

# Staveley Social Infrastructure Scoping Exercise Report



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Daniel Milestone-Mapplebeck ; Emily Bathie

20th March 2026



UNIVERSITY OF  
DERBY

# Staveley Town Deal

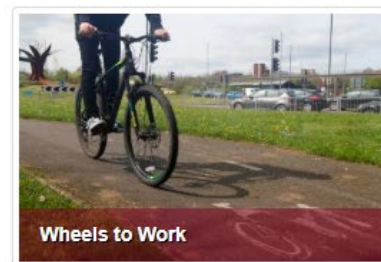
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Staveley was one of the 101 towns in England invited to make a Town Deal bid as part of the Government's Towns Fund.

The Staveley Town Deal was awarded £25.2m in March 2021.

The programme cover the themes of Place, Health and Wellbeing, Innovation and Enterprise, and Inclusive Growth.

It includes a range of projects to be delivered by March 2026, e.g.:



# Social Infrastructure

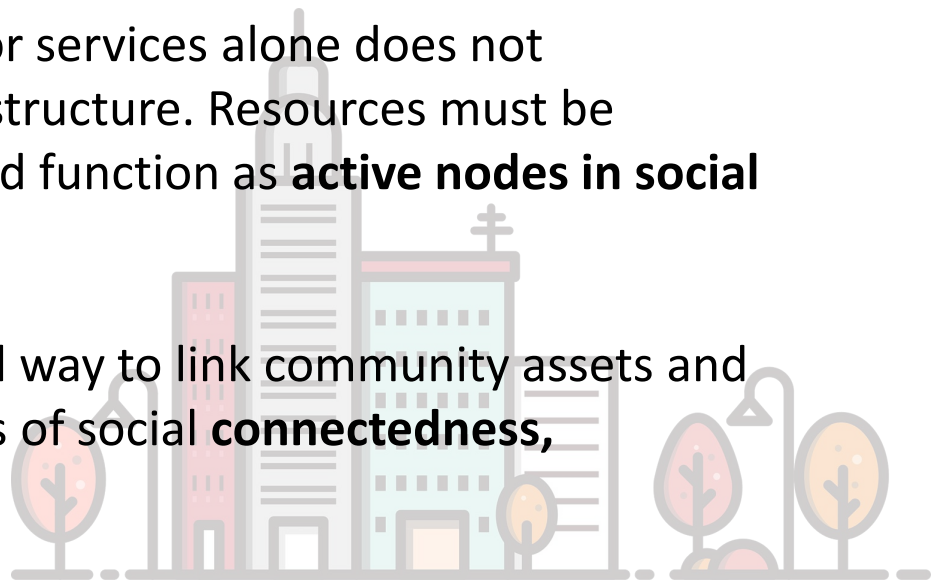
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Social Infrastructure is increasingly used by policymakers, researchers and planners to frame local investment, regeneration and socio-economic development.

In public policy it usually refers to the **spaces, services and structures that support community quality of life**. It is understood to help communities build social connections and encourage interaction across diverse groups.

However, improving physical spaces or services alone does not automatically strengthen Social Infrastructure. Resources must be **accessible, culturally appropriate**, and function as **active nodes in social and physical networks**.

Overall, the concept provides a useful way to link community assets and physical environments with processes of social **connectedness, development and growth**.



# 'Social Infrastructure Research'

Commissioned by Chesterfield Borough Council, the 'Staveley Social Infrastructure' Research Programme aims to:

- map the extent and characteristics of local social infrastructure as an effect of the Town Deal programme and wider resources.
- explore the potential for future social and economic development, identifying gaps and priorities for investment community engagement

It includes two elements:

- A scoping exercise (September 2025 - February 2026)
- A funded PhD (2026-2028)



# Scoping Exercise - towards the PhD programme

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The **scoping exercise** aimed to prepare the groundwork and inform the development of a 3-year Social Infrastructure project, undertaken via a PhD. Specifically, it included:

- **background research** and initial network building;
- development of potential research **aims, scope and methodological approach** for the PhD (feeding into 'Application for Registration')

## Work plan

September 2025 - February 2026

Month	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
Project inception						
Preliminary literature review						
Preliminary background research						
Site visits						
Focus groups with stakeholders						
Methodological workshop						
Report on preliminary data analysis						
Development of project plan						
Scoping out additional activities						
<i>Appointment of PhD student</i>						

# Progress Update

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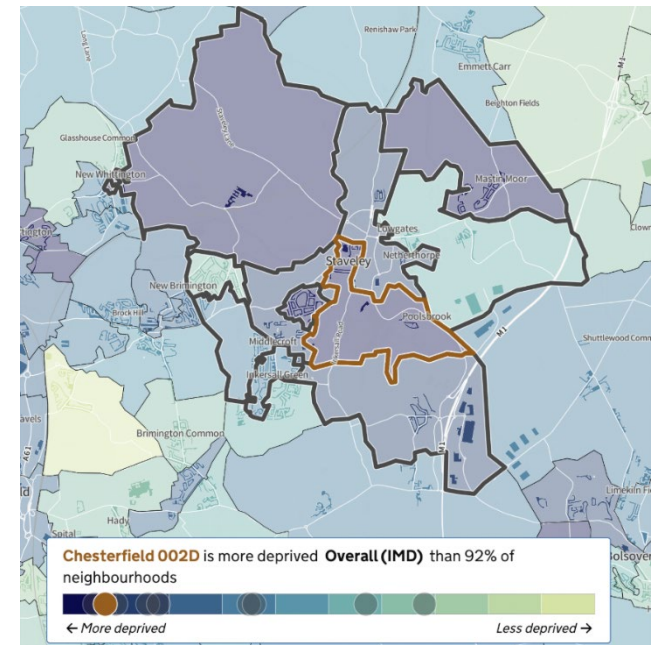
- **Project inception and team establishment** (September - January)  
Prof. Alessio D'Angelo (Lead), Dr Nisan Alici (Researcher), Emily Bathie (RA); Daniel Milestone-Mapplebeck (PhD student)
- **Background research** and literature review
- **T/F group meetings:** 18<sup>th</sup> July; 12<sup>th</sup> November; 23<sup>rd</sup> January
- **Focus groups:** November 11<sup>th</sup> (MWFC); January 21<sup>st</sup> (HLC)
- **Site visits:** across all Town Deal projects
- **Methodological symposium:** November 26<sup>th</sup>



# Staveley: Overview

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- **Population** structure aligned with UK profile; ethnically homogeneous
- **Education:** 24,5% of residents have no formal qualification; only 20.3% have Level 4 qualification or more (sig. below UK average)
- **Employment** and activity rates slightly below national average; locally oriented labour market (but low home-working);
- **Health:** reported bad or very bad health (8.2%) and disability (24.7%) higher than average.
- **Multiple Deprivation:** high variation, but some areas in the most deprived decile nationally (Barrow Hull, Staveley Centre, Mastin Moor)



# Staveley: challenges and opportunities

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## **Area Challenges**

- Tensions between different actors and stakeholder groups
- Unequal impact of benefits
- Local resistance to change
- Regional competition

## **Research Challenges**

- Residents' participation and engagement in research
- Issues of representation, inclusivity and trust
- Balance between academic and operational objectives and approaches

## **Area Opportunities**

- Town Deal Project (direct and indirect impact)
- EMCCA Investment zone
- Other regional, local and national funding schemes
- Local/regional businesses
- HE Research hub

## **Research Opportunities**

- Building a stronger evidence-base for further interventions
- Potential for Action Research
- Longer term monitoring of progress and opportunities



# Staveley: emerging findings

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- Wide-ranging level of **understanding and views** about:
  - the scope and nature of the Town Deal and its projects
  - current and potential impact and beneficiaries
- Overall **support** among those who have direct and indirect knowledge of active projects – but more need to evidence impact.
- **Fragmentation** at local level in terms of residents/non-residents, different villages, different sub-sets of the population and stakeholders
- Linked to issues of identity and **winners/losers**.
- Need to enhance **connectivity** between groups, projects and resources (beyond conflicts of interest and hyper-localism).
- Need to further increase **information** about the Town Deal and opportunities arising from it (including opportunities for **engagement** and targeted outreach to address misconceptions).
- Significant levels of **untapped potential** for social and economic development.



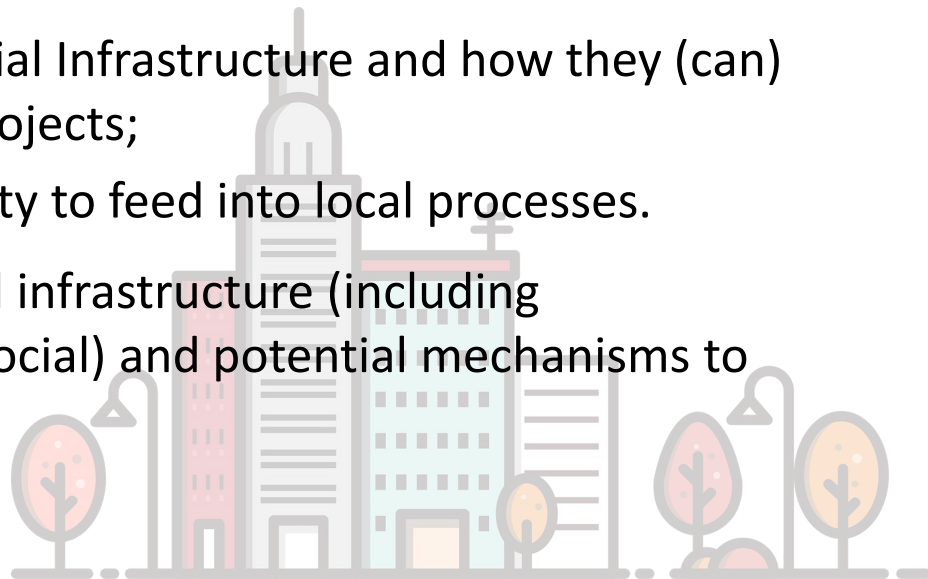


# Research Needs - mapping social infrastructure

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**Map the extent and characteristics of local social infrastructure as an effect of the Town Deal programme and wider resources.**

- **Map** the Staveley Social Infrastructure ‘ecosystem’ around and beyond the Town Deal projects (including visualisations)
- **Explore views** and experiences of diverse stakeholders and residents on:
  - impacts, beneficiaries, challenges and opportunities of the Town Deal projects;
  - other components of local Social Infrastructure and how they (can) connect with the Town Deal projects;
  - access to information and ability to feed into local processes.
- **Identify barriers** to accessing social infrastructure (including geographical, infrastructural, and social) and potential mechanisms to overcome these.



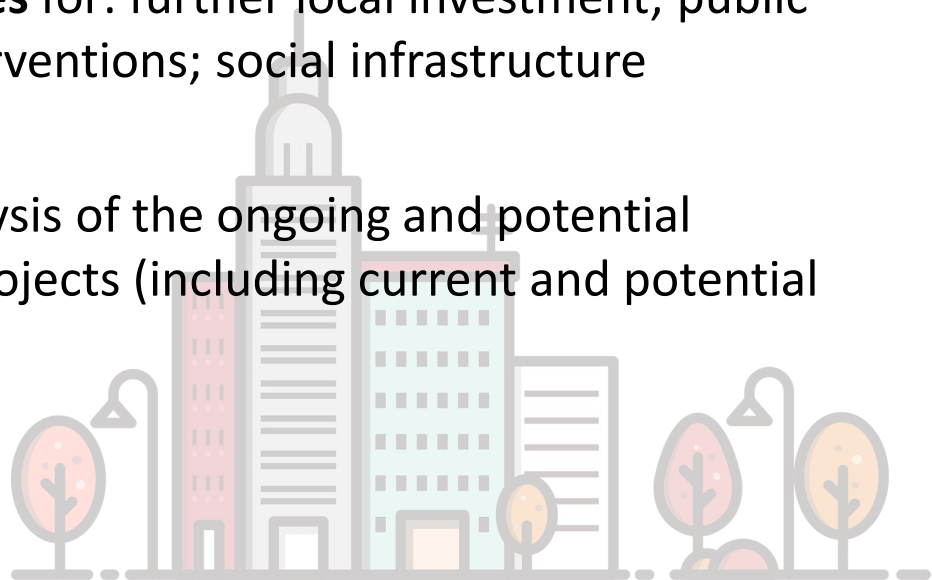


# Research Needs - identify opportunities

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**Explore the potential for future social and economic development, identifying gaps and priorities for investment community engagement**

- Examine **lessons learned** and good practice from other towns and interventions.
- **Monitor** relevant local, regional and national **developments** within the life of the project.
- Identify **opportunities and priorities** for: further local investment; public private and community sector interventions; social infrastructure multipliers.
- Develop a '**Theory of Change**' analysis of the ongoing and potential future impacts of the Town Deal projects (including current and potential assets, inputs and outputs)





# Towards a PhD study: aims and methods

The above Research Needs above will be operationalised into PhD **Research Aims and Questions**.

Potential **research methods** - in addition to desk research and reviews of evidence - to include:

- **Social Infrastructure Mapping Workshops**  
Building on established UoD methods.  
Different sites/themes.
- **Interviews with key stakeholders**  
(including walking interviews)
- **Focus groups** / Expert Advisors Panels
- **Ethnographic observations at key assets**
- **Quantitative analysis of secondary data-set** available through individual projects (e.g. access/use of resources), and CBC (including residents surveys)

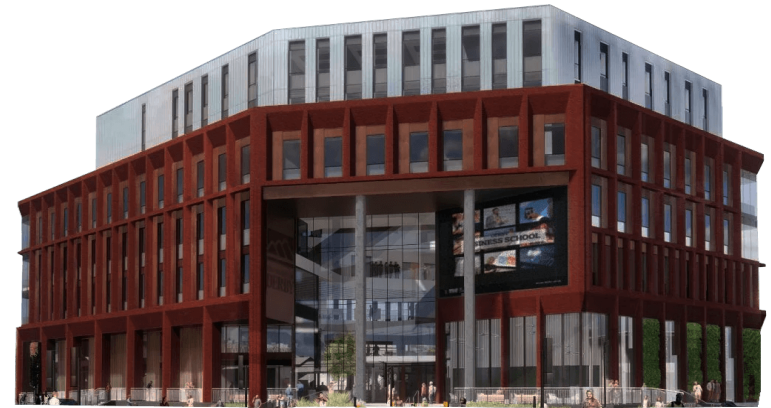


# PhD timeframe and governance

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## PhD indicative timeframe

- Enrolment - 01/2026
- Research plan approval - 04/2026
- Ethical approval - by Spring 2027
- Core data collection - 2027
- PhD transfer - Spring 2027
- Core writing up - 2028
- PhD completion - January 2029



### PhD supervisors:

- Prof. Alessio D'Angelo
- Dr. Nisan Alici

**Reporting** – The Town Deal Board will take over from the project T/F group initially, to be reviewed in March 2027

# Next steps

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## Scoping Exercise:

- Final submission and approval of Scoping Exercise
- One-to-one conversations
- Scoping exercise report

## PhD

- Enrolment (January 27<sup>th</sup>)
- Application for Registration (Project Proposal) - March 2026
- Annual progress report - June 2026



# Moving forward and beyond

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## Policy and Investment Relevance - e.g.:

- **GOV** Plan for Neighbourhoods
- New Towns Taskforce
- Shared prosperity fund
- **NHS** Plan and local interventions
  
- **EMCCA**
  - Inclusive growth
  - Community Development Fund
- **University of Derby:** new Social Infrastructure working group established in March 2026



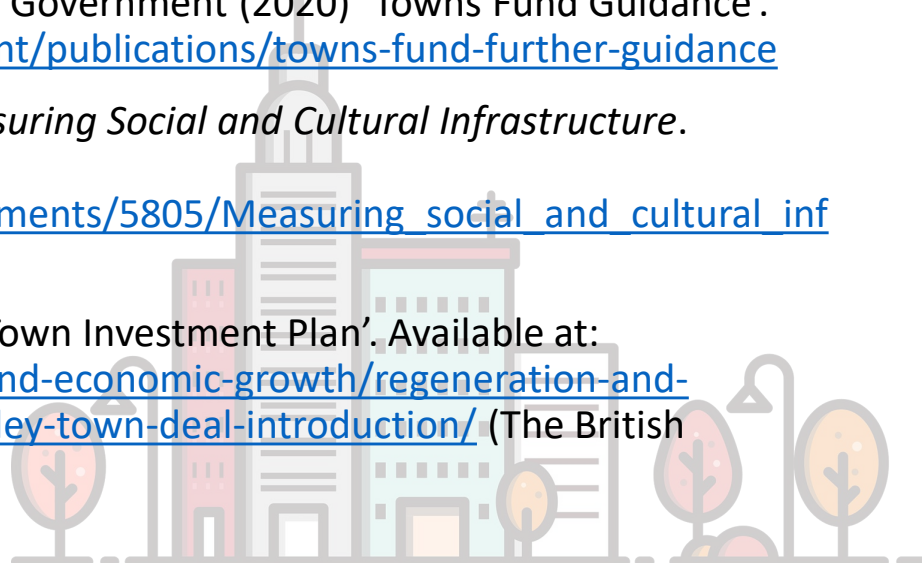
## Research Agendas - e.g.:

- British Academy 'Social Infrastructure' programme
- UoD research on BESP (Business, Economic and Social Policy), Civic Agenda and community mapping
- UKRI and other funding schemes

# Key References

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- Coutts, A.P. and Velásquez, D.M.D. (2025) *Social infrastructure and social capital – the active elements of community resilience*. Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods. Available at: <https://www.neighbourhoodscommission.org.uk/report/social-infrastructure-and-social-capital-the-active-elements-of-community-resilience/>
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- Panayotopoulos-Tsiros, D. et al. (2025) *Measuring Social and Cultural Infrastructure*. London: The British Academy. Available at: [https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/5805/Measuring\\_social\\_and\\_cultural\\_infrastructure.pdf](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/5805/Measuring_social_and_cultural_infrastructure.pdf)
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# Questions and Discussion




ALESSIO D'ANGELO, BEATRICE DE CARLI, ELENA GENOVA, WILL PATERSON, LOUISE RYAN


## Mapping Social Infrastructure Project Report and Toolkit

LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY OF DERBY  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Alessio D'Angelo, Beatrice De Carli, Elena  
Genova, Will Paterson and Louise Ryan,  
*Mapping Social Infrastructure:  
Project Report and Toolkit*  
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