



National Audit Office

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## **Report**

by the Comptroller  
and Auditor General

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**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government**

# Review of the Town Deals selection process

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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

# Review of the Town Deals selection process

Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General

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National Audit Act 1983 for presentation to the House of  
Commons in accordance with Section 9 of the Act

Gareth Davies  
Comptroller and Auditor General  
National Audit Office

16 July 2020

This report sets out the facts about the process by which the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government chose the 101 towns in England it invited to develop Town Deals.

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The National Audit Office study team consisted of:  
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# Part One

## What this review is about

**1.1** On 27 July 2019, the government announced the £3.6 billion Towns Fund for England (The Towns Fund). The Towns Fund is expected to support towns that currently do not have the right conditions to develop and sustain strong local economies, recognising that many towns have not benefitted from the growth experienced by cities over recent decades. It aims to provide a selection of struggling towns across England with funding to address issues such as ageing populations, limited regional economic opportunities and lack of investment. The Towns Fund incorporated and built on the £1.6 billion Stronger Towns Fund announced in March 2019.

**1.2** The £3.6 billion Towns Fund includes three separate funding strands:

- the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (the Department) has invited 101 towns to develop Town Deals and bid for up to £25 million each, or up to £50 million in exceptional circumstances. Selected towns do not automatically qualify for the funding. Each must put forward a plan for how they will spend the funding and what it will achieve, which must then be agreed with the Department to form the basis of the Town Deal;
- a competition for funding for those towns not in the initial selection of 101 towns. Whilst the Department has committed to a further competitive element of the Towns Fund, it has yet to decide upon the focus of this element and ministers have not considered the priorities or criteria to be used to determine how towns will be selected. The Department intends to design the process and any associated methodology for the competitive element of the Towns Fund in due course; and
- the Future High Streets Fund, to be distributed to towns and high streets across England through a competitive process. The Department shortlisted 101 towns and high streets in 2019, which are now developing detailed business plans. The Department is currently assessing the first set of these plans.

**1.3** This report considers only the process for selecting the 101 towns invited to develop Town Deals. The Future High Streets Fund and the upcoming competitive process for towns that were not selected to bid for Town Deals are outside the scope of this report. The government has not ruled out awarding money to some towns both for Town Deals and as part of the Future High Streets Fund.

**1.4** On 6 September 2019, the Department published its selection of 101 towns across England. Each selected town has been invited to bid for up to £25 million, or up to £50 million in exceptional circumstances, from the £3.6 billion Towns Fund to implement an agreed Town Deal. The Department published its *Towns Fund Prospectus* in November 2019, outlining the bidding process.<sup>1</sup> The towns have been invited to develop proposals for Town Deals, centred around the establishment of a Town Deal Board to oversee the development of a Town Deal and its implementation, and a Town Investment Plan setting out plans to increase economic growth. The Department expects each plan to set out the town's investment priorities to drive growth, with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture. The plans should be clearly evidenced and linked to existing local and regional strategies and initiatives. The Department required each selected town to set up a Town Deal Board by January 2020, and to develop a Town Investment Plan by summer 2020. The Department intends to determine the amount of investment for each town, and finalise the contents of a Town Deal, based on the strength of the Town Investment Plans.

**1.5** This review describes the process followed by the Department to select the 101 towns. The selection process comprised two stages. First, an initial assessment – scoring, ranking, filtering and prioritising – of all 1,082 towns across England by the Department's officials (officials) against a range of criteria. Second, the selection of towns to be invited to bid for Town Deals by ministers using the officials' assessments to guide them. Officials designed a framework for decision-making, intended to support ministers to select towns and record their reasons for selection, recognising that there would be some qualitative judgement in which mix of towns were selected. Officials provided ministers with information on towns in a prioritised and ranked list, and suggestions on other factors they might consider in their selection. Officials later reviewed the ministers' selection of towns against the required tests set out in HM Treasury's *Managing public money*.<sup>2</sup> The Department published the list of selected towns without the underlying information to support the selection.

1 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, *Towns Fund: Prospectus*, November 2019, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-prospectus](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-prospectus)

2 HM Treasury, *Managing public money*, March 2018, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money)

**1.6** In response to concerns raised in the media, including by some MPs, over the lack of transparency of the Department's process by which it selected the towns invited to bid for funding, we set out in this report the process by which the Department selected the successful towns, the results of the selection process and the rationales given for the selected towns. Our review is factual and does not evaluate the selection process or its outcomes. Our review covers:

- the criteria, process and sources of evidence used by the Department to assess and rank towns (Part Two); and
- the results of the assessments and ranking of towns, which towns were selected and the rationales given for selection (Part Three).



# Part Two

## The selection process

### The selection process for Town Deals

**2.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's (the Department's) officials (officials) assessed there were 541 towns across England potentially eligible for Town Deals.** Officials took as the starting point all 1,082 towns across England as designated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). These were defined as built-up areas with a minimum area of 20 hectares (200,000 m<sup>2</sup>), with individual settlements separated by at least 200 metres, and with a population between 5,000 and 225,000. Towns do not necessarily mirror established administrative areas, such as local authorities. Officials ranked all towns by income deprivation, an indicator the ONS had estimated for all 1,082 towns and published in July 2019.<sup>3</sup> The Department regarded income deprivation as the most relevant of the few town-level indicators available at the time. Officials identified the 541 towns with an income deprivation above the median value as potentially eligible for Town Deals.

**2.2 Officials scored and ranked the 541 eligible towns across England using a weighted formula across multiple criteria.** In each region of England, officials scored and ranked towns based on a formula that combined scores against seven criteria chosen to reflect local need and growth potential: income deprivation, skills deprivation, productivity, EU Exit exposure, exposure to economic shocks, investment opportunity and alignment to wider government intervention (**Figure 1** overleaf). The first four criteria were drawn from official statistics and the remaining three were based on officials' assessments. Officials differentially weighted the separate criteria to give greater significance to those they determined to be based on more robust data at town level geographically.

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Understanding towns in England and Wales: an introduction*, July 2019, available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/understandingtownsinenglandandwales/anintroduction](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/understandingtownsinenglandandwales/anintroduction)

**Figure 1**  
Criteria used to assess towns' need and growth potential

Officials combined seven criteria to give an overall score for each town

Metric	Measure	Geography	Sources	Year	Weight
Income deprivation	Income component of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation	Town Level <sup>1</sup>	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (the Department)/ Office for National Statistics (ONS)	2015	3
Skills deprivation	Proportion of the working-age population with no qualifications at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level	Local authority	ONS	2018	1
Productivity	Gross value added per hour worked	NUTS3 <sup>2</sup>	ONS	2017	1
EU Exit exposure	Gross value added of sectors identified as 'at risk' by the Bank of England with respect to a "no deal, no transition" EU Exit <sup>2</sup>	NUTS3 <sup>2</sup>	The Department/ ONS/Bank of England	2017	1
Exposure to economic shocks	Significant economic shocks in the town's recent history (qualitative)	Town level	The Department	2019	1
Investment opportunity	Opportunity for investment signalled by significant current or upcoming private investment (qualitative)	Town level	The Department	2019	1
Alignment to wider government intervention	The presence of other government funding or programming with which the Towns Fund could have additionality and synergy (qualitative)	Town level	The Department	2019	2

#### Notes

- 1 Office for National Statistics, *Understanding towns in England and Wales: an introduction*, July 2019, available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/understandingtownsinenglandandwales/anintroduction](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/understandingtownsinenglandandwales/anintroduction).
- 2 NUTS (*Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques*) is a standard for referencing subdivisions of countries for statistical purposes. In England, NUTS3 areas correspond to counties, unitary authorities or districts, or in some cases, groups of these.
- 3 The sectors identified as most 'at risk' by the Bank of England with respect to a "no deal, no transition" EU Exit were: chemicals, food and agriculture, cars and transport goods, and construction.
- 4 For the qualitative criteria (exposure to economic shocks, investment opportunity and alignment to wider government intervention), each town received a score of 0, 0.5 or 1 on each criterion, before weighting was applied.
- 5 For the quantitative criteria (income deprivation, skills deprivation, productivity and EU Exit exposure), towns received a score of between 0 and 1, where 1 was assigned to the highest-ranked town and 0 was assigned to the lowest-ranked town, before weighting was applied.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**2.3 In addition to these seven criteria, the selection process included a regional element, with the aim of focusing funding on the regions with higher need.** A town's prospects are affected by the wider region it sits within. Officials therefore applied a needs-based regional allocation formula which incorporated Local Enterprise Partnership-level (LEP-level) data on: productivity, income, skills, deprivation and rural/urban classification (with rural areas assumed to have greater need). Officials calculated a recommended number of deals, from the planned total of 100 towns, for each of the eight English regions (**Figure 2**). The Greater London region is excluded because it does not contain towns as defined by the ONS.

### Figure 2

Recommended number of towns per region to be invited to bid for Town Deals

Officials recommended how the 100 towns should be distributed across regions

Region	Recommended number of towns
North West	21
Yorkshire and the Humber	19
West Midlands	18
East Midlands	14
North East	11
East of England	6
South West	6
South East	5

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

#### **2.4 Officials divided the 541 eligible towns into high-, medium- and low-priority groups.**

- **High-priority towns:** The Department placed 40 towns in the high-priority group. Within each region, officials categorised 40% of the number of recommended towns as high priority, so that high-priority towns were spread across the regions in proportion to the total number of recommended towns (Figure 2). These towns were those with the highest scores within each region, scored highly across most criteria, and for which officials found that using different formula weightings resulted in only small changes to their scores and rankings. They were not the 40 towns with the highest scores across the whole of England because the aim was to identify high-priority towns in each region of England.
- **Low-priority towns:** Officials categorised 181 towns as low priority either because they were among the 15% lowest-scoring towns in their region or because they were small (fewer than 15,000 inhabitants, or fewer than 10,000 in the South West region, unless they formed part of a cluster of small towns that made up one economic unit).
- **Medium-priority towns:** Officials designated the remaining 380 towns as medium priority.

#### **2.5 Officials made recommendations to ministers regarding their selection of towns from the three priority groups:**

- **High-priority towns:** Officials recommended to ministers that all 40 high-priority towns be selected to bid for funding, and that no additional explanation for their selection was required.
- **Medium-priority towns:** Officials recommended that ministers select up to 60 medium-priority towns, depending on how many low-priority towns they chose, to bring the total number of selected towns to 100 (ministers ultimately selected 101 towns). They were asked to provide a brief rationale for their selection in this category.
- **Low-priority towns:** Rather than ruling them out entirely, officials left it open for ministers to select towns for Town Deals from the group of 181 low-priority towns. Officials recommended that ministers choose relatively few low-priority towns and record a strong rationale for any selected.

**2.6 Officials provided ministers with additional suggestions on other factors they might consider in their selection.** This included:

- **Disqualifying the largest towns, or towns with a City Deal.** Officials suggested that ministers should consider ruling out places which were in principle eligible to benefit from City Deals (another policy for supporting local growth). Officials provided ministers with a list of the 15 largest towns (as defined by the ONS) to illustrate which ones might be ruled out if the largest towns were disqualified.
- **Clustering towns.** Officials suggested that clusters of small, nearby towns that function as a single place could be offered the opportunity to bid for a single, shared Town Deal.
- **Aiming to spread Town Deals across and within LEAs.** Officials suggested that ministers might aim for a spread of towns across LEA areas, in addition to the spread of towns across English regions. It also suggested a mixture of larger and smaller towns within each LEA.
- **Consulting with mayors on town selection.** Officials suggested that in metropolitan areas with directly elected mayors, ministers might want to consult with these mayors before settling on their final selection of towns.

# Part Three

## Outcome of the selection process

### Selection decisions by priority group

**3.1 Based on the categorisation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's (the Department's) officials, ministers selected towns from all three priority groups.** After the Department's officials (officials) had scored, ranked and grouped towns, ministers selected towns to be invited to bid for Town Deals from within all three groups, including 12 from the low-priority group (**Figure 3**). In making the selection, ministers set out the rationale used at a regional level for those within the medium-priority group and at individual town level for the 12 towns that officials scored as being low-priority towns.

#### Figure 3

Number and proportion of towns selected by ministers from each priority group to be invited to bid for Town Deals

##### Ministers selected towns across all three priority groups

Group	Number in group	Number selected	Proportion in group selected (%)
High priority	40	40	100
Medium priority	318	49	15
Low priority	183	12	7

##### Note

1 Proportions are rounded to the nearest 1%.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

### **3.2 The additional guidance provided by officials (set out in paragraph 2.6) was used as follows:**

- **Disqualifying the largest towns, or towns with a City Deal.**

The largest towns or towns with a City Deal were not ruled out of the selection process. Of the 15 largest towns in England, 10 were invited to bid for Town Deals. These were: Northampton, Wolverhampton, Bolton, Bournemouth, Norwich, Swindon, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Warrington and Peterborough.

- **Clustering towns.**

Officials suggested joining certain small towns together to be invited to bid for a single Town Deal. Ministers decided not to do so and all selected towns were invited to bid for Town Deals separately.

- **Aiming to spread Town Deals across and within Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).**

Ministers selected towns from at least two and up to six LEPs within each region (listed in Figure 6).

- **Consulting with mayors on town selection.**

It is not clear whether ministers consulted with mayors when making their selection.

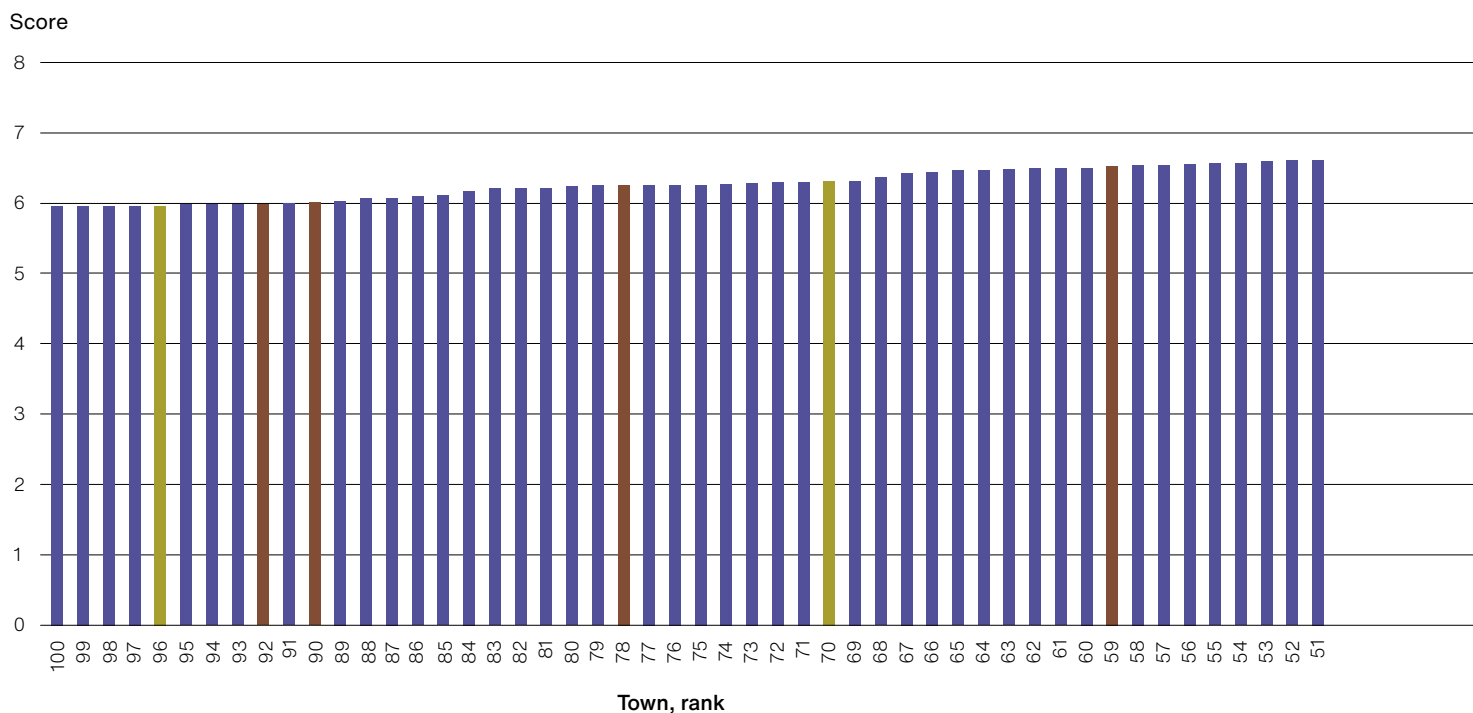
Selection within the high-priority group

**3.3 Ministers agreed with the officials' suggestion and selected all 40 towns for Town Deals in the high-priority group.** Because the 40 selected towns comprised the highest-scoring towns in their respective regions but not the 40 highest-scoring towns nationally, 49 towns in the medium-priority group had higher scores than the town with the lowest score in the high-priority group – this was Telford, which had the 92<sup>nd</sup>-highest score nationally (**Figure 4** on pages 14 and 15). Nonetheless, Telford's score was high for its region (the West Midlands, where it had the seventh-highest score among the 55 towns) and – by definition of the high-priority group – it scored higher than all of the medium-priority towns in that region.

**Figure 4**

Priority group assignments, made at the regional level, for the 100 highest-scoring towns nationally

**The 40 high-priority towns are not the 40 highest-scoring towns nationally, to ensure a regional spread**



■ Low priority ■ Medium priority ■ High priority

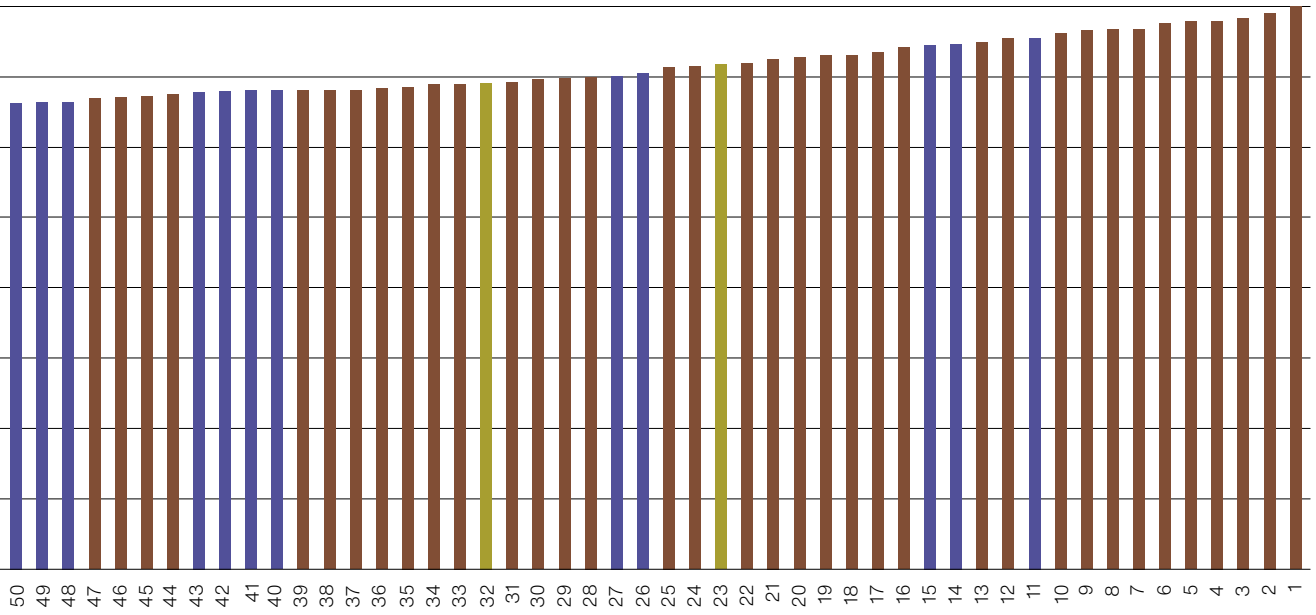
1 Tilbury	11 Sheerness	21 Dudley (West Midlands)	31 St Helens	41 Halifax
2 Margate	12 Doncaster	22 Castleford	32 Ince-in-Makerfield	42 Dover
3 Redcar	13 Blackpool	23 Immingham	33 Hartlepool	43 Bideford
4 Birkenhead	14 Ramsgate	24 Middlesbrough	34 Bridgwater	44 Staveley
5 Grimsby	15 Folkestone	25 Keighley	35 Preston	45 King's Lynn
6 Goldthorpe	16 Rochdale	26 Basildon	36 Stainforth	46 Walsall
7 Rotherham	17 Great Yarmouth	27 Chadwell St Mary	37 West Bromwich	47 Bolton
8 Scunthorpe	18 Skegness	28 Torquay	38 Smethwick	48 Salford
9 Oldham	18 Mablethorpe	29 Runcorn	39 Boston	49 Burnley
10 Dewsbury	20 Blyth (North West)	30 Scarborough	40 Knottingley	50 South Shields

**Note**

1 'Score' denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria that were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government





Town, rank

51 Heywood	61 Mansfield	71 Penzance	81 Widnes	91 Farnworth
52 Wombwell	62 Barnstaple	72 Carlisle	82 Moorends	92 Telford
53 Goole	63 Barnsley	73 Wellingborough	83 Mexborough	93 Radcliffe
54 Sunderland	64 Nelson (North West)	74 Brixham	84 Church	94 Chesterfield
55 South Elmsall	65 Huddersfield	75 Upton (Yorkshire and the Humber)	85 Batley	95 Kidderminster
56 Middleton (North West)	66 Blackburn	76 Bodmin	86 Paighton	96 Berwick-upon-Tweed
57 Brierfield	67 Bootle	77 Thurnscoe	87 Northampton	97 Failsworth
58 Stockton-on-Tees	68 Barrow-in-Furness,	78 Lowestoft	88 Cleethorpes	97 Chadderton
59 Burton upon Trent	69 Winsford (North West)	79 Camborne	89 Ellesmere Port	99 South Ockendon
60 Gainsborough	70 Platt Bridge	80 Luton	90 Hereford	100 Bishop Auckland

### Selection within the medium-priority group

**3.4 Ministers selected 49 towns from the 318 towns that comprised the medium-priority group.** Ministers chose towns with a wide range of scores across this group – they did not just select the towns with the highest scores against the Department’s criteria (**Figure 5** on pages 18, 19 and 20). Towns selected by ministers have a range of individual characteristics not necessarily captured in the Department’s scoring process, such as being a coastal town, or being geographically spread across a region or LEAs. **Figure 6** on pages 22 and 23 presents the rationales provided by ministers for their selection of towns across each region.

### Selection within the low-priority group

**3.5 Ministers selected 12 towns for Town Deals from the 183 towns in the low-priority group.** Ministers chose towns with a wide range of scores, not just those towns in this group with the highest scores (**Figure 7** on pages 24, 25 and 26). The lowest-scoring town selected for a Town Deal was Cheadle, which had the seventh-lowest score out of the 541 assessed by officials. When selecting towns from the low-priority group, ministers provided their rationales for each of the 12 towns selected (**Figure 8** on pages 27 and 28). The reasons given were varied and included criteria that were not used by officials to score the towns, for example poor transport links. A recurring reason ministers gave for selection was a town’s potential for investment or growth.

**3.6 Officials reviewed ministers’ overall selection of towns, concluding it met the tests for HM Treasury’s *Managing public money*.**<sup>4</sup> Officials acknowledged that the scoring of each town was designed as a guide for ministers and was not the only way to assess eligibility. Officials recognised that some towns would be in similar situations, and a degree of qualitative judgement between picking towns with similar characteristics was inevitable. Ministers’ selections resulted in towns being selected with lower scores than some other towns that were not selected. Officials concluded that the overall selection was acceptable because ministers had selected all 40 high-priority towns and provided a rationale for each of the towns selected from the medium- and low-priority groups.

<sup>4</sup> HM Treasury, *Managing public money*, March 2018, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money)

## **Distribution of selected towns across regions**

### **3.7 Ministers deviated from the recommended numbers of Town Deals per region, but within a tolerance which officials decided was acceptable.**

Officials analysed whether the average score for the selected towns deviated significantly from the average expected if ministers had stuck to the recommended numbers of towns per region. Officials concluded that the selection had little impact on overall average score. They also determined that the spread of towns across regions led to a regional distribution of funding that was focused on the regions with higher need, as intended, and was therefore acceptable (**Figure 9** on page 29). The distribution of towns across England is shown in **Figure 10** on pages 30 and 31.

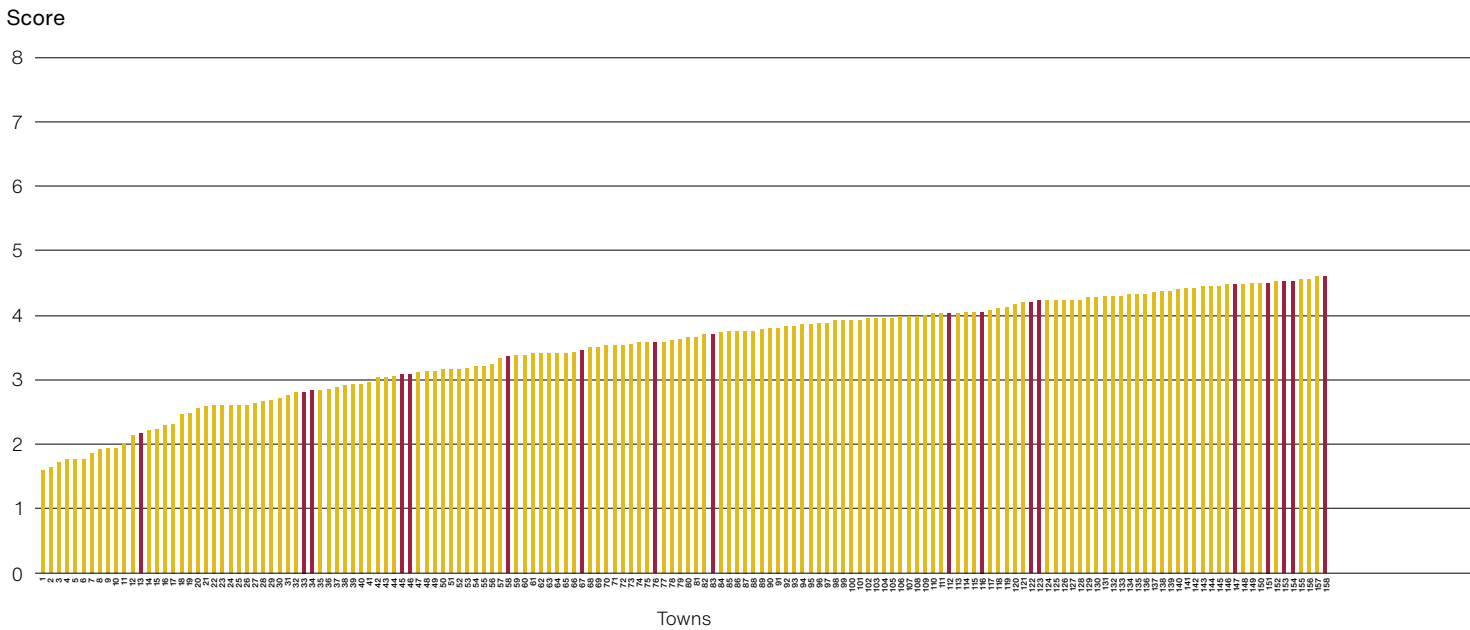
**3.8 Figures 11 to 18 on pages 32 to 40 present the selected towns, and those not selected, within each region.** The figures present the towns ordered by score and arranged in the priority groups. A web-only appendix available on the National Audit Office's website presents for all towns the component scores against the Department's criteria, overall scores and rankings, grouped by region.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Available at: [www.nao.org.uk/report/review-of-the-town-deals-selection-process](http://www.nao.org.uk/report/review-of-the-town-deals-selection-process)

**Figure 5**

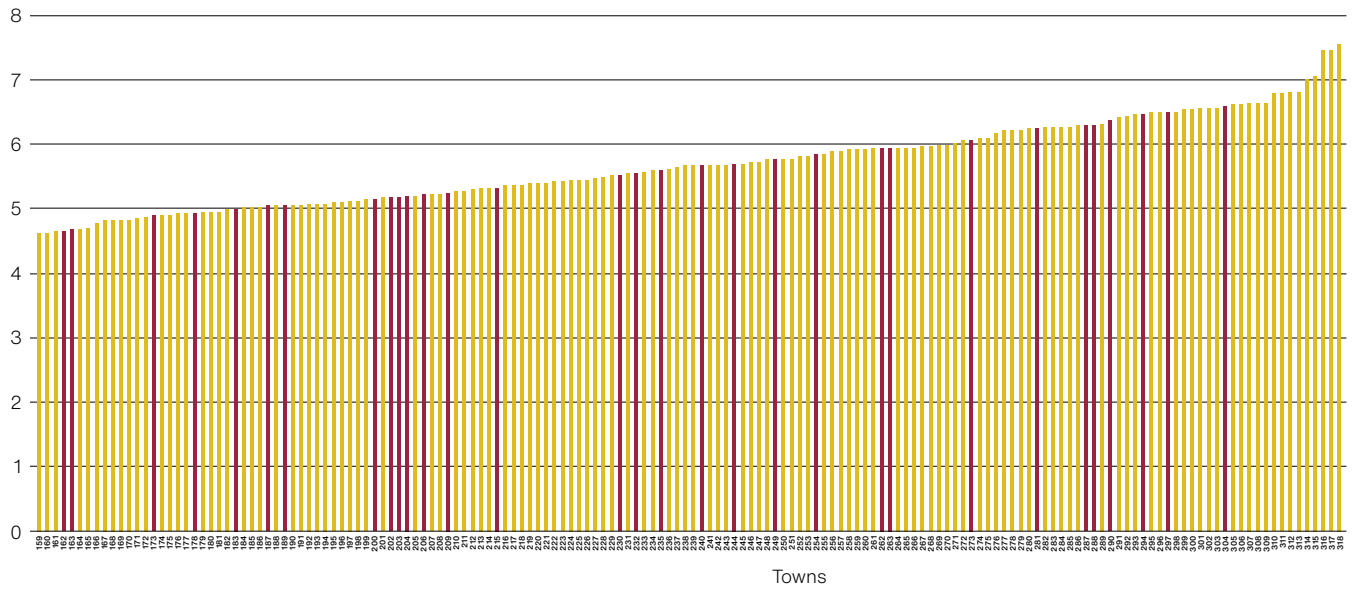
Towns in the medium-priority group selected/not selected by ministers to be invited to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score

Ministers selected towns with a wide range of scores across the medium-priority group



Selected Not selected

1 Rochford	21 Shoreham-by-Sea	41 West Bromwich (East)	61 Tynemouth
2 Maldon	22 Gillingham	42 Havant	62 Ilkeston
3 Loughton	23 South Normanton	43 Rainworth	63 Billingham
4 Bridport	24 Ripley	44 Weston-Super-Mare	64 Swallownest
5 Bognor Regis	25 Rothwell	45 Long Eaton	65 Saltburn-by-the-Sea
6 Portslade-by-Sea	26 Swanley	46 Loughborough	66 Tamworth
7 Peacehaven	27 Northam	47 Minehead	67 Bournemouth
8 Cheshunt	28 Dereham	48 Cannock	68 Bedlington
9 Wellington	29 Braintree	49 Sedgley	69 Jarrow
10 Frome	30 Penryn	50 Waltham Abbey	70 Retford
11 Broadstairs	31 Consett	51 Blaydon	71 Heanor
12 Borehamwood	32 Bexhill	52 Swadlincote	72 Great Malvern
13 Norwich	33 Colchester	53 Thetford	73 Swanscombe
14 Chatteris	34 Ipswich	54 Daventry	74 Carlton in Lindrick
15 Witham	35 Herne Bay	55 Felixstowe	75 Earl Shilton
16 Helston	36 Gloucester	56 Leek	76 Clay Cross
17 Eastbourne	37 Rushden	57 Deal	77 Rugeley
18 Whittlesey	38 Worthing	58 Crawley	78 Tiverton
19 Hythe	39 Eastwood	59 Alfreton	79 Kiveton Park
20 Burnham-on-Sea	40 Chard	60 Hebburn	80 Seaham



- 81 Waltham Cross
- 82 Harwich
- 83 Swindon
- 84 Louth
- 85 Mansfield Woodhouse
- 86 Rawtenstall
- 87 Measham
- 88 Swinton
- 89 Brotton
- 90 Brownhills
- 91 Wallsend
- 92 Cleveleys
- 93 Skelton (North East)
- 94 Glossop
- 95 Bolsover
- 96 Egremont
- 97 March
- 98 Dinnington (Yorkshire and the Humber)
- 99 Clayton-le-Moors
- 100 Great Harwood

- 101 Gorleston-on-Sea
- 102 Coalville
- 103 North Wingfield
- 104 Cinderford
- 105 Spennymoor
- 106 Banbury
- 107 Newton Aycliffe
- 108 Dunstable
- 109 Crook
- 110 Rochester
- 111 Stretford
- 112 Warrington
- 113 North Walney
- 114 Crosby
- 115 Lancaster
- 116 Millom
- 117 Dawlish
- 118 Bedworth
- 119 Newton Abbot
- 120 Hucknall

- 121 Stanley
- 122 Truro
- 123 Thornaby-on-Tees
- 124 Clifton (East Midlands)
- 125 Newport (Isle of Wight)
- 126 Aldridge
- 127 Kettering
- 128 Westthoughton
- 129 Stourbridge
- 130 Ashington (North East)
- 131 Rishton
- 132 Irlam
- 133 Shildon
- 134 Faversham
- 135 Ashton-in-Makerfield
- 136 Shirebrook
- 137 Canvey Island
- 138 Skelmersdale
- 139 Ilfracombe
- 140 Creswell

- 141 Hornsea
- 142 Normanton
- 143 New Ollerton
- 144 Halesowen
- 145 Sudbury
- 146 Ashford (South East)
- 147 Cleator Moor
- 148 Wednesfield
- 149 Teignmouth
- 150 Golborne
- 151 Kidsgrove
- 152 Clowne
- 153 Worcester
- 154 Bedford
- 155 Weymouth
- 156 Shrewsbury
- 157 Filey
- 158 Kirkby-in-Ashfield
- 159 Hemel Hempstead
- 160 Romiley

**Figure 5** *continued*

Towns in the medium-priority group selected/not selected by ministers to be invited to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score

161 East Cowes	201 Yeovil	241 Bridlington	281 Camborne
162 Stevenage	202 Darlington	242 Rawmarsh	282 Thurnscoe
163 Sutton in Ashfield	203 Whitby	243 Newton-le-Willows	283 Bodmin
164 Wigan	204 Peterborough	244 Lincoln	284 Upton (Yorkshire and the Humber)
165 Stalybridge	205 Wath upon Dearne	245 Gateshead	285 Brixham
166 Ryde	206 Workington	246 Thorne	286 Wellingborough
167 Peterlee	207 Hindley	247 Newquay	287 Carlisle
168 Bacup	208 Stockport	248 Fleetwood	288 Penzance
169 Dukinfield	209 Harlow	249 Darwen	289 Winsford (North West)
170 Worksop	210 Bury	250 Bolton Upon Dearne	290 Barrow-in-Furness
171 Heysham	211 Prescot	251 Wisbeck	291 Bootle
172 Bentley	212 Litherland	252 Accrington	292 Blackburn
173 Bloxwich	213 Darlaston	253 Minster (South East)	293 Huddersfield
174 Falmouth	214 Tipton	254 Crewe	294 Nelson (North West)
175 Willenhall	215 Milton Keynes	255 Droylsden	295 Barnsley
176 Houghton Regis	216 Thurcroft	256 Bilston	296 Barnstaple
177 Gravesend	217 Bircotes	257 Redruth	297 Mansfield
178 Wakefield	218 Whitehaven	258 Brierley Hill	298 Gainsborough
179 Hyde (North West)	219 Atherton	259 Withernsea	299 Stockton-on-Tees
180 Duncroft	220 Bletchley	260 Colne	300 Brierfield
181 Denton	221 Grantham	261 Morecambe	301 Middleton (North West)
182 St Austell	222 Clacton-on-Sea	262 Rowley Regis	302 South Elmsall
183 Hastings	223 Kirkby	263 Bishop Auckland	303 Sunderland
184 Brigg	224 Southend-on-Sea	264 South Ockendon	304 Goole
185 Haydock	225 Sittingbourne	265 Chadderton	305 Wombwell
186 Pontefract	226 Whitefield	266 Failsworth	306 Heywood
187 Shipley	227 Adwick le Street	267 Kidderminster	307 South Shields
188 South Kirkby	228 Shaw (North West)	268 Chesterfield	308 Burnley
189 Newcastle-under-Lyme	229 Maryport	269 Radcliffe	309 Salford
190 Maltby	230 Newark-on-Trent	270 Farnworth	310 Bideford
191 Milnrow	231 Hoyland	271 Ellesmere Port	311 Dover
192 Slough	232 Nuneaton	272 Cleethorpes	312 Halifax
193 Oldbury (West Midlands)	233 Wallasey	273 Northampton	313 Knottingley
194 Selby	234 Conisbrough	274 Paignton	314 Chadwell St Mary
195 Eccles	235 Corby	275 Batley	315 Basildon
196 Coseley	236 Taunton	276 Church	316 Folkestone
197 Chatham	237 Croesowallt	277 Mexborough	317 Ramsgate
198 Wednesbury	238 Ashton-under-Lyne	278 Moorends	318 Sheerness
199 Horwich	239 Northfleet	279 Widnes	
200 Grays	240 Wolverhampton	280 Luton	

**Note**

1 'Score' denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria that were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

Figure 6 overleaf

**Figure 6**

Officials' record of ministers' rationales for selecting towns from the medium-priority group to be invited to bid for Town Deals, by region

**Ministers considered additional characteristics to those used in the officials' scoring process**

Region	Rationale
East Midlands	<p>These are spread across the region and include towns in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas of South East Midlands, Greater Lincolnshire, Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and Leicester and Leicestershire.</p> <p>Towns that have been selected include coastal towns such as Skegness, rural towns such as Newark-on-Trent and post-industrial towns such as Long Eaton. The towns also range in size: the smallest Mablethorpe (12,500 inhabitants) and the largest is Lincoln (100,000).</p> <p>More specifically, both Skegness and Boston also score very highly on Office for National Statistics (ONS) deprivation metrics and have faced significant demographic change in recent years. Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Sutton-in-Ashfield and Mansfield are all ex-mining towns and steel towns. Corby is undergoing significant change due to the declining steel industry. Clay Cross is in the 10% most deprived towns in England according to the ONS.</p>
East of England	<p>Towns have been selected from the New Anglia, Hertfordshire and Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough LEPs. These include urban centres with populations of more than 140,000 (Norwich, Peterborough and Ipswich), which are economic hubs serving a wider area with a strong track record of local partnerships and working with government on local growth investment. Also included are medium-sized coastal and often rural towns (Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, King's Lynn), some of which have significant deprivation issues (for example, Great Yarmouth is in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of towns by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measure of deprivation). In addition, area-led intelligence has highlighted significant growth opportunities in these towns, including in the energy sector (Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft). Many areas have complementary investment programmes (for example, Enterprise Zone in Lowestoft).</p>
North East	<p>The North East selection includes a mix of towns from the Tees Valley LEP and the North East LEP. The towns chosen include Middlesbrough and Hartlepool, the two most deprived towns in the Tees Valley. Many of the towns are post-industrial towns that lie along the North East coast; these vary in size, from smaller towns, such as Blyth, to larger towns, such as Middlesbrough. As well as the post-industrial coastal towns, the North East selection also includes inland towns that are facing similar challenges, such as the rural town of Bishop Auckland that displays high levels of income deprivation. Towns selected range in size, from 25,000 inhabitants (Thornaby-on-Tees) to 175,000 (Middlesbrough).</p>
North West	<p>The selection is across the LEP areas of Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and Warrington, Lancashire and Cumbria. There are towns in both rural (for example, Workington) and strategic centres within wider urban areas (for example, Oldham). The towns selected cover a range of sizes, the smallest (Millom) has a population of 6,000 and the largest (Bolton) has a population of 195,000.</p> <p>A number of post-industrial towns (for example, Leyland, Crewe) and coastal towns (for example, Workington, Barrow-in-Furness) have been selected, reflecting the heritage and economic assets of the region. This will also support port towns and towns critical for key sectors, for example, nuclear.</p> <p>A number of towns in the region with significant deprivation and skills constraints are included, including Oldham, Rochdale, Blackpool and Runcorn. Some towns have recently experienced shocks, for example, in Rochdale.</p>
South East	<p>Towns have been selected in the South East and Coast to Capital LEPs. This includes coastal towns such as Hastings, Margate and Grays, some of which have significant issues with deprivation. Also included are larger towns with significance for their sub-region and growth opportunities (for example, Crawley, Harlow, Colchester). Many towns have significant issues with skills. The towns selected in the South East range in size, the smallest has a population of 12,500 (Tilbury) and the largest has a population of 120,000 (Colchester).</p>



**Figure 6** *continued*

Officials' record of ministers' rationales for selecting towns from the medium-priority group to be invited to bid for Town Deals, by region

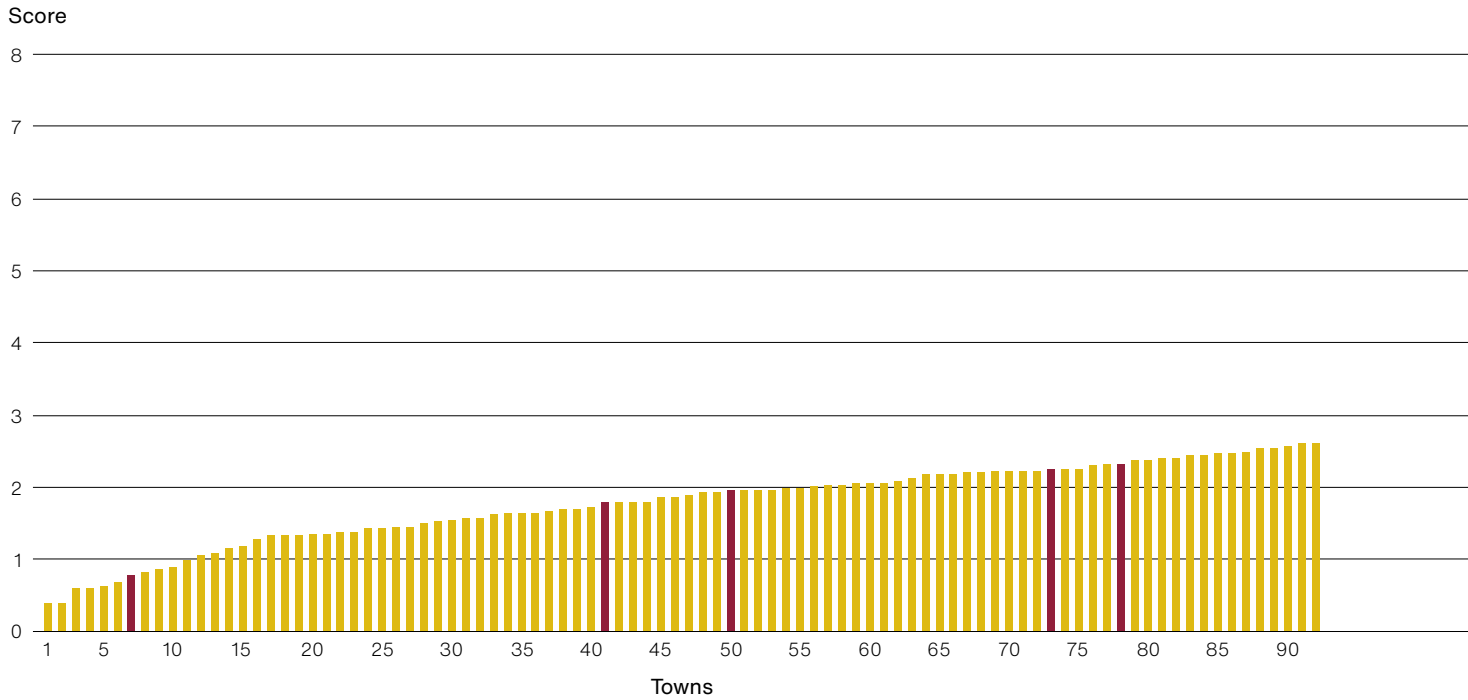
Region	Rationale
South West	<p>Towns have been selected from Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Heart of the South West, Dorset and Swindon and Wiltshire LEPs. Towns in the South West are a mixture of sub-regional centres with populations of 180,000+ (for example, Bournemouth, Swindon) as well as small or medium-sized (8,500-49,000) rural/coastal or in some way peripheral towns (for example, Bridgwater, Penzance), reflecting growth opportunities and economic challenges in the region. Swindon is experiencing highly publicised shocks relating to an industrial plant. Some areas have high levels of income deprivation and there are significant productivity issues across many towns selected for the region, reflecting significant issues, for example, in Cornwall.</p>
West Midlands	<p>The selection covers a broad geographic scope including towns in the Black Country, the Marches, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, Coventry and Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Birmingham and Solihull LEP areas.</p> <p>Towns range in size from a population of approximately 19,000 (West Bromwich) to 210,000 (Wolverhampton).</p> <p>The West Midlands towns selected also reflect a range of typologies. Newcastle under Lyme is an ex-industrial town, Telford has strong economic opportunities, Hereford is a market town and others such as Walsall and Worcester fall into the West Midlands City Region and have strong potential. Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Rowley Regis, Bloxwich and Smethwick all fall into the top towns in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation measure of income deprivation.</p>
Yorkshire and the Humber	<p>Towns have been selected in Yorkshire and the Humber across Leeds City Region, Sheffield City Region and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP areas. Towns range in size from Goldthorpe and Stainforth, which both have a population of approximately 6,000, to Rotherham which has a population of 110,000. Yorkshire and the Humber has suffered significantly from industrial decline and as a result the region includes towns which score very highly in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation measure of income deprivation including Rotherham. Coastal towns have also been selected, including Scarborough and Whitby.</p>

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Figure 7**

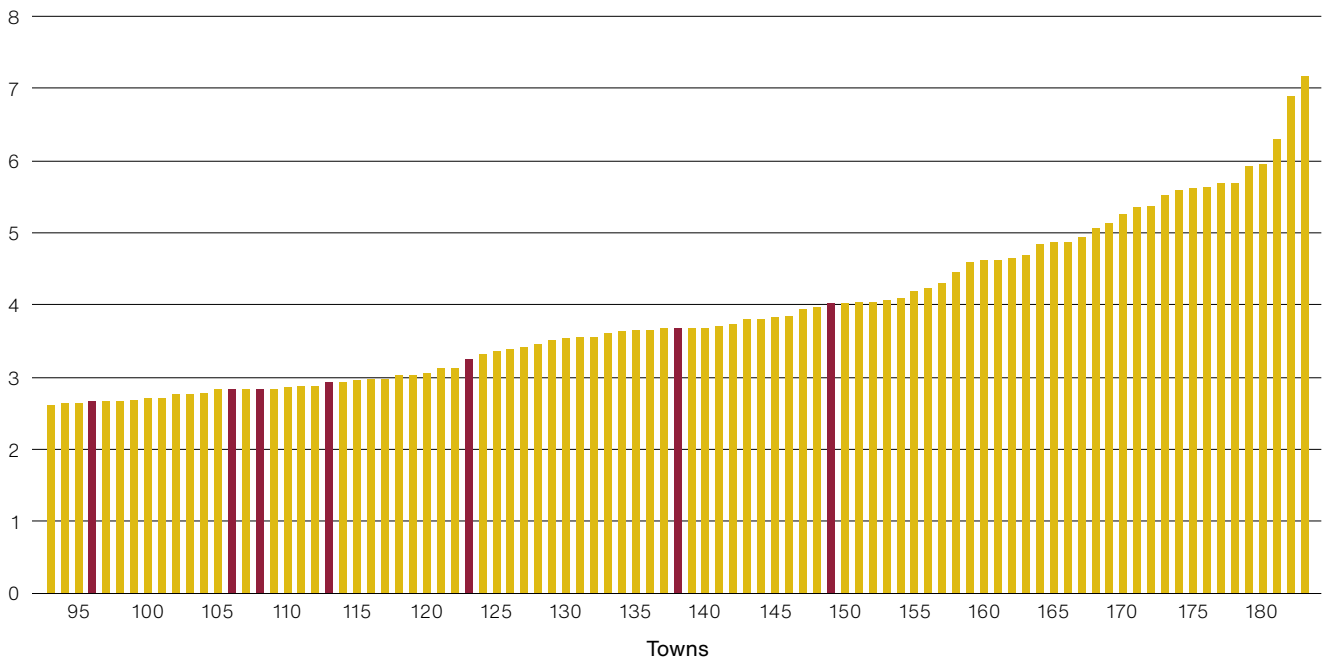
Towns in the low-priority group selected/not selected by ministers to be invited to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score

Ministers selected 12 towns in the low-priority group across a wide range of scores



Selected Not selected

1 Bursledon	16 Dartmouth	31 Skipton	46 Axminster
2 New Milton	17 Gosport	32 Woodingdean	47 Bungay
3 Calne	18 Halesworth	33 Kimberley	48 Prudhoe
4 Devizes	19 Shepton Mallet	34 Letchworth Garden City	49 Beccles
5 Polegate	20 Snodland	35 Preesall	50 Brighouse
6 Blackfield	21 Hailsham	36 Ryton	51 Ossett
7 Cheadle	22 Cullompton	37 Coppull	52 Marske-by-the-Sea
8 Radstock	23 Littlehampton	38 Burnham-on-Crouch	53 Droitwich
9 Rothwell	24 Trowbridge	39 Welwyn Garden City	54 Carlton (East Midlands)
10 Haverhill	25 Honiton	40 Burton Latimer	55 Wincanton
11 Maidstone	26 Halstead	41 Morley	56 Cleckheaton
12 Melksham	27 Wideopen	42 Huntingdon	57 Buxton (East Midlands)
13 Carnforth	28 Brandon (East of England)	43 Ramsey (East of England)	58 Weaverham
14 Hoo St Werburgh	29 Kingsbridge	44 Fazeley	59 Weston
15 East Wittering	30 Selsey	45 Southwick	60 Cramlington



- |                                       |   |                             |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>61</b> Broseley                    | <b>76</b> Okehampton                          | <b>90</b> Great Torrington  | <b>105</b> Ross-on-Wye          |
| <b>62</b> Long Sutton (East Midlands) | <b>77</b> New Romney                          | <b>91</b> Chester-le-Street | <b>106</b> St Ives (South West) |
| <b>63</b> Fakenham                    | <b>78</b> Stapleford                          | <b>92</b> Elland            | <b>107</b> Wigton               |
| <b>64</b> Longbenton                  | <b>79</b> Whitburn                            | <b>93</b> South Molton      | <b>108</b> Todmorden            |
| <b>65</b> Arnold                      | <b>80</b> Eckington                           | <b>94</b> Haslingden        | <b>109</b> Totnes               |
| <b>66</b> Caister-on-Sea              | <b>81</b> Biddulph                            | <b>95</b> Torpoint          | <b>110</b> Rowlands Gill        |
| <b>67</b> Coleford                    | <b>82</b> Wadebridge                          | <b>96</b> Stocksbridge      | <b>111</b> Whitworth            |
| <b>68</b> Guisborough                 | <b>83</b> Downham Market                      | <b>97</b> Washington        | <b>112</b> Lydney               |
| <b>69</b> Coningsby Airfield          | <b>84</b> Diss                                | <b>98</b> Littleport        | <b>113</b> Leyland              |
| <b>70</b> Kingswinford                | <b>85</b> Atherstone                          | <b>99</b> Walkden           | <b>114</b> Sandy                |
| <b>71</b> Ruskington                  | <b>86</b> Thornton (Yorkshire and the Humber) | <b>100</b> Pershore         | <b>115</b> Fence Houses         |
| <b>72</b> Wem                         | <b>87</b> Hemsby                              | <b>101</b> Ludlow           | <b>116</b> Liversedge           |
| <b>73</b> Redditch                    | <b>88</b> Market Drayton                      | <b>102</b> Hunstanton       | <b>117</b> Brandon (North East) |
| <b>74</b> Stourport-on-Severn         | <b>89</b> Kempston                            | <b>103</b> Horncastle       | <b>118</b> Houghton-le-Spring   |
| <b>75</b> Irthlingborough             |   | <b>104</b> Bebington        | <b>119</b> Selston              |

**Figure 7** *continued*

Towns in the low-priority group selected/not selected by ministers to be invited to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score

120 North Walsham	140 Oswaldtwistle	160 Leominster	179 Liskeard
121 Chorley	141 Walton-on-the-Naze	161 Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	180 Berwick-upon-Tweed
122 Norton Canes	142 Freshwater	162 Sandown	181 Platt Bridge
123 Glastonbury	143 Throckley	163 Ventnor	182 Ince-in-Makerfield
124 Dudley (North East)	144 Dodworth	164 Partington	183 Immingham
125 Stakeford	145 Easington (North East)	165 Cudworth	
126 Cromer	146 Whitchurch (West Midlands)	166 Royston	
127 St Blazey	147 Seaton Delaval	167 Blackheath	
128 Wingate	148 Alnwick	168 Leiston	
129 Heckmondwike	149 Newhaven	169 Hemsworth	
130 Looe	150 Bude	170 Barton-upon-Humber	
131 Sale	151 Mossley	171 Market Warsop	
132 Faringdon	152 Armthorpe	172 New Rossington	
133 Swaffham	153 Annfield Plain	173 Holbeach	
134 Chester	154 Launceston	174 Askern	
135 Murton (North East)	155 Ferryhill	175 Kearsley	
136 Pelton	156 Ryhill	176 Worsbrough	
137 Amble	157 Willington (North East)	177 Featherstone (Yorkshire and the Humber)	
138 Southport	158 Shanklin	178 Hayle	
139 Hetton-le-Hole	159 Aveley		

**Note**

- 1 'Score' denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria that were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government data

**Figure 8**

## Officials' record of ministers' rationales for selecting towns from the low-priority group to be invited to bid for Town Deals

Ministers provided their rationales for **each of the 12 towns selected**

<b>Town</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Cheadle, North West	Cheadle is strategically located between Stockport and Manchester Airport, with strong motorway links to relevant job opportunities and a new link dual carriageway. The area is part of Stockport Borough Council, which is looking to set up a Mayoral Development Corporation. Transport improvements in nearby Cheadle Hulme have primed the area for investment. The town ranks in the top half of the 541 towns for Index of Multiple Deprivation deprivation.
Leyland, North West	Preston is the next nearest urban area. The local bus company which serviced the area ceased trading in 2015, however Stagecoach Merseyside & South Lancashire has taken over a single route (route 111). The area scores relatively poorly in productivity and has a relatively high 'exposure to EU Exit' value.
Southport, North West	The area scores highly in the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and has been identified as an area with opportunity for investment and closely aligned to the priorities of the Fund. This area has been particularly struck by timetabling changes to Northern Trains. Is part of the area's Local Industrial Strategy for improvements to the area's digital infrastructure network.
Brighouse, Yorkshire and the Humber	The area has recently suffered an economic shock when a manufacturer went into administration. The company had a longstanding heritage in the local community and 313 local jobs were lost as a result of the company folding. The town scores in the bottom 28 <sup>th</sup> percentile for productivity. The town and surrounding area have struggled to unlock its potential.
Morley, Yorkshire and the Humber	Morley is looking to invest in its transport hubs and is seen as an area with investment opportunities. The wider area around the town also suffers from low productivity and is at risk of potential economic 'shocks'.
Stocksbridge, Yorkshire and the Humber	Its economy is dominated by the steel sector, which has experienced various periods of growth and decline over past decades; however, the current challenges facing the steel industry stand Stocksbridge out as a potentially vulnerable economy. Added to this, the town displays low household incomes and high levels of deprivation. The town has been identified by Sheffield City Region and City Council as a "priority" and the City Council has submitted a Future High Streets Fund bid in the past.
Todmorden, Yorkshire and the Humber	Todmorden has severe pockets of deprivation. It has been economically reliant on heavy industry, heavily reliant on the cotton spinning and weaving industry, yet its industrial base is now much reduced and primarily operates as a commuter town for people working in surrounding cities including Manchester, Leeds and Bradford. There are regeneration opportunities for Todmorden which may help it build an economic base of its own. Affordable housing is a significant issue with limited land available for building.
Stapleford, East Midlands	The area has a relatively high level of EU Exit shock exposure. It is part of South Nottinghamshire, which has no other towns in the list, and helps a geographical spread across the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire area.
Redditch, West Midlands	In recent years the town centre has experienced decline and would benefit from regeneration. The town was previously an industrial centre, with strong historical links to manufacturing. Redditch's economy is facing a higher-than-average risk from EU Exit, as a result of the sectors that make up the broader NUTS3 economy it lies in. The town also faces a productivity challenge, with lower than average GVA (Gross value added) per hour worked compared to the 541 towns that were chosen from.

**Figure 8** *continued*

Officials' record of ministers' rationales for selecting towns from the low-priority group to be invited to bid for Town Deals

Town	Rationale
Newhaven, South East	Newhaven has suffered from longstanding deprivation and is in the 25%-highest towns in terms of income deprivation. It is an urban area but has significant rural pockets and is coastal. Successful development of Newhaven would help relieve pressure on Brighton's housing and employment. It has an enterprise zone and received investment from the High Streets Fund and therefore demonstrates strong potential.
St Ives, South West	Cornwall as a county faces low productivity, in particular for coastal areas. Cornwall's economy is also expected to have fairly significant exposure to EU Exit. There are growth opportunities for the sub-region in St Ives, for example, arising from investment related to the Tate gallery.
Glastonbury, South West	The town scores relatively poorly in productivity, EU Exit exposure, and the Index of Multiple Deprivation income deprivation metrics. The nearest transport links for the town are Castle Cary railway which has no direct bus links to the town.

**Note**

- 1 NUTS (Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques) is a standard for referencing subdivisions of countries for statistical purposes. In England, NUTS3 areas correspond to counties, unitary authorities or districts, or in some cases, groups of these.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Figure 9**

Recommended and actual number of towns per region selected by ministers to be invited to bid for Town Deals

The actual number of towns selected per region was deemed acceptable by officials

Region	Recommended number of towns	Selected number of towns	Difference
North West	21	20	-1
Yorkshire and the Humber	19	16	-3
West Midlands	18	15	-3
East Midlands	14	19	+5
North East	11	7	-4
East of England	6	7	+1
South West	6	9	+3
South East	5	8	+3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>101</b>	

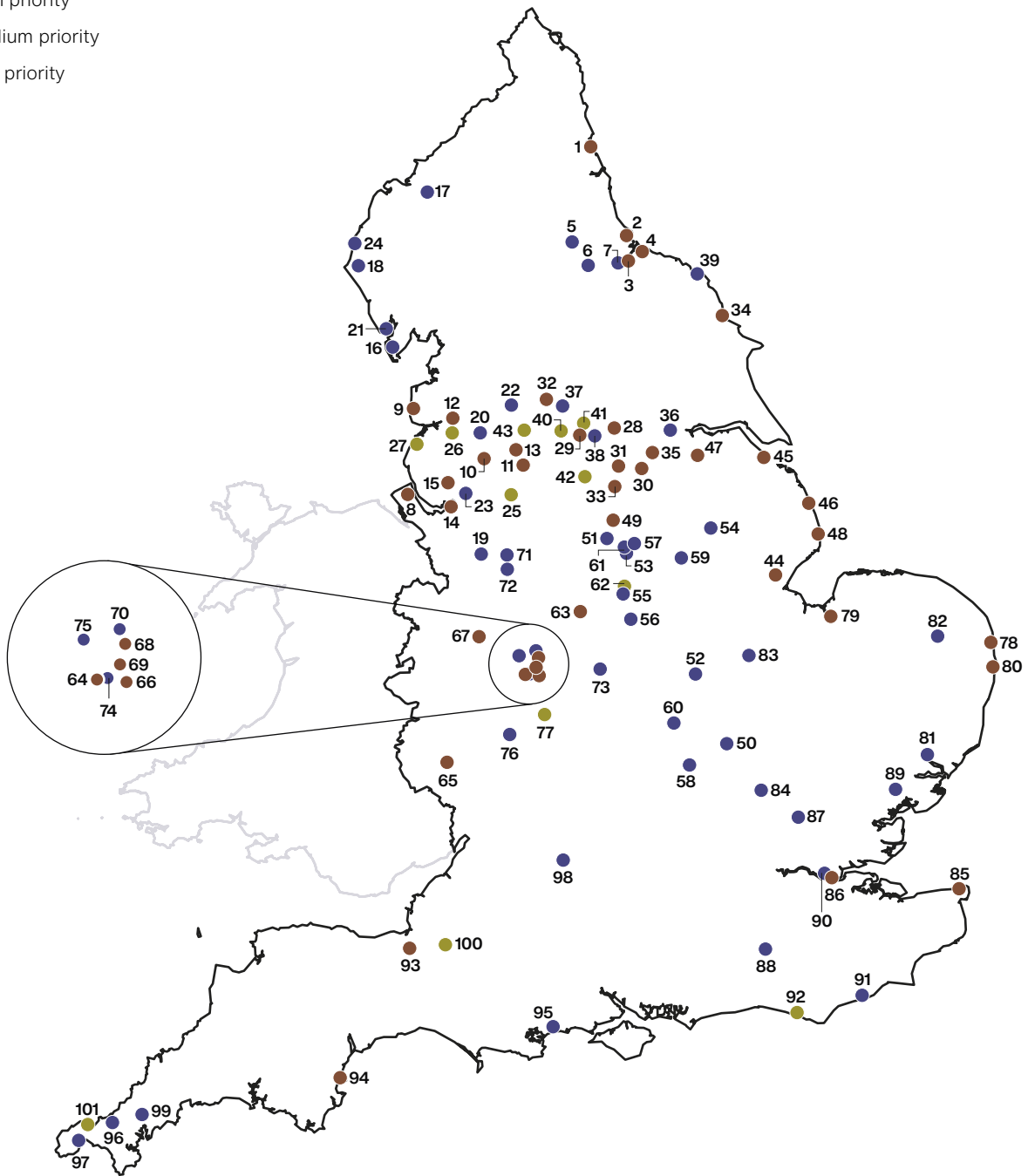
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Figure 10**

Distribution of towns across England selected by ministers to be invited to bid for Town Deals

Towns selected for the Towns Fund by priority rating

- High priority
- Medium priority
- Low priority



**Note**

1 The towns were classified into regions of England by the Department.

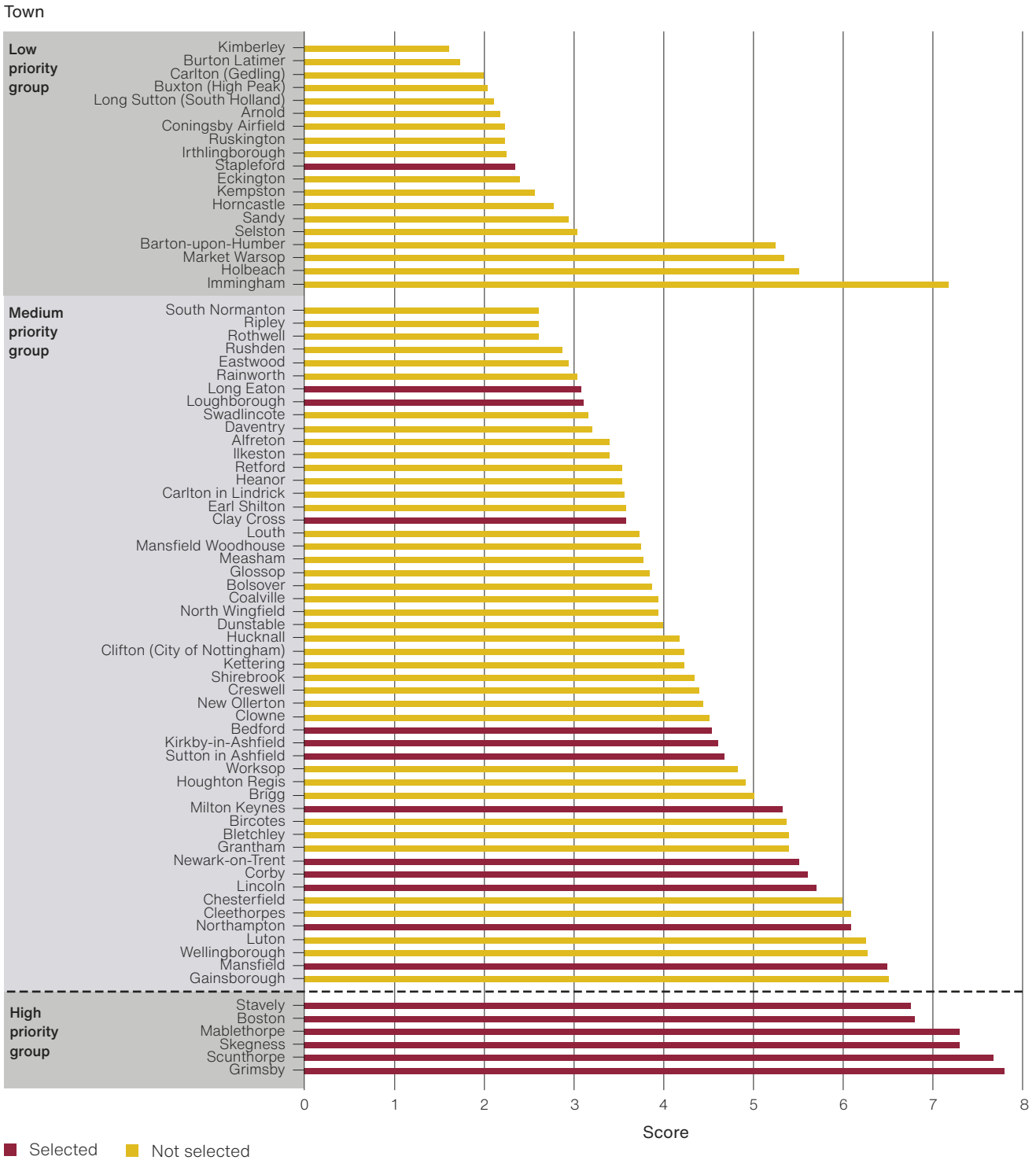
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government



<b>1 North East</b>			<b>3 Yorkshire and the Humber <i>continued</i></b>			<b>5 West Midlands <i>continued</i></b>			
High Priority	1	Blyth	Medium Priority	36	Goole	Medium Priority	70	Bloxwich	
	2	Hartlepool		37	ShIPLEY		71	Kidsgrove	
	3	Middlesbrough		38	Wakefield		72	Newcastle-under-Lyme	
	4	Redcar		39	Whitby		73	Nuneaton	
Medium Priority	5	Bishop Auckland	Low Priority	40	Brighouse		74	Rowley Regis	
	6	Darlington		41	Morley		75	Wolverhampton	
	7	Thornaby-on-Tees		42	Stocksbridge	76	Worcester		
				43	Todmorden	Low Priority	77	Redditch	
<b>2 North West</b>			<b>4 East Midlands</b>				<b>6 East of England</b>		
High Priority	8	Birkenhead	High Priority	44	Boston	High Priority	78	Great Yarmouth	
	9	Blackpool		45	Grimsby		79	King's Lynn	
	10	Bolton		46	Mablethorpe		80	Lowestoft	
	11	Oldham		47	Scunthorpe	Medium Priority	81	Ipswich	
	12	Preston		48	Skegness		82	Norwich	
	13	Rochdale	49	Staveley	83		Peterborough		
	14	Runcorn	Medium Priority	50	Bedford		84	Stevenage	
	15	St Helens		51	Clay Cross	<b>7 South East</b>			
Medium Priority	16	Barrow-in-Furness	Medium Priority	52	Corby	High Priority	85	Margate	
	17	Carlisle		53	Kirkby-in-Ashfield		86	Tilbury	
	18	Cleator Moor		54	Lincoln	Medium Priority	87	Harlow	
	19	Crewe		55	Long Eaton		88	Crawley	
	20	Darwen		56	Loughborough		89	Colchester	
	21	Millom		57	Mansfield		90	Grays	
	22	Nelson		58	Milton Keynes		91	Hastings	
	23	Warrington		59	Newark-on-Trent	Low Priority	92	Newhaven	
	24	Workington		60	Northampton		<b>8 South West</b>		
Low Priority	25	Cheadle		Low Priority	61	Sutton in Ashfield	High Priority	93	Bridgwater
	26	Leyland			62	Stapleford		94	Torquay
	27	Southport	<b>5 West Midlands</b>			Medium Priority	95	Bournemouth	
<b>3 Yorkshire and the Humber</b>			High Priority	63	Burton upon Trent		96	Camborne	
High Priority	28	Castleford		64	Dudley		97	Penzance	
	29	Dewsbury		65	Hereford		98	Swindon	
	30	Doncaster		66	Smethwick		99	Truro	
	31	Goldthorpe		67	Telford		Low Priority	100	Glastonbury
	32	Keighley		68	Walsall	101		St Ives	
	33	Rotherham		69	West Bromwich				
	34	Scarborough							
	35	Stainforth							

**Figure 11**

East Midlands: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score

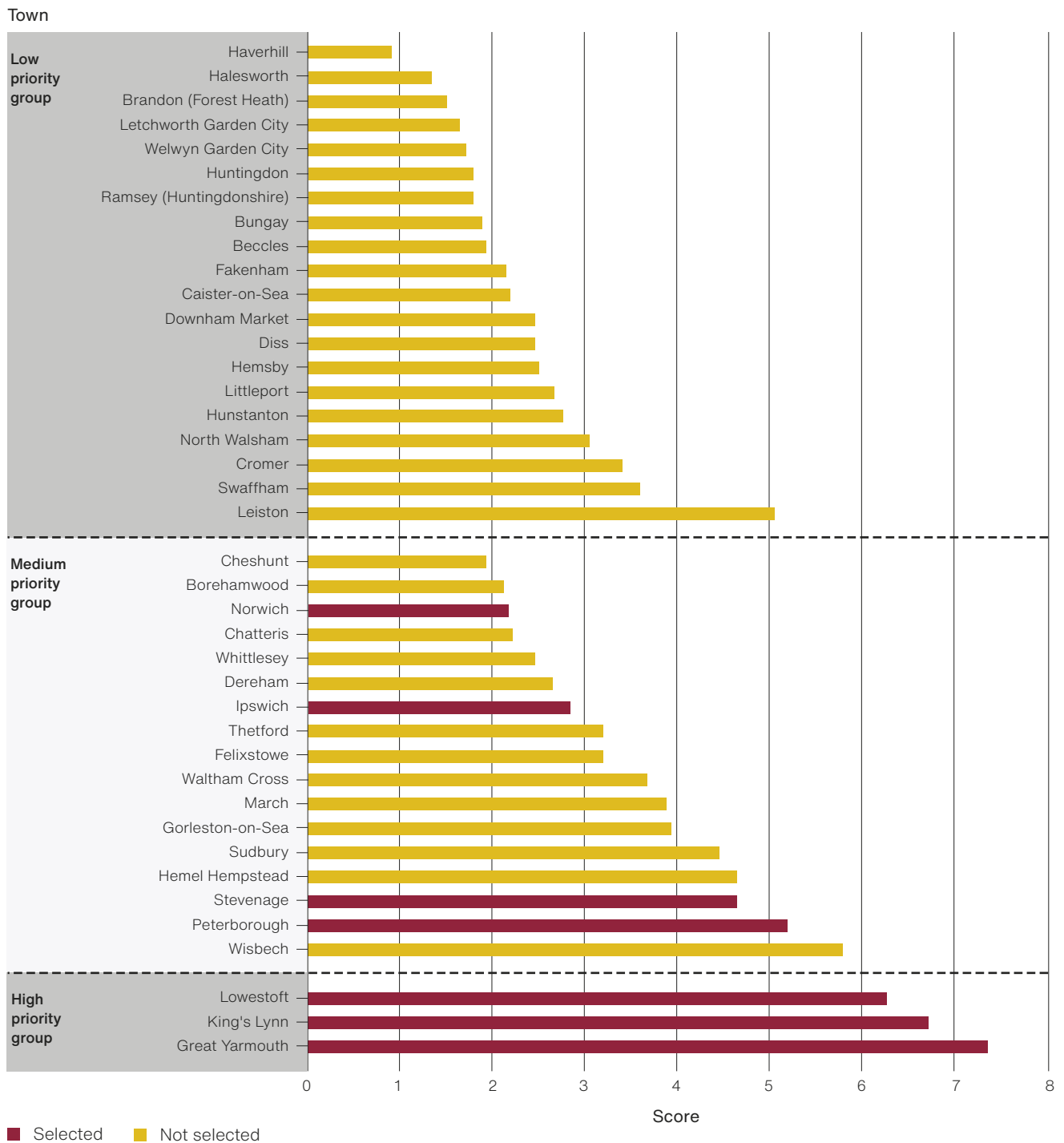


**Note**

1 "Score" denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

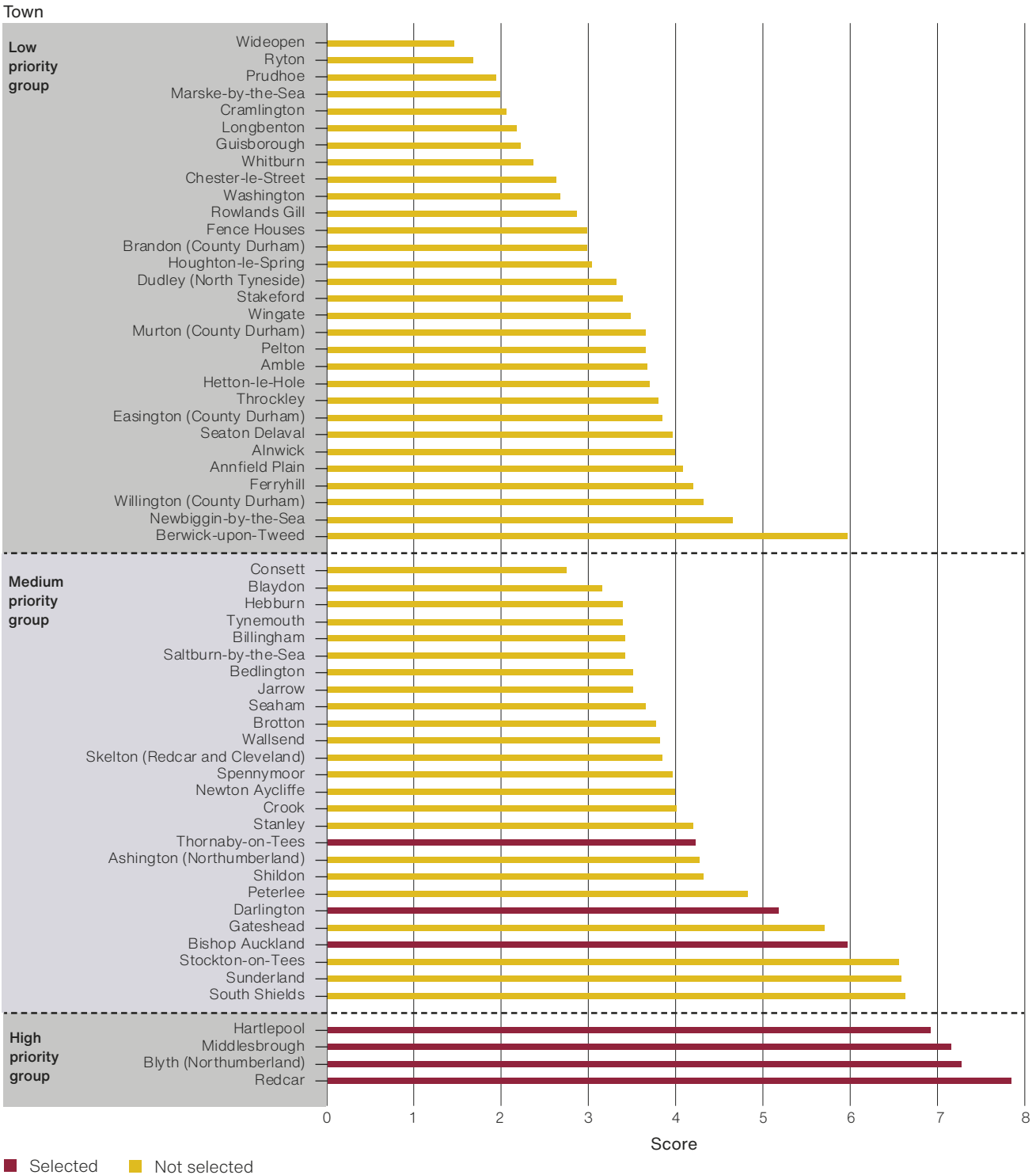
**Figure 12**  
East of England: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score



**Note**  
1 "Score" denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

**Figure 13**

North East: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score

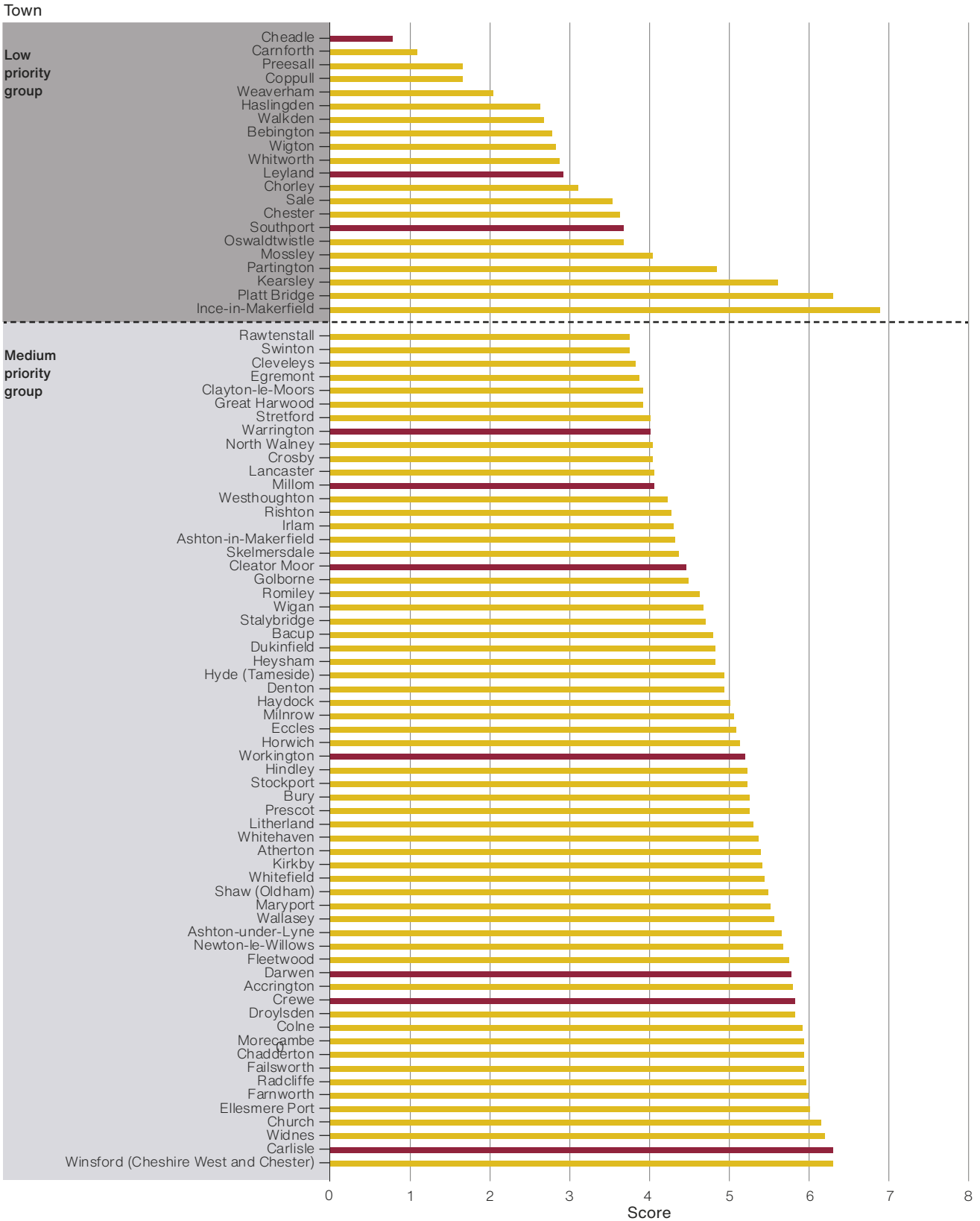


**Note**

1 "Score" denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

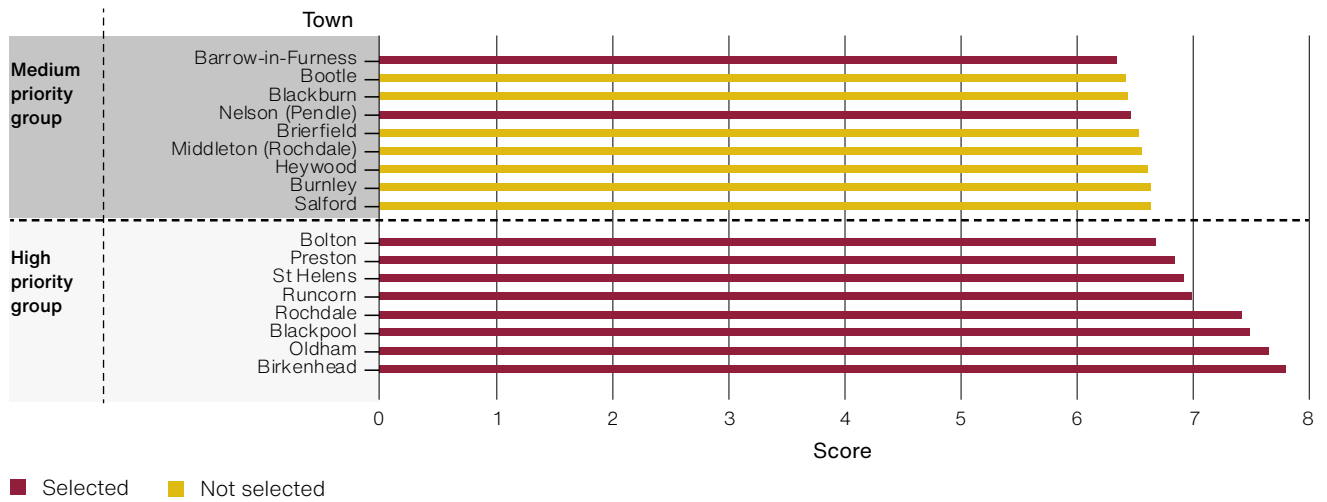
**Figure 14**

North West: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score



**Figure 14** *continued*

North West: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score



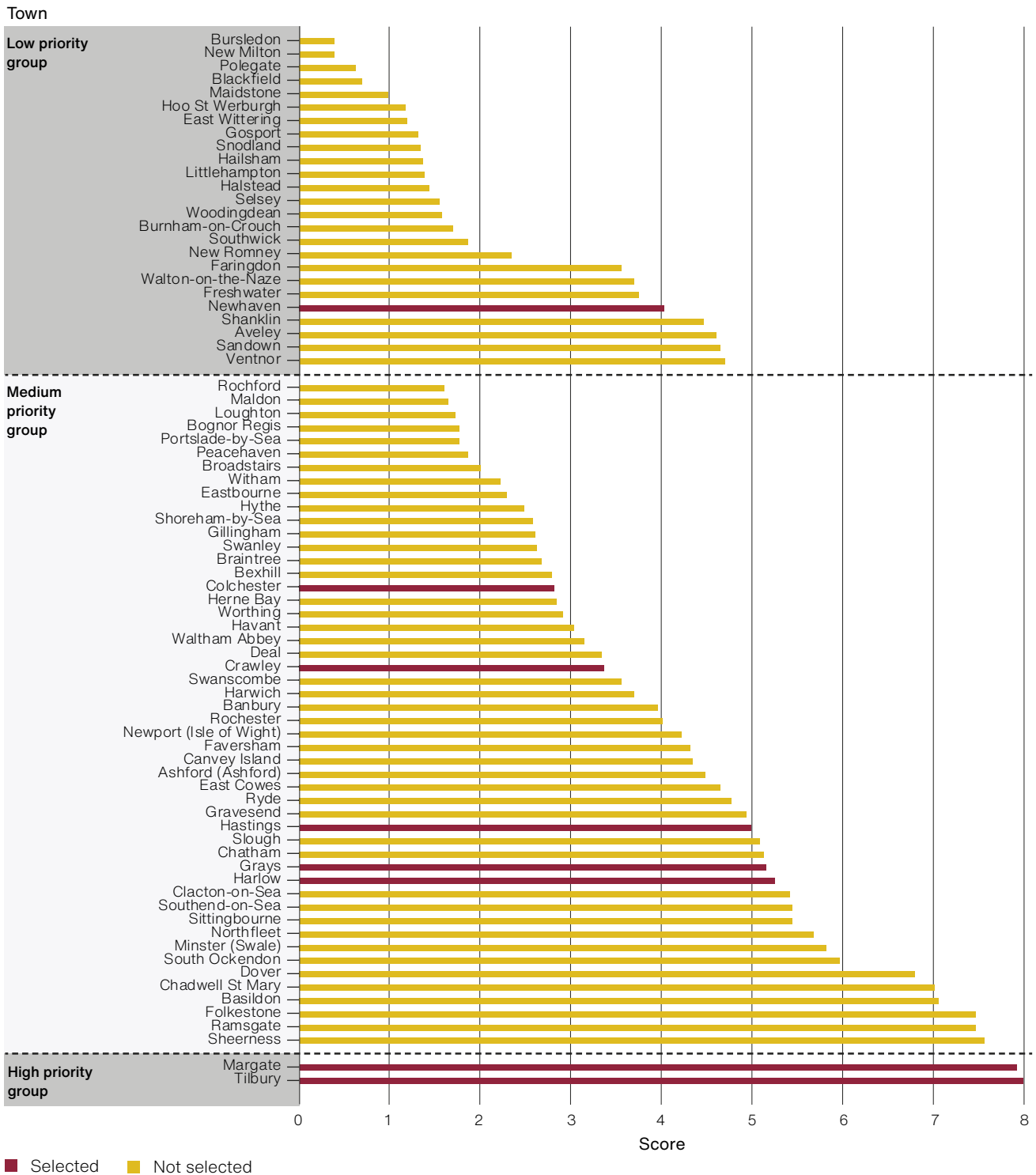
**Note**

1 “Score” denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town’s level of need and growth potential.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Figure 15**

South East: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score



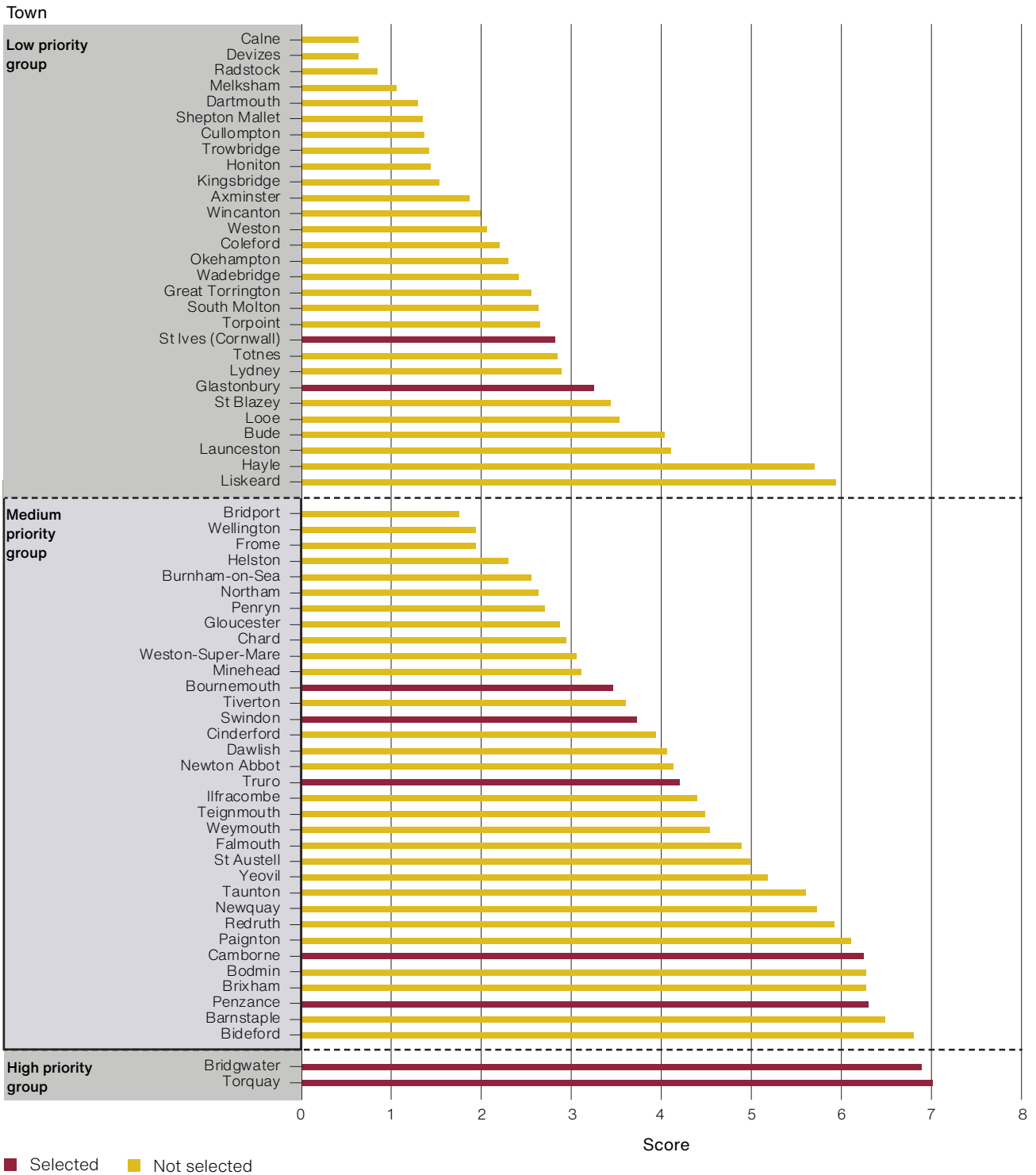
**Note**

1 "Score" denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Figure 16**

South West: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score



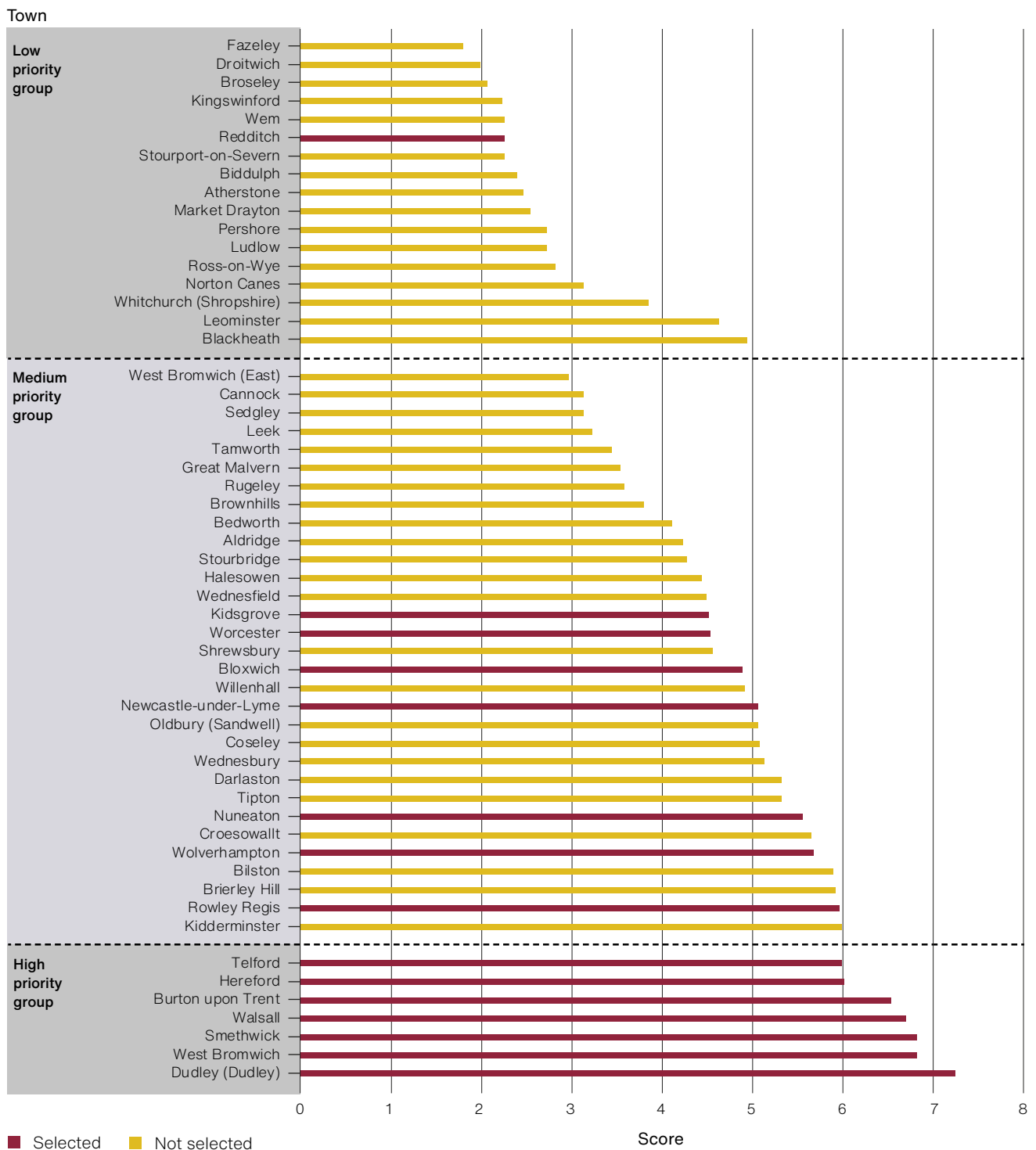
**Note**

1 "Score" denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.



**Figure 17**

West Midlands: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score



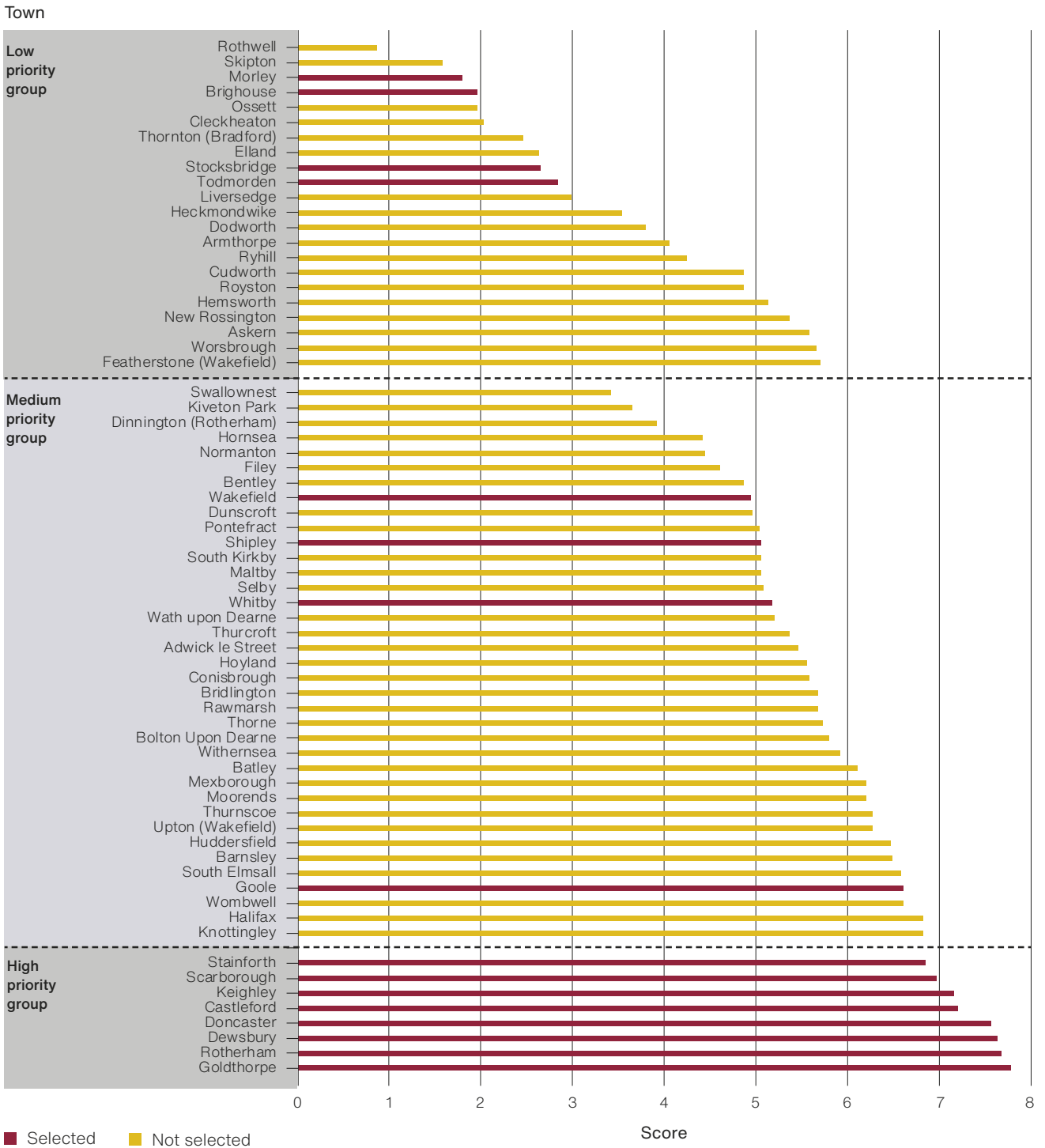
**Note**

1 "Score" denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Figure 18**

Yorkshire and the Humber: towns selected/not selected by ministers to bid for Town Deals, ordered by score



**Note**

1 "Score" denotes the total score given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government across seven assessment criteria which were intended to capture each town's level of need and growth potential.

# Appendix One

## Our scope and methods

### Scope

**1** This report looked at the process by which the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (the Department) chose the 101 towns in England it would invite to bid for Town Deals. In response to concerns raised in the media, including by some MPs, over the lack of transparency of the Department's process by which it selected the towns invited to bid for funding, we conducted a review that examined how the Department selected towns to be invited to develop Town Deals and bid for funding from the Towns Fund:

- what criteria the Department used to select the towns;
- what sources of evidence the Department used to assess towns against the selection criteria; and
- which towns were selected, what evidence was used, and what was the result of the assessments against the Department's selection criteria.

### Methods

**2** Our fieldwork took place between January and May 2020.

- We interviewed officials from the Department who were responsible for the Town Deals selection process.
- We reviewed published and unpublished documents produced by the Department, including its spreadsheet for evaluating towns, and records made by the Department's officials that described the work undertaken by the Department to select the 101 towns from the set of all towns in England.
- We created charts and tables showing which towns were selected and how they scored against the Department's criteria.

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