

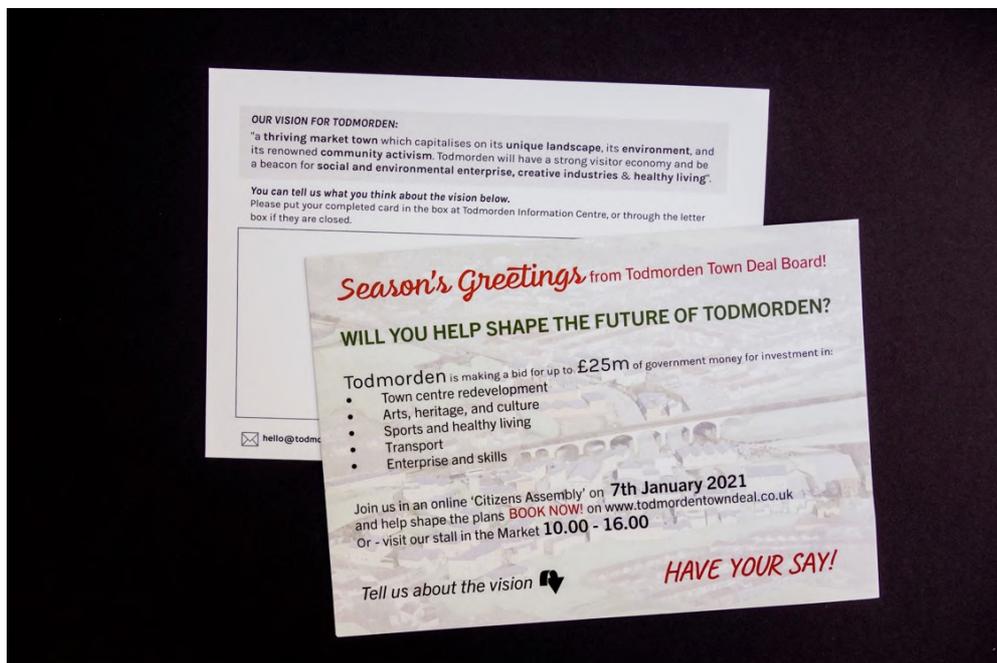
## Community and Stakeholder Engagement: Using Todmorden's Scout Post Service to publicise a Citizens' Assembly and gather feedback on the Todmorden Town Deal Vision Statement

In mid-December 2020 Todmorden's Town Deal Board (TTDB) collaborated with Bauman Lyons Architects to organise an on-line 'Citizens' Assembly' for 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The purpose of this event was to present the projects selected for inclusion in the Town Investment Plan (TIP) to Todmorden residents and give them the opportunity to discuss the proposals with Board members, council officers and consultants. A day-long presence and display at a stall on Todmorden's outdoor market<sup>1</sup> was scheduled for the same date and with the same purpose.

TTDB then engaged Todmorden's Scout Post Service<sup>2</sup> to deliver postcards to all addresses in the town, inviting residents to take part in the events and to give feedback on the Vision Statement.

The postcard delivered included:

- A seasonal greeting from the Town Deal Board
- A brief introduction to the purpose of the Towns Fund
- Instructions for booking a place at the Citizens' Assembly
- Notice of the consultation event at the outdoor market
- The vision statement, and a space to record comments about it
- Website and social media details



<sup>1</sup> Following the announcement of further restrictions due to COVID-19 on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the consultation at the outdoor market unfortunately had to be cancelled.

<sup>2</sup> The Scout Post is a local Christmas card delivery service run annually by the 8th/26th Calder Valley Scouts. Users are charged 25p per item, and all proceeds go towards running the group's minibuses. The buses are not just used by Scouts, but by other community and youth groups and by local primary schools. The buses have also been used to collect and distribute food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recipients were asked to return any cards with written comments about the Vision Statement to the TTDB, either by means of a post box specially installed inside the Todmorden Information Centre, or by posting them through the Centre's letterbox during closed periods.

Taken together these arrangements offered the following benefits in terms of community/stakeholder engagement:

- Raised awareness about the Towns Fund bid through direct physical mail communication with all Todmorden households
- Opportunity for all residents to give feedback on the overall Vision Statement
- Opportunity for all residents to apply to take part in discussion of the plans at a Citizen's Assembly
- Support, through payment for the scout postal service, for an organisation which benefits the local community
- Visible involvement of, and support for, an organisation which benefits the local community, with resulting positive publicity for the Towns Fund enterprise
- Opportunity for all residents in the town to engage with the development of Todmorden's bid in ways that did not depend on use of smartphones or computers (i.e. either by face-to-face communication in a relatively COVID-19 safe environment at the outdoor market, or by traditional pen-and-paper/physical mail methods).

The TTDB's communications sub-group issued a press release about the use of the Scout Post to local media - example coverage here:

<https://www.halifaxcourier.co.uk/heritage-and-retro/heritage/scouts-helps-spread-todmorden-town-deal-message-3076391>



Honey Lancaster and Blue Lancaster of 8<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> Calder Valley Scouts with Todmorden Town Deal Board member James Duffy



8<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> Calder Valley Scouts with the Todmorden Town Deal postcards

## Vision Statement Responses

By 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021 thirty postcards had been returned to the Todmorden Information Centre. The comments about the Vision Statement are reproduced below.

*I think there should be more opportunities for young people - apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities, youth clubs and coordinated sporting activities. Tod should be more open and welcoming, celebrating diversity and its current communities are often ignored.*

*I would like to see additional components in the plan:*

- *Real-time displays at all bus stop served by minibuses*
- *Additional play areas and shops where these are absent*
- *Increased accessibility for all parts of the town*

*What group of trendy lefties produced the flowery garbage above? The last thing we want is another Hebden Bridge. No doubt of the same idiots that blocked the rear of the Town Hall. Some of us actually go to work in the morning. If the CCTV works watch the chaos caused by the pedestrianisation under the smokescreen of COVID-19 when people want to use Cryers or One-stop when the latter is having a delivery. A very disgruntled council tax payer.*

*Please consider moving the outdoor market stalls on to Tip Side. The area can then be used in a similar way to the square in Hebden Bridge. Room for the arts - heritage and culture activities surrounded by seating and planting make a great area to view the railway arches and Town Hall. Demolish the building (One-stop) adjacent to the Town Hall.*

- *Renovation of the bandstand*
- *Repairs to woodland walks and pathways in the park*
- *Disabled access/lift at the station*
- *Increased parking spaces as we are evolving to electric*
- *Funding for the theatre to show films*
- *Improvement to Todmorden online site providing up-to-date information of activities in the area*
- *Community workshop/repair shop*
- *Online guided walks around Tod*
- *Improve and develop the market*
- *Run after-school computing/coding/IT classes*

*Some pedestrianised areas would be good - Water Street and around the Town Hall. The market needs effort putting into it to revitalise it - artists and makers markets? Totally locally markets? Upmarket Sundays? Support the college! And local businesses. Look at encouraging ethical businesses and sustainability. Smarten up the town centre.*

- *Make the most of the Town Hall with up-lighters*
- *Repair pavements with flags not tarmac*
- *Create a beautiful space which is then maintained on Pollination Street*
- *Heavily subsidised rentals/grants for desirable shops (not takeaways) to occupy empty shops*
- *Refurbish the bandstand*
- *Make the park look like a park - with flowerbeds*
- *Trees down Halifax Road to make the approach to the town more attractive. Shops opposite Lidl to be improved with new Signage/canopies. Ex-mayor's shop is one of the scruffiest.*

*Charging for the market car park is contributing to its demise. If I need to pick up one or a few items I'll go to one of the supermarkets where parking is free. And with Aldi opening will only make the problem worse. Please make the market car park one hour disk.*

*Some of the money should be spent on rebuilding the bandstand in some form of material making it vandal proof. Re the green grass area near market - make area into a village square as in Hebden Bridge.*

*It would be good if somewhere could be found as a centre for the young people of the town. They need a space where they could meet, listen to music, share conversation etc. Somewhere for them. They really lack this . . . this is why they hang about parks, etc. Surely there is someone or a group who could organise such project (preferably young people themselves?)*

*Would it not to be a more cohesive approach to join up with Todmorden Learning Centre and combine the funds if you get them? You basically have the same underlying vision for helping the town so it makes better sense to have both groups working together. TLC has an eco-vision which will interest young and old. Hopefully they can develop associate courses which would bring in many people. There are many people in Tod who have a huge variety of skills and talents lying under-used at present.*

*Entering Calderdale along the canal from summit is a bag of \*\*\*\* and its condition will be levelled at Todmorden because all the way from Top to Brighouse has been surfaced. Let's not waste any more money or the white elephants of Tod - The Town Hall, bandstand, Fielden Centre etc.*

*My vision for Todmorden: A peaceful market town which is immune to capitalist exploitation, covets its neat landscape, shuns interference from activists and jobsworths, yet takes care of its community and environment in a wise, mature and usually very discreet way. And, beyond commercial enterprises as a necessary evil, keeps itself to itself. And is generally free of hassle, be it from underdeveloped things or middle-class know-it-alls. Question: What are you going to do about all the terraces that were built for the slaves of the millowners and consequently have no gardens? The fact that there are too many roads and no gardens is a massive barrier to collective quality of life. My vision for Todmorden revolves around one specific priority: Rip up a few roads, turn them into gardens and more interesting secluded spaces like people have further up, and give them to the owners of those properties. Yes, for free. Shock horror! if you've got money and you sincerely wish to improve conditions for the community as a whole here in Tod this is a very real issue that cannot be ignored and in my view it's a basic right as well. It's scandalous that they built these rows of barracks for the workers to live in back in the day while they themselves lived in relative luxury and look down on them . . . \*\*\*\* you if you don't care either. Oh, I almost forgot: And tell Incredible Edible to \*\*\*\* off!*

*We have recently moved into the area, to Lumbutts. Your vision is excellent. One of the unique 'selling points' of Todmorden is its creation by a family who had tremendous foresight, social conscience and philanthropic mindset. A concerted effort to focus visitors on this, linking stories to the landscape and physical remains/buildings, pathways, landmarks etc. will be money well spent. I would be willing to help.*

*This is too complex an issue for this kind of 'consultation'. I'd like to see Todmorden better serve its residents before becoming a 'tourist destination'. Todmorden is not Hebden Bridge, we don't need an attempt to copy it.*

*Cycle path from Portsmouth/Cornholme down to Tod centre so cyclists don't have to use Burnley Road - which cars race along. Town allotments - how great would this have been instead of another supermarket (Aldi)! It's bonkers we've now got three supermarkets when what makes the town is its local independent shops. If not allotments, then more green wildlife space integrated into the town centre. Capitalise on the popularity of cycling - road and mountain biking - for locals and visitors.*

*The amount of litter in the town centre (and Gaddings Dam during the summer) is depressing to see and, I believe, shames the town. Please could some money be spent on more litter bins, emptied more frequently, and litter wardens with the power to hand out spot fines.*

*Make Water Street a pedestrian-only zone, maybe enabling cafés and shops to have tables outside giving a relaxed continental feel. Also a place for street performers, carnival type events. Also the corner of Dale Street, facing Oddies. Lorries come around the corner, mount the kerb and paintings move around on the walls in the house. It's a dangerous corner! Employ more road sweepers and employ binmen who have the intelligence to return bins after emptying them.*

*I can't think of anything that embodies this vision more than the building of the Todmorden Strawbale Hotel on Rose Street. It will support the local community (in managing some of the downsides, in terms of living space, of this unique landscape and environment), support and enhance the visitor economy by providing accommodation and an iconic example of what sustainable building in the future will look like. The build itself will support the aims of the Todmorden Learning Centre in providing practical experience for the learners of the skills for sustainable world. It will provide further opportunities for existing Todmorden businesses in servicing and supplying the hotel food and drink. The learning of skills can support new businesses to enhance our local economy and wider reputation as we demonstrate new ways of development - strawbale homes built communally on in-fill sites, for example. It's a step away from the tired old ways - and a beacon for social and environmental enterprise, creative industries and healthy living.*

*I like the vision. I'd like to know more about how it can be achieved. Suggestions:*

- *More help for independent small businesses*
- *Athletics track*
- *Regeneration of the bandstand*
- *More community events in the park*
- *Regeneration of the animal/bird/aquarium in the rose garden in the park*
- *Need to do more about the litter*
- *Vegan café*

*This vision is great. It would be great if we could have improved green transport and grow the local economy to provide well-paid local jobs. Young people need to feel part of this so they can have a safe space to grow up and socialise and dream dreams.*

*Hi. I like the vision - it takes all the boxes. My list would be:*

- *Exploit the canalside*
- *Clean up the town generally*
- *Encourage visitors*
- *Support the Tod Learning Centre*
  
- *Local business accountability for external premises*
- *Graffiti removal, street clearance, litter picking*
- *Penalties for fouling and refuse/flytipping*
- *Reframe market as heritage/artisan identity - see other regional successes*
- *Invest in and redevelop the tourist information centre and related social media*
- *Prioritise disability access and refresh train station*

- *Strategise visual identity - shopfronts*
- *Make optimum use of external market - themes/specials*
- *Synchronise heritage activity/venues - planning and comms*

*Concrete skate park. Progressive for bikes, children's scooters and skateboarders. Search 'pump track' ref: Inverness skatepark pump track. [wheelscape.co.uk](http://wheelscape.co.uk), [maverickskateparks.co.uk](http://maverickskateparks.co.uk), [olympic.org/skateboarding](http://olympic.org/skateboarding)*

*Morrisons at Todmorden are allowing anyone in not wearing a mask! They (Morrisons) are despicable money grabbing bullies! Their security guards are arrogant and useless. All other shops won't allow people in without a mask on. Shame on them! I've stopped shopping there! More police are needed to fine the speeding drivers in around the valley. It is still dangerous after they lowered the speed limit to 30 mph! Roadworks take too long! The companies involved should be enforced to speed up and not leave traffic lights when not needed.*

*No more supermarkets. Demolish the building housing the post office etc. Temporarily accommodated in area where Rose Street Health Centre used to be. Building to be rebuilt taking into account the Town Hall etc. Keep grass area by open market and covered market. Area where Rose Street Health Centre used to be could then eventually be used to attract small business. Craft ventures - art – jewellery. Small buildings, attractive buildings, with low rent. Better promotion of our lovely countryside and walks. We are very often the poor relation, with Hebden Bridge getting more publicity.*

*We missed the "Golden Opportunity" for the marina on Halifax Road. We now have more supermarkets than any one town needs!! Let's make a lasting legacy with the ground in the centre of Todmorden and link our great indoor and outdoor markets with a development of a craft centre on the former Rose Street site. Could we also redevelop the shoebox One-stop, post office building, maybe a garden area? Maybe a small hotel somewhere in the centre.*

*Travelling into Todmorden would be more attractive if there was an adequate bus service in the Burnley valley, or even if the present service was reliable.*

*I think the vision as expressed above is really positive. Keen to ensure the town centre is developed so as to preserve the good things like the Village Green which has really enhanced the environment and ability to have visitor and community events. The college project also fits really well with the vision with an emphasis on social and environmental enterprise, creative industries and enhanced sports and leisure facilities, e.g. gym and renovated hall available for use. The college clearly has to be a central part of this vision. Think some of the money should be spent on the park shelters in Centre Vale - they've been so important to the life of the town during the pandemic.*

- *Local apprenticeships*
- *Community centre/well-being centre – multi-purpose/multi-functional, co-ordinate all community resources*
- *Step up repair cafes – more often*
- *Hotels/BnB/Youth Hostel – eco fixtures and fittings*
- *Whole town well-being*

- *Bring all local enterprises together*
- *Local job fairs*
- *Environmentally friendly town – grants for solar panels, encourage no plastic*
- *Organised walks – town + ----/graded walks, history walks*
- *Canal + river - better maintenance and access, signs and maps for tourists*
- *Park - bandstand festivals/outdoor music + plays + dance*
- *Lamplighter/Pushing Up Daisies/literary festival/arts festival*
- *Expand Incredible Edible or other venture. Local organic farm. More flower beds*
- *Creation of town square*
- *Sculpture trail*
- *Seating/viewing platform on hills*
- *Affordable, eco friendly social housing (not Together Housing).*
- *Dance and music festival for local young people*
- *College area utilised. Further education for all ages*
- *More provision for young people*
- *Better use of Town Hall. Have art gallery in there and museum*
- *Better use of library – local talks*
- *Foraging talks and tours*
- *Better use of Fielden Centre*
- *Improved local signs*
- *Improved and regulated shops*
- *Maps showing local amenities*
- *No more roads*
- *Disabled access to railway station*
- *Recycling bins across town – clearly signed*
- *Improved and free public toilets*