

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Long Term Plan for Towns**

#### **Executive Summary**

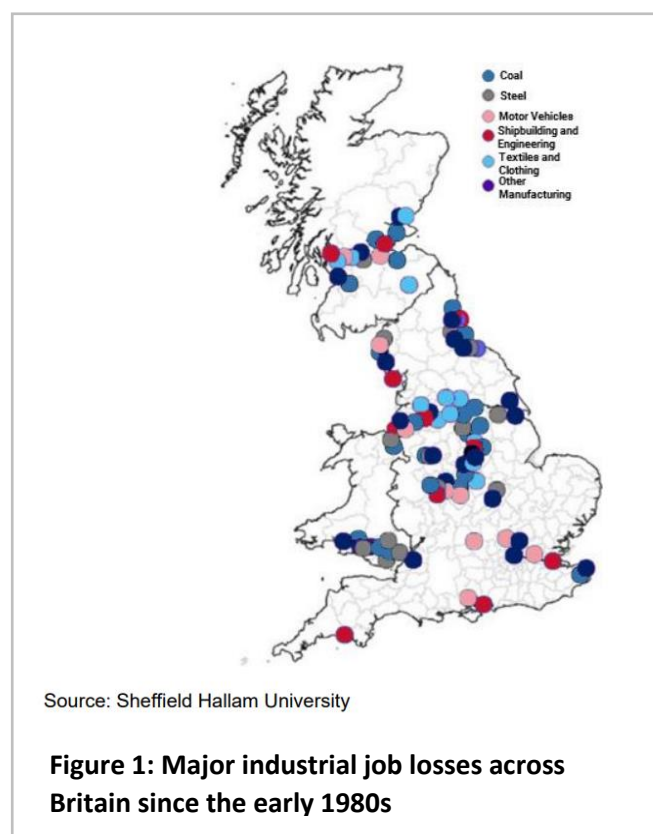
1. Doncaster has been selected to be a participant in the government's Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) programme, a £1.1 billion programme which aims to drive plans to regenerate 55 towns around the United Kingdom.
2. Each participant will receive an 'endowment-style' fund worth almost £20m over 10 years (at current prices). The funding will be provided annually and split approximately 75% Capital and 25% Revenue.
3. To access the fund, places are required to submit a Long-Term Plan comprising a 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan, before 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024. The Plan will set out how funding will be allocated and spent, with the local authority as the accountable body for funding and delivery.
4. The fund has a strong focus on support for town centres. Its three themes are: Safety and security; High streets, heritage and regeneration; Transport and connectivity. Within these themes, a set of 'pre-approved' policy interventions has been identified by government. The case for support for these interventions has already been agreed, simplifying the Long-Term Plan process. Areas can choose to propose alternative interventions if they submit an outline business case as part of their Long-Term Plan.
5. Development of the Long-Term Plan must be overseen by a Board. Doncaster Town Board has been adapted to meet the requirements of the programme and local aspirations, with increased membership, comprising of:
  - An independent Chair
  - Two local Elected Members
  - The relevant Member(s) of Parliament
  - A senior representative from the Police
  - Other members at the discretion of the chair from areas such as: Community partners; Local businesses and social enterprises; Cultural, Arts, Heritage and sporting organisations; Public agencies and Anchor Institutions
6. Government has set the default geography for the Long-Term Plan as the 2022 Doncaster Built Up Area, as defined by the Office for National Statistics. Boards are able to suggest minor amendments to this geography but are not able to add more towns into the boundary, which is expected to be contiguous.
7. The Doncaster Built Up Area aligns closely to the existing Doncaster Central Locality area. Based on the default geography provided by government, the themes of the fund and the associated policy interventions, it is proposed that the default boundary is expanded to incorporate the full Central Locality Plan area, and that interventions align with this delivery plan with a clear focus on the City Centre.

## Recommendations

8. It is recommended that the Board notes:
  - a. The participation of Doncaster in the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme and the requirement to produce a Long-Term Plan setting out a 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan.
  - b. The annual funding profile totalling £19.51m over 10 years, the themes of the fund and the policy interventions proposed by government.
  - c. The proposed timescales for development of Doncaster's Long-Term Plan and the requirement to submit the final plan to by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024.
  - d. The default geography proposed by the government in line with the Office for National Statistics Doncaster Built Up Area 2022
9. It is recommended that the Board approves the Doncaster Long Term Plan boundary described in Annex B, expanding the default geography to incorporate the full Doncaster Central Locality Plan area and associated local assets, for submission to government.

## Background

10. Since the 1970s, the UK has seen a fast and broad deindustrialisation compared to other developed countries, with a lasting impact in the North, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the Midlands in particular. Globalisation has played a role in offshoring activities to other parts of the world, with evolving consumption patterns changing consumer demand for goods. In coastal towns and others reliant on tourism, the fall in the cost of air travel and rises in living standards have led to an increase in consumers looking abroad for their next holiday destination.
11. Figure 1 illustrates the geography of industrial job loss, highlighting the most significant losses in places where major industries have been reduced to a fraction of their former size or disappeared entirely.
12. Several other characteristics are associated with these areas. Since the 2008 Financial Crisis, employment growth in towns has been much slower than elsewhere. Between 2009 and 2021, employment in towns grew by 7%, half the rate of cities outside of London (14%) and around a third of that of out-of-town areas (20%).



13. Younger people in towns and villages are more likely to be workless because they are unwell (3.4%), compared to younger workers in core cities such as Cardiff, Glasgow, or Liverpool (2%). Towns also tend to be less attractive prospects to many graduates, who made up 26% of young people in core cities in 2020-2022
14. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, average wages in London in 2019 were 60% higher than those in Scarborough and Grimsby – with the top 10% of earners in London earning nearly twice as much per hour. Half of working-age adults in London and Brighton have university degrees compared with less than a fifth in places such as Doncaster or Mansfield.
15. However, in recent decades some towns around the UK have been able to transform their fortunes through a long-term plan and locally-driven change. Prominent examples include Salford Quays, beginning in the 1980s with the Manchester Metrolink and continuing to Media City today, and Stevenage, whose 20-year regeneration plan leverages public funding to draw in private investment to transform the town centre.
16. Doncaster has been selected to be a participant in the new Long-Term Plan for Towns initiative, a £1.1 billion programme which aims to drive plans to regenerate 55 towns around the United Kingdom.
17. The Long-Term Plan for Towns programme is part of a broader series of measures created by government to support small, medium and large towns, including the Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Partnerships.

## Long Term Plan for Towns Summary

18. Long Term Plan for Towns is an allocative fund, that will be provided to preselected local authorities according to a methodology produced by Government.
19. The Long-Term Plan for Towns takes a new endowment-style approach, which means that funding is released annually over ten years. The allocation comprises of both Capital and Revenue funding. In total Doncaster will receive £19.51m over 10 years.
20. The funding profile is shown in Table 1 below.

In £000's	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34	Total
Total RDEL per place (Revenue)*	50	449	423	449	449	449	449	454	467	467	467	4,574
Total CDEL per place (Capital)		491	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	14,936
TOTAL	50	940	2,028	2,054	2,054	2,054	2,054	2,059	2,072	2,072	2,072	19,510

**Table 1: Long Term Plan for Towns Funding Profile**

*\*Differential in total due to rounding of annual figures*

21. The fund will support policy interventions in three investment themes:

Theme	Rationale
Safety and Security	<p>Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a priority for turning around local areas and ensuring business can thrive. It is impossible to level up a town if people do not feel safe to go into the town centre. Towns that feel unsafe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drive away shoppers</li> <li>• deter investors</li> <li>• undermine the norms and behaviour that underpin a thriving society</li> </ul> <p>The increase in shop vacancy rate and decrease in footfall has resulted in high streets becoming prime locations for anti-social behaviour, diminishing pride in place. The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan launched this year in England and Wales, to make our streets safer and treat anti-social behaviour with the urgency it deserves. To support this, towns can use the funding provided through the Long-Term Plan for Towns to help reduce crime and improve safety in the local area.</p>
High streets, heritage and regeneration	<p>As research from More in Common and Power to Change has found, ‘for many people, nothing epitomises local neglect more than the state of their local high street’. Since the 1960s, our high streets have centred around retail, however, increasing overhead costs, an oversupply of retail space, the growth of out-of-town shopping centres and online shopping have created a challenging local retail environment.</p> <p>A hollowing out of high streets and town centres can affect the liveability of a place. This makes it less attractive for, and harder to retain, skilled workers, often resulting in towns having an older population and creating an economic environment that exacerbates these demographic challenges.</p> <p>To ensure they remain the beating heart of our towns and can offer opportunities to local people, traditional high streets need help to adapt and diversify their offer. Towns can use this funding to enhance their town centres, making them and their buildings more attractive and accessible to residents, businesses, and visitors.</p>
Transport and connectivity	<p>The ease with which residents can access high streets, jobs and local shopping centres is critical if towns are to thrive into the future. This means offering transport options, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• linking different parts of the town with new infrastructure</li> <li>• providing safe ways for people can walk or cycle into the centre</li> <li>• ensuring public transport options are viable and accessible.</li> </ul> <p>While improving transport connectivity is a critical component of levelling up, it alone will not turn around the economic fortunes of a place. Investment will need to be used alongside other themes, particularly safety and security, to ensure that transport options are seen as attractive and safe. Used well, this funding could make towns more connected and easier to find good quality and affordable parking - increasing footfall and viability – to high streets and local shopping centres, and accessibility to local employment opportunities.</p>

**Table 2: Long Term Plan for Towns Investment Themes**

22. To access the fund, local areas must:
- Establish a Town Board (or adapt an existing Town Board) to develop the Long-Term Plan, working closely with local people.
  - Submit a Long-Term Plan comprising their 10-year vision and a 3-year investment plan by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024
23. In line with government guidance, Doncaster Town Board (now Doncaster City Centre Board) has been adapted and expanded to fulfil the requirements of the fund and meet our local ambitions.
24. The 10-year vision should be a long-term, strategic document. It should be backed by insights gained through engagement with local people, to create buy-in with the public. It should include:
- A 250-word vision statement that articulates, at a high level, the vision for the future of the town and how success will be judged.
  - The strategic case for change, building on the evidence in the data pack provided by DLUHC<sup>1</sup> with, where relevant, more granular local data and stories.
  - The outcomes and objectives the town is trying to meet and how these align with the priorities of the local community, including what local people think needs fixing, the opportunities the investment offers over the decade, and priority outcomes for 2034 and beyond.
  - The planned direction of travel for the regeneration of the town, across the 3 investment themes. It should detail the interventions that are available to achieve this.
  - Clear evidence that the Town Board is community led, including through its membership, ways of working and distinction from the local authority, and evidence of buy-in from local businesses, civil society and communities. It should describe how these stakeholders have been engaged to date, and how that engagement will continue going forward.
  - How the Town Board will attract and combine new and existing private, public and philanthropic investment, setting out the existing commitments and ambitions to secure further support going forwards.
  - High level delivery milestones over the 10-year lifespan of the programme, with an overview of potential future interventions and how the powers in the policy toolkit will be used in a way that best suits the town across the 3 investment themes.
25. The 3-year investment plan annex should set out:
- The interventions and powers the Board wishes to use over the 3 years for each investment theme.
  - Whether the interventions are from the list of interventions or are 'off-menu'.
  - How the Board will use the interventions locally and how much they will cost.
  - How the interventions will address the outcomes set out in the 10-year vision, grounded in evidence and data.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities

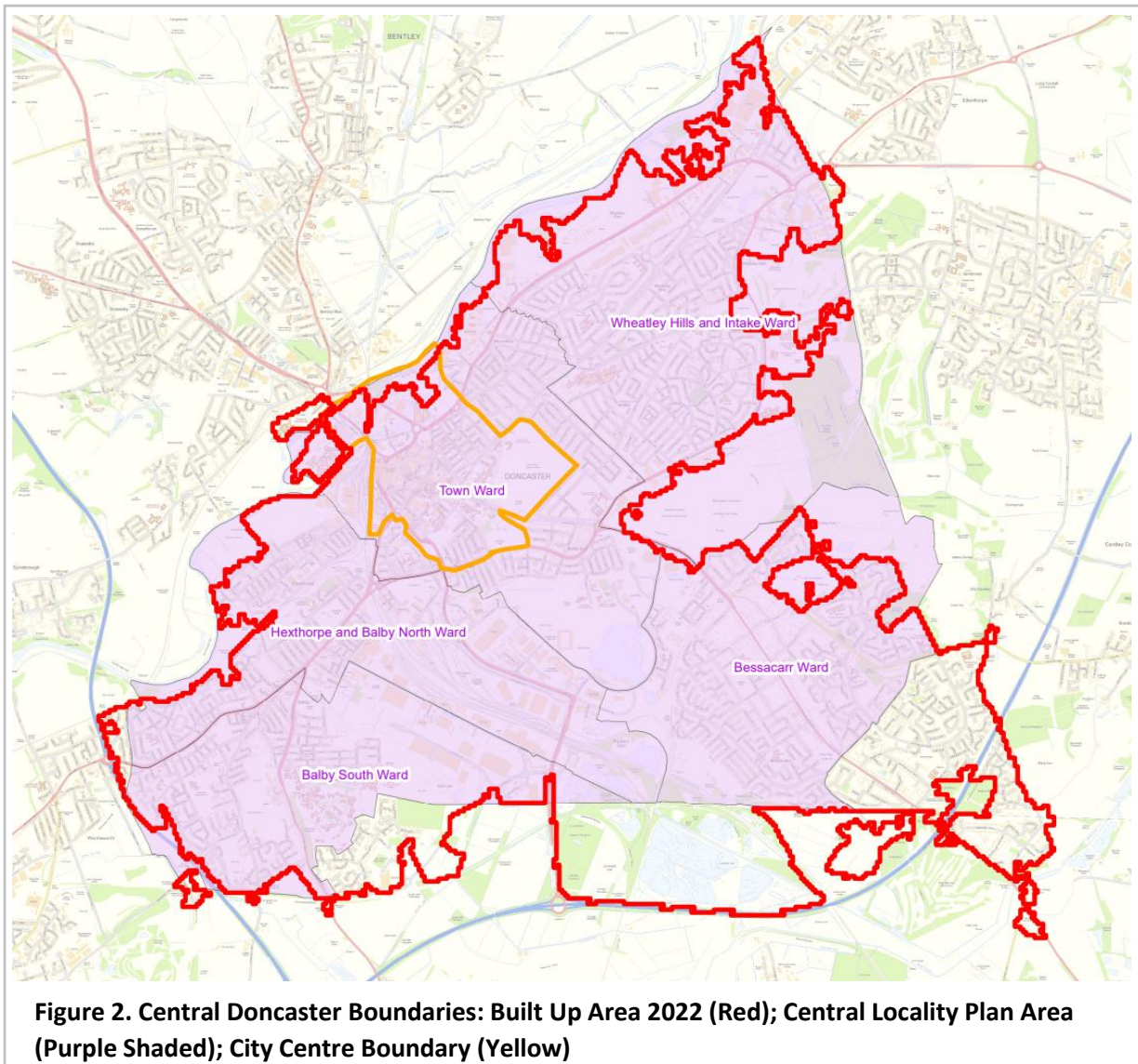
26. Government strongly encourages Boards to consider how additional funding can be attracted from other sources. This could include new private investment, philanthropy or other public funding, particularly where there is scope for partnership working between bodies or agencies.
27. The list of interventions provided at Annex A are those which have already been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit-to-cost ratio. Should a Board wish to pursue one of these interventions, a business case will not be required as part of the assessment process – this is intended to simplify the process as far as possible and reduce bureaucracy.
28. Should it be agreed that other, ‘off-menu’ interventions better meet local needs, an outline business case will need to be provided, underpinned by insights from local stakeholders, agreement with the local authority where they are required to underwrite the risk, and – where possible – numeric evidence.

## Boundary Proposals and Focus of Investment

29. Some immediate actions are required regarding the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme. In particular, Doncaster needs to provide confirmation that the new Board is in place and propose any amendments to the default boundary by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
30. The default boundary for Long-Term Plans is set by government based on the 2022 Built-Up Areas defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Town Boards are able to suggest minor amendments to this geography but are not able to extend the boundary to encompass more towns and any amended boundary is expected to be contiguous.
31. While the ONS Built-Up Areas (BUA) are a good representation of the boundary of many towns, particularly those clustered densely around a town centre, it is less effective in describing the geography of Doncaster. For example, the BUA boundary does not include the full city centre as defined in the Urban Centre Masterplan, and some communities close to the city centre such as Bentley, Scawthorpe, Scawsby are excluded. In addition, by their nature, Built-Up Area geographies tend to exclude some local assets such as greenspace.
32. However, the default government geography does closely approximate the existing Doncaster Central Locality Plan boundary, which is a contiguous area comprising of five central electoral wards: Town Ward; Wheatley Hills and Intake Ward; Hexthorpe and Balby North Ward; Balby South Ward; Bessacarr Ward.
33. The Central Locality Plan is an annual delivery plan which sets out service delivery and investment priorities for central Doncaster based on wide ranging community consultation and stakeholder engagement. Several of the priorities within the Central Locality Plan align directly with the themes of the Long-Term Plan for Towns.
34. As described in Table 2, although the BUA describes a broader geography, much of the focus of the Long-Term Plan investment themes and policy interventions relate to the vibrancy and success of town centres. Doncaster has previously defined a town centre boundary in the Urban Centre Masterplan and Town Investment Plan. This area falls entirely within the Central Locality Plan boundary.



35. The Doncaster Built-Up Area, Central Locality Plan area and City Centre boundary are shown in Figure 2.



36. It is therefore proposed that The LTPT is aligned to delivery of the Central Locality Plan but that the primary focus of Doncaster's policy interventions is the city centre, whilst ensuring that sufficient flexibility is retained to address potential issues such as the displacement of activity or the delivery of investments which would overlap the existing City Centre boundary.
37. Based on the default geography provided by government, the themes of the fund, and existing delivery plans, it is recommended that Doncaster's Long-Term Plan boundary is expanded to incorporate the whole Central Locality Area. This will add a small number of local sites and assets to the default BUA 2022 boundary, in particular the City Centre Waterfront site, and greenspace assets including Hexthorpe Park, Cantley Park, Doncaster Racecourse/Doncaster Common and Sandall Beat Woods.
38. The proposed Doncaster Long Term Plan boundary is shown in Annex B.

## Community Engagement

39. Community engagement is at the heart of the Long-Term Plan for Towns, so plans should reflect local priorities and be co-designed with communities, businesses and residents, drawing on available evidence and data.
40. A significant amount of recent engagement work already exists regarding the City Centre and the themes of the fund, including through the Public Space Protection Order project, the Fairness Commission and the development of the annual Central Locality Plan. This consultation provides a strong foundation for the development of the LTPT investment plan, ensuring that early interventions can help to address issues that residents have already told us matter to them.
41. The Locality Plan consultation identified several areas that people feel is a strength of the city centre, including:
  - **Community Spirit:** Good neighbours, family, friends and community groups, places of worship.
  - **Connectivity & Transport:** Great links to trains, buses, motorways, cycling and walking routes. Active Travel Hub to support access to cycles.
  - **Local Amenities:** Access to culture and heritage venues, Cast, Library, parks, health & specialist services.
  - **Businesses & Investment:** Established local businesses, good range of shops, hospitality and markets. Continued investment to improve facilities & infrastructure.
42. However, it also identified issues requiring improvement, including:
  - **Thriving Community:** More communication with residents & businesses, more community groups, events and activities. Promoting the city positively.
  - **Environment & Sustainability:** Cleanliness of City Centre, litter, waste, reuse/recycling, more green spaces, parking.
  - **Fairness, Health & Wellbeing:** Youth education & activities, support for homelessness, substance misuse, mental health, cost of living.
  - **Businesses & Economic Investment:** Cost of living, empty properties, market management, attracting new investment, accessibility, events, promoting the city.
  - **Community Safety:** Crime (theft, drugs, violence, knife), anti-social behaviour, homelessness, begging, street drinking, feeling of safety.
43. This existing recent consultation may be sufficient to identify early priority interventions for Doncaster's long-term plan. However, to build on this work, further engagement work is proposed including through an Appreciative Inquiry. This will aid the development of the Long-Term Plan and wider City Centre Strategy, supplementing the existing consultation exercises which have primarily focused on current issues, by further drawing out views on current strengths and aspirations for the future.



## Options Considered

44. The following options have been considered in relation to the Doncaster LTPT boundary:
45. Use the Default ONS Boundary: This is the default area defined by Government, however, it excludes part of the Waterfront area within the current City Centre as defined in the Doncaster Urban Centre Masterplan and Town Investment Plan. It also excludes other assets from the Central Locality Plan area, most notably some parks, greenspaces and Doncaster Racecourse/Doncaster Common.
46. Expand the boundary to cover the whole Doncaster Central Locality Plan Area: This would ensure that the whole of the city centre area and Doncaster Central Locality Plan area are included within the Long-Term Plan for Towns boundary and is the recommended option.

## Reason for Recommended Option

47. Based on the default geography provided by government, the themes of the fund and the associated policy interventions, it is proposed that Doncaster's Long-Term Plan boundary is expanded to incorporate the whole Central Locality Plan area, but that policy interventions focus primarily on the City Centre, building on the existing priorities and city-wide consultation that has already taken place. This will also provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that other potential interventions are not excluded and that any potential displacement of activity from the city centre can be addressed if required.

## Consultation

48. In developing these proposals, Officers have taken account of the Government guidance and consulted with the Chair of the Town Board, senior officers and elected members from City of Doncaster Council and discussed the approach with civil servants from the local area team.

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## **Annex A: List of policy interventions**

### **1. Safety and security interventions**

**S1: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.** This might include:

- promoting the active use of streets and public spaces throughout the daytime and evening
- improvements to streetlighting
- installation of new CCTV

**S2: Engage with Police Force and together consider interventions to focus on visible crime prevention in defined areas places.** Interventions could include:

- hotspot policing
- problem-oriented policing

**S3: Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime and reduce reoffending.** These might include:

- sports programmes designed to prevent crime and reduce reoffending
- mentoring
- police-led pre-charge diversion models for young offenders
- focused deterrence strategies
- halfway house programmes

**S4: Measures to reduce repeat burglary.** These might include:

- Neighbourhood Watch
- provision of crime prevention advice
- property marking
- target hardening (increasing the security of a property)
- cocoon watch (provision of crime prevention advice, support and guidance to neighbours and surrounding addresses of burgled properties)
- alley gating

## 2. High streets, heritage and regeneration interventions

**H1: Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements, which could include better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.**

This might include:

- regenerating a town square or high street
- public realm improvements, for example street furniture or other decorative improvements
- the delivery of outreach, engagement and participatory programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries

**H2: Funding for new or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects and assets including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding, and support for decarbonisation of facilities, energy efficiency audits, and installation of energy efficiency and renewable measures in community buildings (including capital spend and running costs).** This might include:

- building new or updating existing defences to increase communities' resilience to natural hazards like flooding or coastal erosion

**H3: Creation of and improvement to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments. Improvements to the natural environment and the incorporation of more of these natural features into wider public spaces.** This might include:

- development of a new park, particularly in areas with the least access to greenspace
- development of a new park or community garden
- improvements to a canal towpath, particularly in more deprived neighbourhoods
- urban or riparian tree planting
- changes to management of green spaces and verges
- regeneration of existing parks or community gardens, particularly in areas with poor quality parks and gardens
- improving access to existing parks

**H4: Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.** This might include:

- the delivery of events programmes for community spaces, including youth centres and public libraries
- the development, restoration or refurbishment of local natural, cultural and heritage assets and sites

**H5: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.** This might include:

- funding for maker spaces
- funding for local art galleries, museums, libraries for exhibitions
- support for displays for artists to showcase work
- locally led music and theatre performances, tours, author events and film screenings
- funding for cultural, heritage and creative events
- support for outreach, engagement, participatory programmes as part of wider local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities
- support for the establishment and development of cultural, heritage collaborative networks to share knowledge locally

**H6: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.** This might include:

- campaigns promoting the local area and its culture, heritage, leisure and visitor offer to residents and visitors
- campaigns to encourage visitors from further afield to visit and stay in the region, collaborating with other places where appropriate

**H7: Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.** This might include:

- funding for local volunteering groups, such as youth charities and carer's groups
- support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally

**H8: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.**

This might include:

- renovation and maintenance of existing sports facilities
- support for community sports leagues
- regeneration of an unused area to build sports facilities
- creation of new 3G sports pitches and other sports facilities

**H9: Investment in capacity building, resilience (which could include climate change resilience) and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.** This might include:

- funding for community spaces, such as village halls, libraries or community centres for local civil society and community groups to use
- support for people to develop volunteering and social action projects locally

**H10: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.**

**H11: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses.** This might include:

- funding to support the establishment and ongoing running of a new open air market
- business support activity for entrepreneurs

**H12: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.** This might include:

- development of local visitor trails and tours
- grants for the development, promotion and upkeep of local tourist attractions
- development of other local visitor experiences based around the local offer

**H13: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors.** This might include:

- grants to bid for, secure and hold a conference for a leading sector locally

## **Transport and connectivity interventions**

**T1: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.** This might include:

- creation of new foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need or social inequalities
- upgrading of existing foot paths and cycle paths, particularly in areas of health need or social inequalities

**T2: Funding for bus infrastructure and connections to speed up journeys.** This might include:

- traffic signalling improvements
- bus lanes and corridors
- improved passenger information

**T3: England and Scotland Only: Additional revenue funding added to the Bus Service Improvement Programme Plus (BSIP+) funding model from June 2024 - that would award funding to LTAs based on a connectivity scoring so they could undertake activities that would boost economic growth.**

**T4: Funding for new, or improvements to road networks to improve access within and to the town.** This might include:

- traffic management improvements to relieve congestion
- road safety
- highway maintenance (including potholes)

**T5: Funding to improve rail connectivity and access.** This might include:

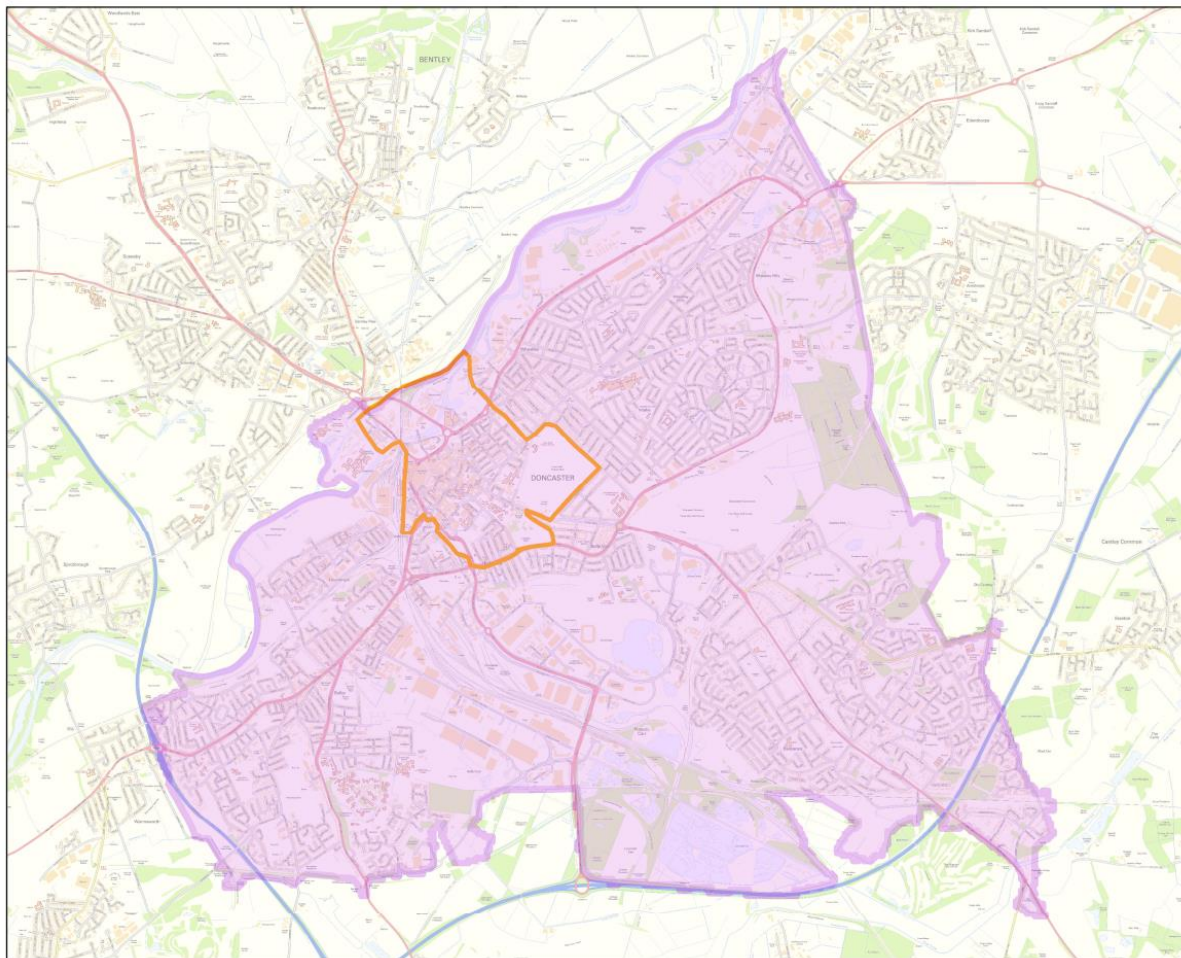
- adding stations along existing lines
- improved accessibility and journey quality at and around stations
- improved passenger information

**T6: Reducing vehicle emissions.** This might include:

- EV charging facilities
- procuring zero emission buses

**T7: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.**

## Annex B: Proposed Doncaster Long-Term Plan Boundary



The proposed Doncaster Long Term Plan for Towns geography is shown above (purple shaded area).

Within this geography it is proposed that the primary focus of investment is within the city centre as described in the Urban Centre Masterplan and Town Investment Plan (orange boundary).