I am Lucy Allan and I am the MP for Telford – a new town set in the heart of rural Shropshire.

**Welcome**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Parliament, to launch this cross party group for New Towns. Like my fellow New Town MPs, many of whom are here tonight, I have a passion for the vision and ambition that the New Town movement embodies

With our New Towns coming of age - many are marking their 70th or 50th birthdays - and at a time when Government is committing to ‘new New Towns’ and the Prime Minister began 2018 by making it her personal mission to see the building of more houses, it is right that we are launching a joined up voice for New Towns in Parliament.

**The New Town vision**

The New Town dream is an inspiring story: building a better way of life and spreading that opportunity across the country.

New Towns symbolise the drive, energy and optimism of people choosing to go in search of a

job, a home of their own and a better future for them and their family.

New Towns were born in the 1950s out of a post war determination and real necessity to re new and to build more houses, but the New Town Vision has always been more than just building housing.

They are about place making for the common good –a utopian dream of a planned, self-sustaining community, spreading opportunity and delivering social justice. They are about creating a better future, a better place to live and work and a better place to raise a family. Telford, my constituency, like many other new towns, embodies that spirit of hope and optimism

**Why do we need an A- P- P- G for New Towns?**

We believe in New Towns we want new towns to be centre stage.

MPs work collaboratively in parliament – whether it is rural, coastal, urban or regional MPs.

In the same way, I work with my West Midlands colleagues and my Shropshire colleagues.

But New Towns, by their very nature are dispersed right across the country, they are disconnected in many ways from the areas that surround them and we share many common challenges and experiences. So this cross party group will be an effective champion for New Towns in Parliament.

We want to celebrate New Towns –take pride in our shared identity, they have achieved great things. We want to ensure that we are not forgotten, and are not left behind.

There has been resistance towards New Towns and a negative perception that bears no relation to reality. My constituency in the heart of rural Shropshire was not welcome when it was created 50 years ago and the M54, our link road to the outside world was opposed on all sides - and while that resentment still exists, *today* *we* are the beating heart of Shropshire, we are an outstanding success story with more jobs, more skills, a truly modern centre of technology innovation and

enterprise and I am particularly pleased to see representatives of Telford business here tonight who played their part in making that possible.

It is fantastic that we have the SoS here this evening, he has visited Telford, a number of times and knows for himself that what an excellent example of a thriving, successful new town it is.

MPs for New Towns want to tackle common challenges together and look to play a part in influencing future Government policy:

our infrastructure is aging, our connectivity needs improving, and we have areas of significant deprivation. We share the problem of decaying private rental housing. And I am delighted the Government will be backing the private members bill on homes fit for human habitation which directly seeks to tackle some of the housing issues that post war New Towns face.

There is much to learn from the post war New Towns - about place making and communities, jobs and skills, the importance of connectivity and green spaces, and about the need for long term stewardship. Creating an identity of which we are proud and an environment where people belong.

**21st Century New Towns**

In 21st Britain, our post war New Towns have come of age – in that time we have seen massive social change – now, as home owners, whether freeholders and leaseholders, we want to have a say about our communities and our future, and we want to be heard - we buy a dream when we move to a new town and it is the responsibility of developers and local government to work together, help people realise that dream.

The New New Towns will differ in many ways from our original post war New Towns but I know they will retain that original New Town spirit of ambition and opportunity for all. All New Towns will have an important role in building Britain’s future and in the lives of our next generation.

It is up to us, politicians, policy makers, industry experts and business, to ensure that all New Towns past, present and future realise their full potential and make their contribution to Britain’s future.

Hand over to Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of TCPA.

It has pleasure of getting to know Kate over the past few months. Kate brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to New Towns and shares my passion and I look forward to working with her and the TCPA over the coming months as we take our initiative forward.

Thank you so much for being here tonight and supporting this event – I very much look forward to the program ahead and focus on quality homes, skills, innovation and healthy new towns which I hope many of you will feed into:

I would like to thank the sponsors for their very kind generosity:

* Wei Yang & Partners
* Places for People
* The Lady Margaret Patterson Osborn Trust

I would also like to send a special thanks to the TCPA for organising tonight and for their continued knowledge and insight.

A particular thank to the Secretary of State and the other New Town MPs for sharing my passion and enthusiasm for our new town constituencies, and for making sure the voices of our residents are heard in this place and beyond.