

First Town Deals worth almost £180 million announced

- First 7 towns offered funding to boost regeneration
- Deals will help local economies outside of big cities
- Funding will sustain jobs, improve connectivity and boost economic growth at this crucial time for local communities

Communities in 7 areas across England are set to benefit from up to £178.7 million in new Town Deals, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today (27 October 2020).

Barrow-in-Furness, Blackpool, Darlington, Peterborough, Norwich, Torquay and Warrington are the first of 101 places to be offered a Town Deal and work will now begin with these areas to confirm final funding.

These areas will have the opportunity to invest in their local economies at this critical time, implementing proposals submitted to the government's £3.6 billion Towns Fund, which is designed create jobs and drive growth across the country.

Forming a cornerstone of this government's levelling up agenda to help reshape our towns and cities into places where businesses and communities can thrive, these landmark deals will see millions invested in projects across the country including:

- £39.5 million to be used to update the Blackpool Illuminations, for a return to tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic, which used to attract 4 million visitors and bring in £284 million a year, and to support the development of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone
- £21.9 million to modernise Torquay town centre, transforming it into a retail and leisure destination for people visiting, working and living in the town as well as improving transport links with a new focus on walking and cycling routes
- £22.9 million investment for Peterborough to lay the groundwork for low carbon living, supporting healthy lifestyles and encourage enterprise and innovation. Planned projects include a skills centre for green technologies, enterprise hub and a new pedestrian bridge

This latest funding builds on the government's wider package of unprecedented measures to help protect and support communities, business and jobs through the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that nobody is left without hope or opportunity.

Ministers will remain in conversation with local leaders over the appropriate coronavirus alert levels for their areas, including any further support that might be required.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

This government is levelling up opportunity all across the country. We are unlocking the full potential of towns and communities, giving them the support that they need to thrive and the 7 Towns Fund Deals that I am announcing today mark the start of locally designed regeneration projects across the country.

Backed by £180 million, we are boosting skills, job creation and connectivity in these 7 towns – providing investment and confidence at a crucial time for these communities.

The offers announced today respond to locally led proposals put forward by Town Deal Boards with representation from business, the local community, public sectors and local MPs.

All 101 towns selected to work towards a Town Deal were given a funding allocation with proposals being submitted to the MHCLG. The first cohort of towns submitted proposals in July, before being reviewed by officials and a final decision made by ministers. Further Town Deals are due to be announced in November.

Town Deals build directly on the government's commitment to decentralise funding and decisions away from Whitehall, invest in the growth of local economies and devolve powers through ambitious City and Growth Deals, providing more than £9 billion of funding to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and introducing 8 metro mayors in England.

The government is working with councils and LEPs to create better transport links, more connectivity and world-class education opportunities across the country.

On 27 July 2019 the Prime Minister announced that the £3.6 billion Towns Fund would support an initial 101 town deals across England. See further details of the [announcement](#).

A Town Deal is an agreement in principle between government, the Lead Council and the Town Deal Board. It will set out a vision and strategy for the town, and what each party agrees to do to achieve this vision.

See the [101 places being supported to develop Town Deals](#).

Further detail on local bids

Blackpool have been awarded £39.5 million to be used to update their much-loved illuminations, which attracts 4 million visitors and brings in £284 million a year. They also plan to use the funding towards the further development of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, creating new jobs, improving local transport links and attracting businesses to the area.

In Torquay, the £21.9 million funding is set to be used to modernise the town centre, transforming it into a retail and leisure destination for people visiting, working and living in the town as well as improving transport links with a new focus on walking and cycling routes.

Darlington's £22.3 million deal sets out to boost employment skills across the town, for both young people and adults. Plans include funding for the town's T-Levels offer which will help learners kickstart their careers in a number of fields.

Barrow have secured £25 million which the council could spend on developing a new learning quarter, community wellbeing hubs and improving the local cycling and walking infrastructure. They also plan to run a housing renewal programme to address the lack of high-quality housing in the region.

Norwich's £25 million will help the council to realise their '2040 Vision', which includes a new digital hub, a digi-tech factory and an advanced construction and engineering (ACE) centre. These developments will grow the city's digital sector, bringing new jobs and opportunities to the community.

Peterborough Council could use their £22.9 million investment to lay the groundwork for low carbon living, support healthy lifestyles and encourage enterprise and innovation. Planned projects include a skills centre for green technologies, enterprise hub and a new pedestrian bridge.

In Warrington, the £22.1 million investment will help to utilise vacant spaces and restore a vibrant town centre. The council's plans include building an electric bus fleet depot, an advanced construction training centre and a health and social care academy.