



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil  
Department of Housing,  
Planning and Local Government

# Town Centre First

AILG Briefing

30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

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# Origin of Policy

**Programme  
for Government**  
Our Shared Future

commits to the development of a Town Centre First Policy

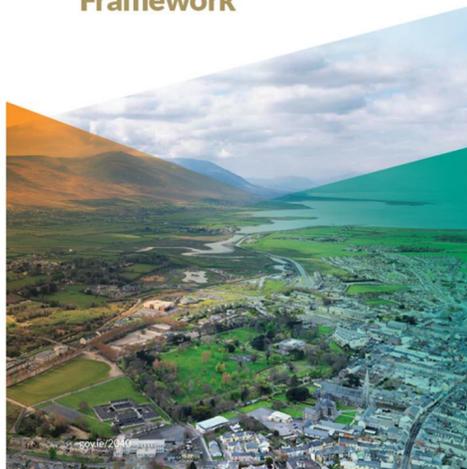
*'...implement a strategic approach to town centre regeneration by utilising existing buildings and unused lands for new development and residential occupancy in our rural towns and villages.'*



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Project Ireland 2040

**National Planning  
Framework**



anchored in National Planning Framework

- Sustainable Growth of Settlements
- Climate Agenda
- Strong Rural communities

# TCF Approach – key features

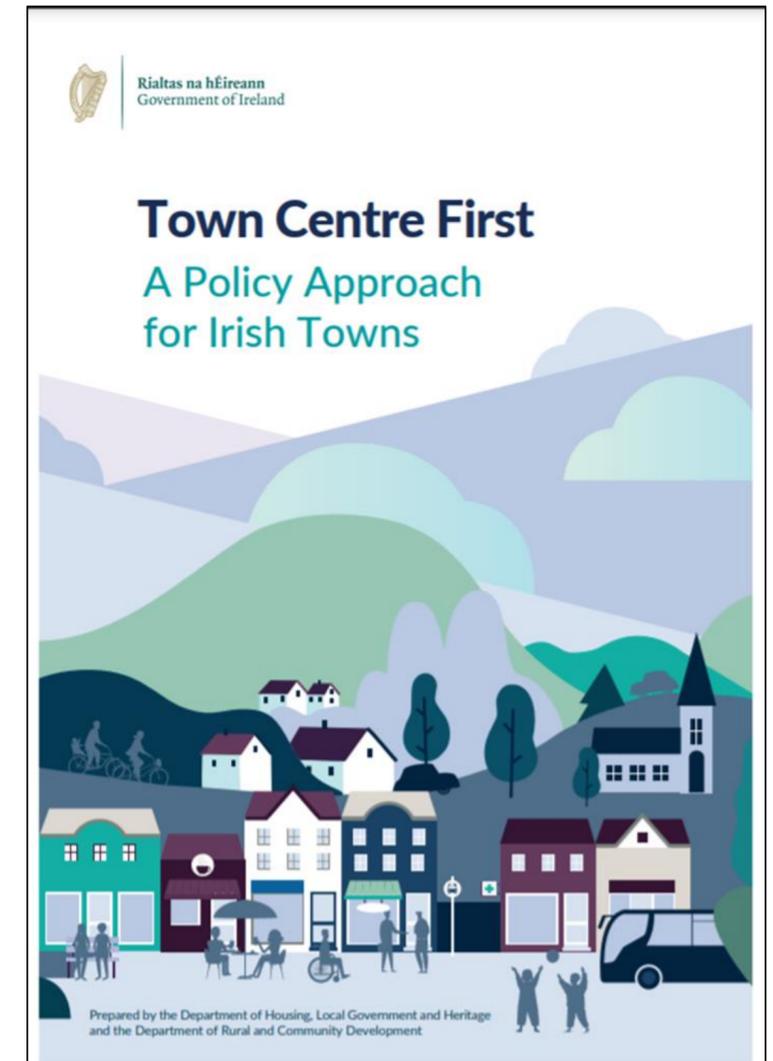


- **Creating the vision:** Collaborative plan-led approach based on diagnosis of local challenges and tailored response to match
- **Community Engagement and Buy-in:** Essentially to draw widest support for actions
- **Local Championing:** Need for strong local governance and collaboration
- **Business Case:** proposed actions to be examined comprehensively to identify risks and opportunities
- **Deliverability:** Focus on implementation.



# TCF **Key elements**

- Launched 4<sup>th</sup> February
- 33 Actions and owners
- Local supports and national structures
- Integrate existing work and capacity build
- Greater focus for funding on TCF policy



# TCF Some Key Policy Elements

➤ Dedicated **Town Regeneration Officer** (TRO) in local authority working with the wider multi-disciplinary team

➤ **TCF National Office**

to drive policy and coordinate with the network of TROs including

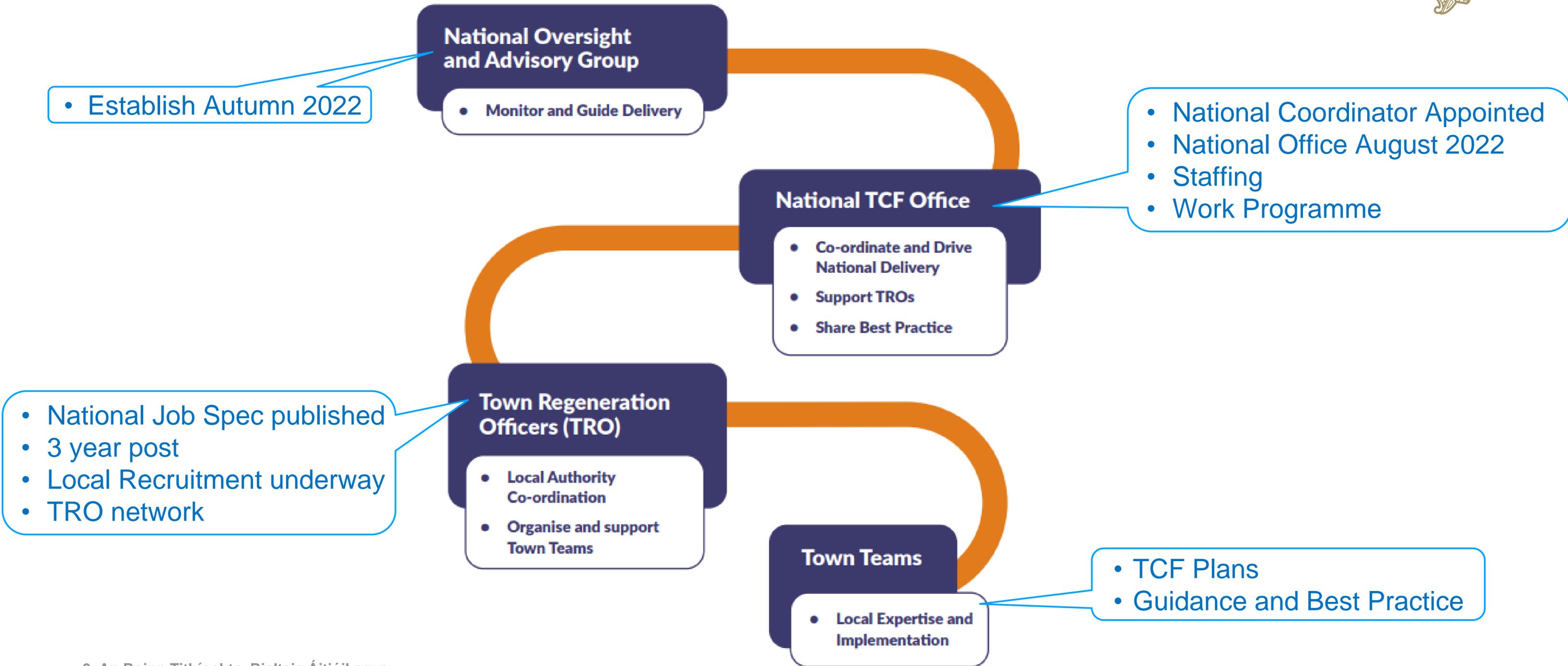
- Best practice networking and dissemination
- Provision of toolkits and other resources for Health Checks
- Research and analysis

➤ **National Oversight & Advisory Group**

➤ **TCF Plan** – project/outcome focused and prepared by Town Teams of local stakeholders



# TCF Key Roles & responsibilities



# TCF Plan ?

- Produced by the **Town Team** supported by the TRO
- **Project-based, action orientated/operational** in nature – implementing the Development Plan...
- Examine **local issues and challenges** (economic, transport, amenities, built environment, infrastructure, etc.) that are present in the town
- Formulate **actions and projects** to address challenges
- Connect projects & initiatives with **potential funding sources**
- **Deliver** change locally !



# Pilot Towns for a TCF Plan



- ✓ 26 x 1 Pilot Town per County Council for 2022/23
- ✓ Funded e100,000 each for preparation of the plan

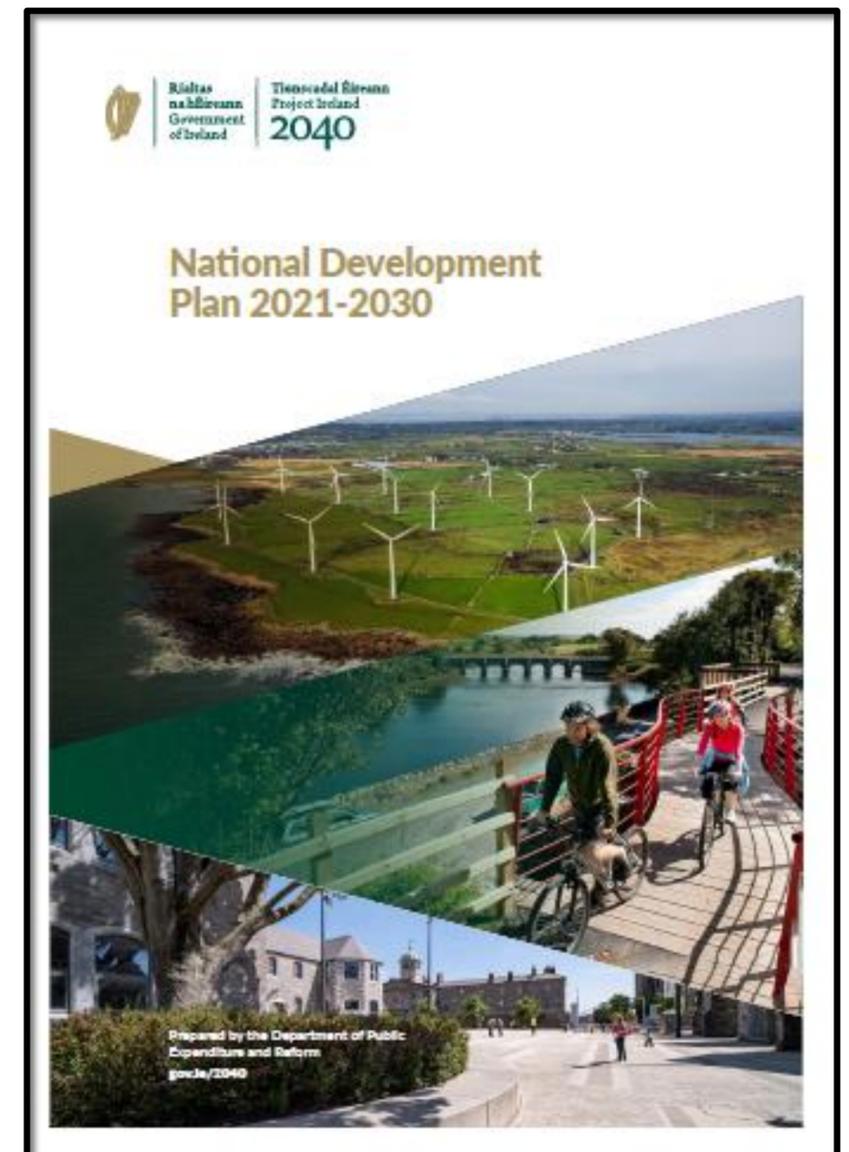
Tullow, Co. Carlow	Bailieborough, Co. Cavan	Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare	Skibbereen, Co. Cork	Milford, Co. Donegal	Lusk, Co. Dublin
Gort, Co. Galway	Milltown, Co. Kerry	Clane, Co. Kildare	Urlingford, Co. Kilkenny	Rathdowney, Co. Laois	Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim
Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick	Longford, Co. Longford	Dunleer, Co. Louth	Killala, Co. Mayo	Enfield, Co. Meath	Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
Clara, Co. Offaly	Strokestown, Co. Roscommon	Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo	Roscrea, Co. Tipperary	Portlaw, Co. Waterford	Moate, Co. Westmeath
New Ross, Co. Wexford	Blessington, Co. Wicklow	<b>....for completion by June 2023</b>			

# TCF – Integrating Funding

Funding from a variety of sources to deliver TCF plan implementation and support place-based development at a town scale



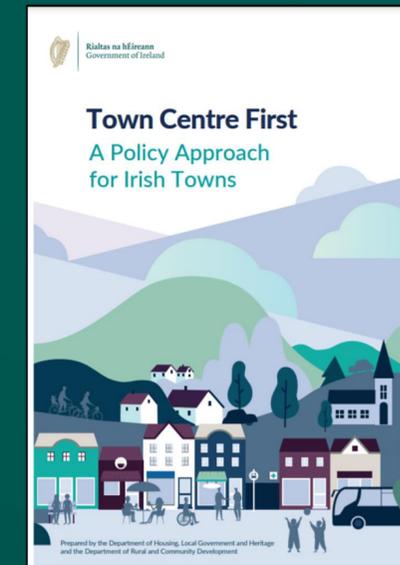
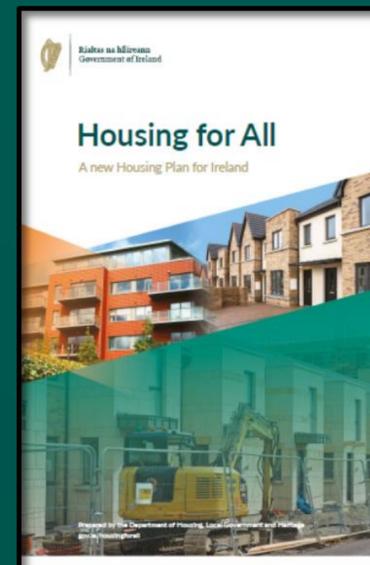
- ✓ URDF and RRDF
- ✓ Towns and Villages Renewal Scheme
- ✓ SH Capital Programmes for refurbishment and re-use
- ✓ Cross-Border Funding
- ✓ Sustainable Transport Programmes
- ✓ Built Heritage Funding





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# TCF Housing Priorities



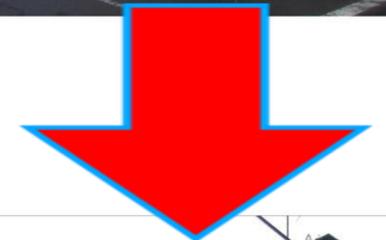
- Deliver increased housing within towns
- Greater choice of homes
- Target underutilized existing stock
- Funding and Actions to support



# TCF & the Vacancy Issue...



- TCF provides **overall strategy and actions** for Town Regeneration – including in relation to vacancy
- Full-time **Vacant Homes Officers (VHOs)** now in each LA
- Working with TROs on **the vacancy issue specifically**
- Providing assessment of vacancy problem in towns and **inputting to TCF Plan** preparation
- Coordinating **vacancy actions** with overall TCF strategy for a town
- Integrating **vacancy funding proposals** with wider TCF funding applications and projects



# Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund

## ✓ Stream 1 – Refurbishment

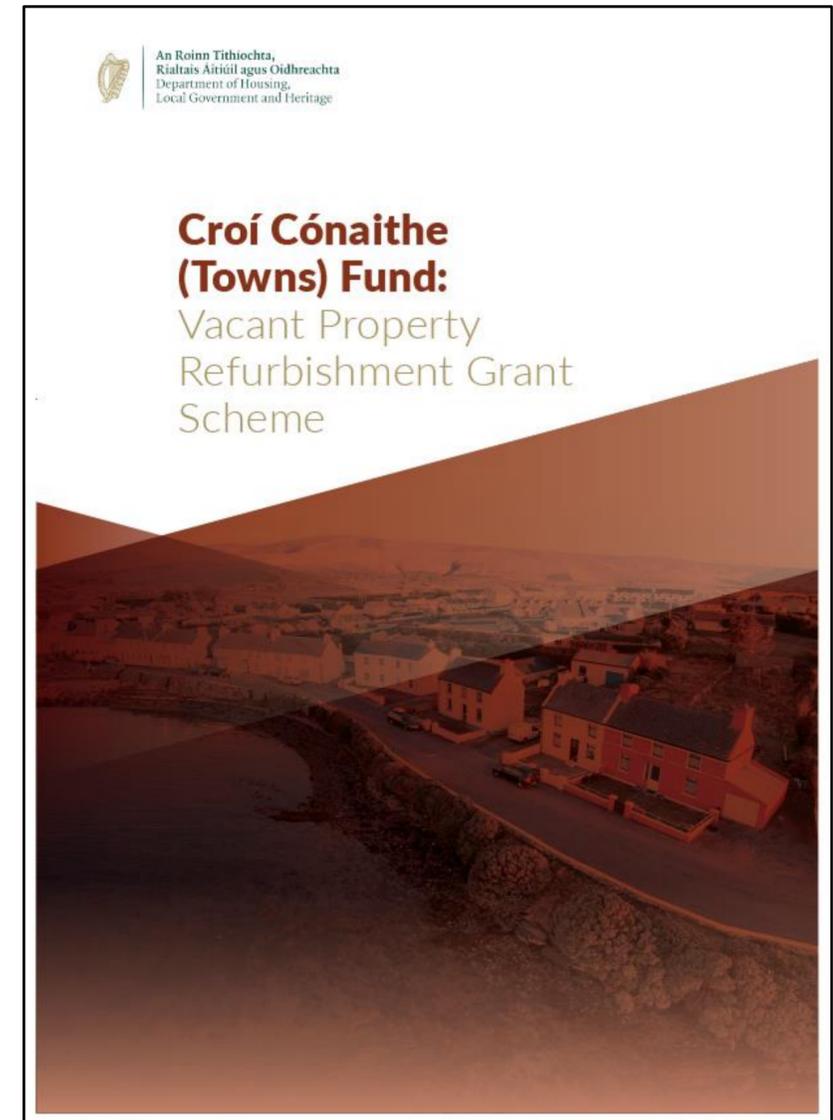
- Buildings built pre-1993
- Vacant >2 years
- Grant - e30,000-50,000

## ✓ Stream 2 – Sites for Self Builders

- Discounted site offered by LA
- Applicant seeks planning permission for dwelling
- Pilot Scheme

Targeted at Owner Occupiers – Clawback <10 years

Managed by VHO in Local Authority



# Summary Points



- ✓ TCF = priority for Towns in policy, activities & investment
- ✓ Local and national **actions** with structures to support
- ✓ **Significant** funding for Towns available across Government
- ✓ TCF a focus for all funding programmes – demonstration of an integrated town strategy in funding applications **critical**