and for overseeing delivery of the programme, monitoring and evaluation of the individual projects and compliance with the Heads of Terms Agreement with government.

NLC will appoint a Programme Manager (PM) to the Towns Fund programme who will have responsibility for day-to-day decisions and delivery oversight of the TIP projects:

- The PM will report to the Senior Responsible Officer and will be supported by appointed project managers and other economic development and regeneration specialists, including legal, finance and communication specialists.
- The SRO who will have delegated authority for operational delivery decisions. Collectively these resources will form the NLC delivery team.
- Each TIP project will be led by an appointed Project Manager who will work with a Project Delivery Group made up of relevant internal and external stakeholders for this project.
- The Programme Manager will provide update reports to the Programme Board.. Regular programme monitoring reports will be provided to the Board and MHCLG.
- Programme decisions will require final approval by NLC's Cabinet.
- Decisions made by the Programme Management Team will relate to the following work areas;
- Day to day responsibility for the management and administration of the Towns Fund programme
- Overseeing the delivery of all TIP projects
- Ensuring that projects remain state aid compliant - overseeing appropriate due diligence (whether internal or external)
- Drafting funding agreements letters/contracts, where appropriate (approved by NLC's legal department)
- Communicating as required with private sector partners and any individual grant beneficiaries
- Performance managing any external grant awards, monitoring milestones, outputs and the terms and conditions
- Claim, drawdown, defray and account for funds from MHCLG

- Liaising with MHCLG/Towns Fund Team to ensure they receive monitoring updates and progress reports as required
- Supporting 3rd party project teams in their delivery of Towns Fund projects, monitoring progress where appropriate through a grant agreement
- Reporting on Towns Fund progress to NLC's internal Board, TF Board, Portfolio Holders, Scrutiny and Cabinet
- Implementation and delivery of the Communication Plan

A diagram of the reporting and decision-making process for the delivery of the Towns Fund programme is shown below:



## TIP Project Prioritisation

The Board have led the selection process in developing the TIP projects. The process took three stages;

1. Longlist of projects
2. Initial Sifting Exercise
3. Final Sifting Exercise

The first exercise created a long list of projects located within the Towns Fund boundary - 84 projects were identified in total.

These projects were derived from a range of sources, for example engagement with stakeholders like local business groups as well as Board members and feedback from

The second stage was an initial sifting exercise that looked at how these projects fit with a set of more detailed criteria

The final sifting exercise which shortlisted the final projects for the TIP, involved an outcome led approach. This final exercise identified 7 projects for inclusion in the TIP, full information of these will be published on the Towns Fund website following final approval and submission of the TIP to government.

The TIP proposals were approved by Cabinet in December 2020.

## Scrutiny

The Programme Board is made up of Senior managers, responsible for ensuring that the programme aligns to the wider business of the Council and its policies and procedures.

There is representation from specialist areas like legal, finance and communications, they act on behalf of the accountable body and will scrutinise the performance of the Towns Fund programme to ensure appropriate compliance to Council, MHCLG and Towns Fund policies and processes.

Additional scrutiny of the programme will be carried out through programme reviews by internal Audit and where appropriate external auditing of the programme which would be a procured service.

## Financial Regulations

NLC must conduct its business efficiently and ensure it has sound financial management policies in place, including arrangements to monitor compliance.

NLC's statutory Section 151 Officer is also charged with ensuring that proper financial management processes are in place.

NLC's financial regulations provide clarity about the financial accountability of individuals.

The regulations identify responsibilities of individuals across all levels. Written records are a requirement where decision making has been delegated to members of staff in order to give assurance that tasks or decisions have been performed in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

A scheme for further delegations will be put in place by the Accountable Body with specific reference to the delegation of authority for the Towns Fund programme. This proposal will ensure the most efficient and timely management of the programme, in the context of the delivery timeframes.

## Risk Management

Risk management is an important part of how NLC achieves its priorities.

NLC proactively manages its risks, enabling it to effectively manage current priorities and promptly identify future challenges.

Risk management is noted as one of the key pillars of good decision making and therefore a crucial element of good governance. NLC continually develops its risk management processes.

A programme delivery risk assessment will be completed and reviewed quarterly at the Town Programme Board as part of the monitoring process ensuring that identified risks are minimised where possible and do not impact negatively on us achieving our priorities, outputs and outcomes.

## Risk Register

NLC's Risk Register will record the Towns Fund programme and will be updated on a regular basis recording a list of any significant risks which may prevent the programme from

achieving its priorities, outputs and outcomes. It will hold both strategic and operational risks. The Register identifies the lead individual to manage the risk, identify the controls or mitigation that needs to be in place to continually monitor the risk and record the outcome of any audit review.

The register is used for reporting and monitoring of risks at a variety of levels and is configured in risk groups aligned to the directorate structure of NLC. It is overseen by the Audit and Risk section, who will also maintain evaluations of NLC wide and confidential risks. Key risks are also be recorded in NLC's electronic risk register and are escalated to the Strategic Risk Management Board as chaired by the Chief Executive and to the Audit Committee if the risk reaches a defined level.

## Procurement

As a public sector body, NLC employs rigorous procurement processes which fully comply with the European and HM Treasury regulation on tendering and procurement and is a 'contracting authority' under the Public Contracts Regulations. Any procurement carried out as part of the Towns Fund programme will follow the Council's procurement procedures which can be found at: Joint Procurement Strategy.

Appendices

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE TOWN DEAL BOARD**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

North Lincolnshire has ambitious growth plans spanning the next 20 years, with real progress made since 2017.

North Lincolnshire's Scunthorpe is one of the 100 towns included in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)'s Towns Fund, set up to address growth constraints and to deliver long term economic and productivity growth through:

- Urban regeneration, planning and land use
- Skills and enterprise infrastructure
- Connectivity

The Towns Fund provides an opportunity for Scunthorpe to agree a Town Deal with MHCLG and thereby benefit from significant investment for growth.

It is a requirement of the Towns Fund that North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) develops and convenes a Town Deal Board.

#### **THE ROLE OF THE TOWN DEAL BOARD**

The Town Deal Board ("the Board") is the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for is defined.

The Board will:

Develop and agree an evidence based Town Investment Plan that includes:

- Background, context and evidence of need for suggested interventions.
- A vision that, complements agreed or emerging local economic strategies.

A high level description of priority areas for the short, medium and long term including:

- Activity that can be locally funded.
- Projects that could be supported by public investment (including through the Towns Fund), with high level costs estimates.
- Ambitions for private sector investment and community involvement.
- Develop a clear programme of interventions
- Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders

The area the Board will represent the geographic area as shown on the map at Appendix A.

The Board is not a legal entity, and its role is advisory. Its purpose is to work with NLC, to which it is accountable as the Lead Council, to produce a well – evidenced Town Investment Plan which sets out a clear understanding of Scunthorpe focusing



on its assets, opportunities and challenges. It will subsequently assist in the production of business cases to access Town Deal funding.

### **The Role of the Accountable Body**

The role of North Lincolnshire Council is to:

- Define the area the Town Deal Board will represent on a map.
- Convene the Town Deal Board which will align with the governance standards and policies of the Lead Council including around whistle blowing, conflicts of interest, and complaints;

Publish the Town Deal Board's governance structure and ways of working, such as a statement for how the board will engage stakeholders and agree decisions over time; and

- Set out how capacity funding will be spent, and how that will support the process of
- developing a good Town Investment Plan. This funding will be used for:
- Convening Town Deal Board
- Running business and wider community engagement events
- Developing Town Investment Plans
- Providing technical expertise for business case development

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The Board is made up of 15 members comprising:

1. An independent chair from the private sector, appointed through a process led by NLC.
2. The Board will have the power at any time to co- opt further members if and when an appropriate candidate becomes available.
3. Within 12 months the Board will aim to have a minimum female representation of 33% in line with Government recommendations.

A Board member shall cease to be a member if a:

- Member gives written notice to the Board of their resignation, to take effect on receipt by the Board of the notice of resignation.
- Member is declared bankrupt, making of any arrangement or composition with his creditors, or liquidation, or in the case of an organisation, winding up, liquidation, dissolution or administration or anything analogous to any of the foregoing occurring in relation to a member.
- Member ceases to have an office or other base within NLC or ceasing to be employed by such organisation as entitles them to be a member.

All Board members must retire every three years but can be reappointed by their nominating body at the end of each three-year period.

NLC will provide administrative support to the Board.

## BOARD MEETINGS

1. The Board will meet xx times per year in the first year of operation, with an expectation of meeting 4 times per year thereafter.
2. No business shall be transacted at any Board meeting unless a quorum is present.
3. The quorum shall be eight and shall include NLC, and a Business/SME member.
4. Members of the public may attend all board meetings, unless information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person or organisation is likely to be disclosed.
5. NLC will give at least 5 clear working days' notice of all Board meetings, by publishing details on its website.
6. NLC will publish on its website copies of agendas and reports that are open to public inspection at least 5 clear working days before each board meeting, and copies of minutes of board meetings that are open to public inspection as soon as practicable once they have been approved by the Board.
7. NLC will invite MHCLG representative to attend Board meetings.
8. Each Board member shall have one vote and decisions will be made on a show of hands. In the event of an equality of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.

## 5. BOARD MEMBERS' CONDUCT

Board members are expected to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, as defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life . They are:

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

- **Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## Conflicts of Interest

NLC will maintain and publish on its website a Register of Board Member Interests.

The following provisions shall apply to all Board members:

- In the event that there is a conflict of interest the person so conflicted shall immediately declare the nature of the conflict or potential conflict and withdraw from any business where the conflict would be relevant.
- Whenever a person has an interest in a matter to be discussed at a meeting the person concerned will not be:
  - entitled to remain present at the meeting during discussion of that matter
  - counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting
  - entitled to vote on the matter
- The Board may, at any time authorise a person to remain in the meeting whilst a matter in which they have or may have a conflict of interest is discussed, provided that the conflict of interest is declared and the person subject to the conflict of interest shall not be entitled to vote on the matter.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### The Chair and Vice-Chair

The role of the Chair and vice-chair is to lead the Board in defining vision and direction, and in delivering the desired outputs, whilst ensuring that appropriate procedures for governance and management of resources are in place.

The key responsibilities of the post are to:

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- Be an effective influencer and “ambassador” for Stevenage at local, regional and national levels working with appropriate partner organisations and individuals.
- Be an effective advocate on behalf of the Board, NLC and the businesses and people of Scunthorpe, in particular at conferences and events/meetings with Ministers, MPs and key civil servants.
- Reflect the agreed policies of the Board and its members in all discussions with partners, stakeholders, government and its agencies.
- Ensure that the Board adheres at all times to high standards of ethics and governance in public life and is an exemplar to other organisations.
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- Have a casting vote in Board decisions if circumstances so require.

If the Chair resigns during the year, the Vice Chair will become Interim Chair and an interim Vice Chair will be nominated by the Board until the formal elections are held. If the Vice Chair indicates they do not wish to become the Interim Chair, then the Board will nominate an interim Chair until the formal elections are held. If the Vice Chair resigns during the year, an interim Vice Chair will be nominated.

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