# **Project Scoring Panel – Terms of Reference**

**1. Introduction/Purpose:**

This document outlines the Terms of Reference for the Project Scoring Panel (hereafter referred to as "the Panel") established by the Mansfield Place Board (hereafter referred to as "the Board"). The purpose of the Panel is to ensure a consistent, transparent, and objective process for scoring projects that align with the updated "Long term plans for towns" guidance (hereafter referred to as "LTP4T"), the "Make it in Mansfield" strategy (the town's economic development strategy), and the findings of the community survey of over 2000 residents.

**2. Responsibilities:**

The Panel will be responsible for:

* Developing and maintaining the project scoring criteria in accordance with the LTP4T guidance, the "Make it in Mansfield" strategy, and the community survey findings.
* Reviewing project proposals submitted to the Board.
* Applying the agreed-upon scoring criteria to each project proposal.
* Providing clear and documented scoring justifications.
* Making recommendations to the Board regarding project selection, prioritization, and funding allocation.
* Monitoring the effectiveness of the scoring and selection process and recommending improvements.

**3. Authority:**

The Panel will make recommendations to the Board for final approval.

**4. Membership:**

* The Panel will consist of six (6) members:
  + The chair of the Place Board, who will act as chair of the panel
  + The chairs of the four (4) subgroups operating under the authority of the Mansfield Place Board: Safe, Healthy and Engaged Communities (focusing on social wellbeing and community safety); Town Centre; Pride and Perspectives; and Growth and Opportunity. *These chairs are also members of the Mansfield Place Board.*
  + One (1) member from Mansfield District Council (MDC) who will act as deputy chair of the panel,
* The Project Manager will attend Panel meetings as an observer, providing administrative and procedural support but not participating in scoring or decision-making.
* An officer from MDC will attend Panel meetings as the accountable body representative.
* A subgroup chair's membership on the Panel is contingent upon their continued role as chair. If a subgroup chair's tenure ends, their successor as subgroup chair will automatically assume their position on the Panel.

**5. Meetings:**

* The Panel will meet at least quarterly and more frequently as needed to review project proposals or discuss matters relating to the scoring and selection process.
* Where a member of the panel identifies a conflict of interest with any item being assessed, they will withdraw from any discussion on the scoring of that item.
* Meeting minutes will be recorded and distributed to all Board members.
* The quorum for meetings will be three (3) members
* All meetings must have an officer of MDC in attendance in order to fulfil the role of the accountable body.

**6. Scoring Process:**

* The Panel will develop and maintain a documented scoring framework that places primacy on the delivery of the commitments within the "Make it in Mansfield" strategy and takes due consideration of the findings of the community survey of over 2000 residents in 2024 (and/or any similar subsequent surveys). It will also be designed to take account of, and ensure compliance with, any available, external funding opportunities, whether these be governmental, mayoral, private or philanthropic.
* In order to address the likely imminent opportunity of the Long Term Plan for Towns (or its successor), the previous scoring criteria ("Potential Impact on Strategy," "Relevance to Survey Outcomes," "Alignment with LTP4T Interventions," "Potential for Match Funding," and "Risk") will be used as a basis for developing the revised scoring criteria. The Panel will review these existing criteria and adapt them to ensure they are fully aligned with the priorities and objectives of the updated "Long term plans for towns" guidance (LTP4T), as well as the "Make it in Mansfield" strategy and community survey findings. The Panel will consider whether “Value for Money”, “Cost Benefit” or similar is to be used as a scoring criterion or as part of the project selection process.
* The revised scoring framework will include clearly defined criteria (as discussed previously), weighting for each criterion, and a scoring matrix with detailed descriptions for each score level. This matrix will provide clear guidance on how to score each project based on the defined criteria.
* The Panel will decide how it works together to agree scores for each proposal, whether this be by combining/averaging individual scores, debating to reach a consensus or some other approach.
* The Panel will present its proposed scoring mechanism, in full, to the Board at its meeting scheduled for April 2024 (or any revised date). Once approved by the Board, full details of the scoring matrix, including descriptions for all score levels for each criterion, will be documented in a separate document titled "Project Scoring Matrix," which will be made available on the Mansfield Place Board website.
* The scoring process will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

**7. Selection Process:**

* The Panel will develop and maintain a documented selection process that ensures transparency and fairness.
* The selection process will be adaptable for the particular funding opportunity available at the time and the amount of funding available (so a £10M project would automatically be excluded from a funding opportunity worth only £5M).
* The selection process will include a consideration of how projects will come together to create a coherent and deliverable programme of work to maximise overall impact within the funding envelope available. It will also consider the delivery and impact of projects in combination with others that have previously been approved and/or are in progress. As such, it may be that some projects that score lower than others are selected in preference to others that score higher. Whatever the outcome, a clear rationale will be recorded and shared with the Board.
* The selection process will include, but not be limited to:
  + Project Submission Guidelines: Clear guidelines for project submission, including required documentation, format, and submission deadlines.
  + Review and Evaluation Process: A detailed process for how the Panel will review and evaluate project proposals, including the application of the scoring criteria.
  + Timelines: Specific timelines for each stage of the selection process, from project submission to final decision.
  + Communication Methods: Clear communication methods for keeping project applicants informed of the status of their applications.
  + Appeals Process: There is no formal appeals process.
  + Decision-Making Process: A clear description of how the Panel will make recommendations to the Board.
* The Panel will ensure that the selection process is documented and communicated clearly to all potential project applicants.
* For the avoidance of doubt, the Panel will not make selection decisions but will make selection recommendations to the Board.

**8. Review and Evaluation:**

* The effectiveness of the Panel and the scoring and selection process will be reviewed annually.
* Feedback will be sought from stakeholders, including project applicants and the Board, through surveys.

**9. Review and Approval:**

These Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved by the Mansfield Place Board on [Date].