

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CROSS PARTY GROUP ON TOWNS AND TOWN CENTRES

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER 2016, 12.30 PM

COMMITTEE ROOM 2, THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Lunch kindly supported by the Scottish Grocers Federation

Attendees and Apologies (Appendix 2)

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

John Scott MSP welcomed members.

In his opening statement J Scott thanked all present for their continued support for the work of this Cross Party Group. This Cross Party Group has led to a greater focus being placed on town centres and new partnerships through activity such as the Small and Rural Towns Parliamentary reception and the MSP Connector Programme.

J Scott went on to say, Scotland is a nation of towns and it is important that we continue to work collaboratively to ensure progress and improvement become embedded.

It was encouraging to see this progress being acknowledged beyond our borders - Scotland was chosen to host the first ever World Towns Leadership Summit in Edinburgh in June. Two hundred delegates from North America, South Africa, Europe, Scandinavia and the British Isles took part to share and learn together – the Scottish Government has asked STP and the Summit partners to continue to develop these new relationships to see what further progress can be made around a World Towns Framework.

2. Reconstitution of the Group and Appointment of Office Bearers

It is proposed to reconstitute the Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres, the purpose of which is, to analyse policy prescriptions and develop ideas and innovations. This will help Scotland's towns and town centres through the current economic climate to emerge stronger, smarter, cleaner, healthier and greener. The group will discuss ways in which Scotland's towns can work towards sustainable economic growth through greater vibrancy and vitality.

As a former retailer, Daniel Johnson MSP welcomed the reconstitution of the Group. He invited proposals for Convener and proposed J Scott. This was unanimously agreed.

J Scott sought proposals for two deputy conveners. J Scott proposed Daniel Johnson MSP and this was seconded by Neil Bibby MSP. J Scott then proposed Gillian Martin MSP and this was seconded by D Johnson.

J Scott proposed Elaine Bone of Scotland's Towns Partnership to continue as Secretary. This was unanimously agreed.

J Scott expressed gratitude to Margaret McCulloch for her work as former Convener of the group.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Cross Party Group & Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting of the Group. Ian Fowell, Small Towns Group, adopted the Minutes and Derek Rankine, SURF, seconded the Minutes. Copies of Minutes and Annual Reports are available on the Scottish Parliament website. These are also available on the Scotland's Towns Partnership website along with any presentations provided.

4. Presentations: *Celebrating Local Leaders*

4.1 Business Improvement Districts

Presenter: Laura Molloy, Barrhead Business Improvement District

The BID has provided an enabler for leadership.

Traditionally Barrhead known as an industrial working class town with close link to Paisley. Now its link to East Renfrewshire highlights a social and physical divide.

At the start of the BID consultation process, a survey revealed that 97% of local people visited Barrhead once a week and 45% visited daily. The mainstay offer in the town comprises fast food outlets, bookmakers, small retail and a lot of public services. However it is a cultural desert. There is a sense of community so a lot to build on. With 1500 houses developing but in comparison, a 1970s town centre, this was a trigger for the BID. See slides (on Scotland's Towns website) for images of developments in Barrhead. Last year Barrhead was voted Scotland's best small town. The BID has given Barrhead an identity; a strong steering group made up of a diverse cross section of motivated 'do-ers'; a focal point for people and the local authority to speak to; great PR – replacing bad with good news stories; cultural events, Christmas street entertainment; and money - £100k from the levy and £10k from Transport Scotland. All of this has happened with the BID just at launch stage, so in 5 years' time the change will be amazing.

4.2 Development Trusts

Presenter: Maggie Broadley, Executive Director, Craft Town Scotland (CTS).

CTS is a project of West Kilbride Community Initiative Limited. It is an umbrella charity and membership organisation with a volunteer Board of Directors with devolved decision making powers.

Operating across various areas including, built environment, community development, creative/crafts, environmental, fund management, heritage, town centre regeneration and generating income.

In 1996 half of the town's properties were boarded up or closed. It was a former thriving coastal holiday town in demise which had an impact on community confidence and created a social divide.

It was decided to find a new use for empty properties tie into theming the town. The Local Authority, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire & Scottish Arts Council failed to support and WKCIL proceeded themselves. Though not well-received initially, they went ahead with the first property, creating a hobbyist crafts and community information centre. The activity grew organically, going on to establish a Christmas Craft Fair; take over running of Village Hall; purchase the Old Barony Church; and establish an environmental group.

In 2001 with help through The Moffat Charitable Trust they purchased and refurbished the first two craft studios. Having proved themselves, Scottish Enterprise contributed £115,000 (50% match funded by local

community) and from 2009 to 2017 capital and revenue funding secured, £2,212,080. In 2012 the renovated Barony Centre opened, going on to win Creative Place Award 2012.

The message is to remain strong. This nature of regeneration is wonderful and what should happen but there are challenges – proper support and capacity building is needed. “Building dreams by people who know them, love them and want them.”

The Church is now home to an in-house run café, education classes, studios. WKCIL/Craft Town properties now make up 20% of the town centre units open to the public. Their strength and determination was rewarded in the 2015 Great British High Street Awards, winning the village category - judges commented: “There are two key innovations which have transformed the village of West Kilbride: the successful development of a unique usp as a craft centre and the stunning use of an old church into a community run exhibition centre know as the Barony Centre.”

They are also running a local campaign to encourage people to spend £5 a week locally.

People are key to their survival. There are seven volunteer Board members plus a voluntary External Advisory Group. A team of 40 volunteers staff the Barony Centre and support office operations, averaging 3.5 hours per week – equivalent to £54,000 per annum ‘in-kind’ based on the living wage. The hurdle now is remaining sustainable and would urge all to consider the ‘S’ word.

5. Discussion

J Scott thanked both L Molloy and M Broadley for their inspirational presentations.

Discussions followed covering the following areas –

- N Bibby is seeking follow-up clarification on FE involvement.
- Tom Johnston representing Scottish Chambers of Commerce, asked if the supermarket acted as a catalyst for some of the regeneration. L Molloy said that although it caused concern initially, the outcome has been positive with ASDA contributing community benefit.
- J Scott asked both if supported by local Chamber of Commerce and media. Both responded positively saying local Chamber also good for networking. Media response has been positive especially with success of projects.
- M Broadley added that WKIL is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, having 140 members who attend an AGM, but with delegated authority to the Board who meet on a bi-monthly basis. Its assets are wholly owned with no loans. It is important to maintain assets. They have achieved more than they set out to do, so focus is now on working with the community and increasing footfall. M Broadley’s advice is to have a clear vision; be prepared to take on challenges and advice but ignore the ‘naysayers’. Taking on a big building is a challenge. The Development Trusts Association Scotland, CIS, Scottish Enterprise helped. T Johnston asked how long before the outcome was visible after the group set up. M Broadley said that initially they made small but noticeable improvements such as hanging baskets. Little things built goodwill while working on the craft studio project.
- Raymond Boyle asked about the position with Scottish Water reference housing infrastructure. L Molloy explained this was part of East Renfrewshire Council’s masterplan and so their area of responsibility. Aware they are looking at Dam development and Shanks site.
- J Scott asked how easy to develop a BID. L Molloy said it is a natural fit with a town, even a small business can fund low level levy. Ian Davison Porter, BIDs Scotland added BIDs is about people. Success through people who want it and have drive and ambition to bring improvement and change. BIDs are now proving successful thematically with the first food and drink BID in East

Lothian which is increasing sales in Scotland and developing export markets. Others of note in development are an island BID in Arran and Canals BID. The flexibility of the legislation in Scotland is not prescriptive.

- Derek Harper asked if much support from Community Councils. M Broadley would say there is varying interest and support. I Davison Porter added that in South Queensferry and Crieff, the Community Council drove the BID. It's important for all stakeholders to work together, including the community groups. In smaller towns, the BID is the community anchor that makes it work and brings all players together. D Harper added planning is key – important for government to help. He asked if participatory budgeting was an option for WKIL. M Broadley feels it doesn't bring enough higher value and doesn't seem straightforward. She called for senior government to spend more and significant time in communities to understand better their issues.
- I Davison Porter: in relation to the Community Empowerment Act, it is important that local community organisations involved in decision making about their area.
- Leigh Brown, Perth City and ATCM, asked if there is enough training and support for organisations to set up a BID or local organisations and projects. M Broadley said it's an important element but also, skills are brought by the volunteers. Much of the time it is about giving confidence to succeed and empowering people.
- J Scott emphasised that putting little steps in place to begin with can grow to greater things; quoting an example of a farmer market stall evolving to become a farm shop.

6. Town Centre Action Plan Update

E Bone will circulate the update from Phil Prentice of Scotland's Towns Partnership with the draft Minutes (appendix 3) and a link to today's presentations will be on the Scotland's Towns website. P Prentice will update on the progress of the Action Plan in person at the next meeting.

7. Any Other Competent Business

There was no other business to note.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Small and Rural Towns Parliamentary Reception will take place on 5th October at 6pm. The next meeting of the Cross Party Group is 7th December at 6pm.

APPENDIX 1 – RECORD OF 21ST SEPTEMBER 2016 AGENDA

Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres

12:30 – 14.00, Wednesday, 21st September 2016

Committee Room 1, Scottish Parliament

Agenda

'Celebrating Local Leaders'

- | | |
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| 12:00 | Meet in Parliament reception area |
| 12:15 | Lunch kindly supported by The Scottish Grocers Federation |
| 12:30 | Welcome and Opening Remarks – John Scott MSP, Convener |
| 12:35 | Reconstitution of the Group and Appointment of Office Bearers |
| 12:45 | Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Cross Party Group & Matters Arising – John Scott MSP, Convener |

Celebrating Local Leaders

12:55 Business Improvement Districts: Laura Molloy, Barrhead Business Improvement District

13:05 Development Trusts: Maggie Broadley, Executive Director, Craft Town Scotland

13:15 Discussion

Town Centre Action Plan Update

13:25 Scotland's Towns Partnership update, reported by John Scott MSP, Convener

13:35 Any Other Competent Business

13:45 Close of Meeting

APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR THE CPG ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON TOWNS AND TOWN CENTRES WEDNESDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER 2016, 12.30 PM – 2.00 PM COMMITTEE ROOM 1, SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

APOLOGIES AND LIST OF ATTENDEES

APOLOGIES

George Adam MSP
Jackie Baillie MSP
Gillian Martin MSP
Gordon Bell, The Retailer Group
Vivien Collie, Vivid Ideas and Solutions Ltd.
Hew Edgar, RICS
Elaine Gorman, Business in the Community Scotland
Eric Guthrie, TACTRAN
Alison Jones, BIDs Scotland
Stephen Leckie, Crieff BID
David Lonsdale, BRC
Ross Martin, Scottish Council for Development and Industry
Craig McLaren, RTPi
Maggie Mitchell, Queensferry Ambition
Alasdair Morrison, Renfrewshire Council
Colin Munro, Miconex
Carole Noble, Keep Scotland Beautiful
Nairn Pearson, West Lothian Council
Phil Prentice, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Pete Reid, Falkirk Council
Dennis Rodwell, Architect-Planner
Professor Leigh Sparks, University of Stirling
James Trolland, Scottish Democratic Alliance

ATTENDEES

Convener: John Scott MSP
Neil Bibby MSP
Angela Crawley, MP
Daniel Johnson MSP

Gordon Lindhurst MSP
Akshita Bajpai, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Elaine Bone, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Raymond Boyle, New Consensus Communications
Maggie Broadley, Craft Town Scotland
Leigh Brown, Perth and Kinross Council
Ian Davison Porter, BIDs Scotland
Joe Fagan, Scottish Parliament
Alex Fleming, Falkirk Delivers
Ian Fowell
Keith Geddes, Pagoda PR
David Grove, Fife Council
Linda Gillespie, DTAS Community Ownership Support Service
Graham Hamilton, PJ Leggate
Derek Harper, Community Network Developer (Scotland) for the Eden Project
Kate Houghton, RTPI Scotland
Steve Hunt, Scottish Futures Trust
Tom Johnston, Colliers and representing Scottish Chambers of Commerce
Sean McLaughlan
Laura McKelvie, FSB Scotland
Laura Molloy, Barrhead BID
Derek Rankine, SURF
Ewan Robertson, Scotland's Towns Partnership
David Russell
Tom Sneddon, Architect

APPENDIX 3– TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN UPDATE BY PHIL PRENTICE FOR THE CPG ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016

Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres, 21 September 2016 – Introduction and TCAP Progress Update

The Town Centre Action Plan is the cross-government response to the national review of towns, it has an emphasis on people, enterprise and place and provides us with clear recommendations and a raft of potential approaches to ensure our towns are vibrant place. It is clear that many of the solutions outlined in the Review and Action Plan were not intended for the Scottish Government to undertake directly but rather that this would stimulate an enabling framework to encourage actions from the wider public, private and community sectors.

STP was established to become the national “go to” body for towns and to build such partnerships and collaborations. There are now 150 strategic members and 7,000 regular users of the national towns web portal.

The Scottish Government has been undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the demonstration projects that were delivered as part of the Town Centre Action Plan. This evaluation will be published later in the Autumn and we will be happy to share this progress with you all.

You will all have a full copy of the Town Centre Action Plan update so I will just mention a few highlights in terms of more recent progress against the themes –

1) Town Centre First and Proactive Planning

- The Carnegie UK Trust organisation has signed up to the Principle of Town Centre First.
- The Review of the Scottish Planning System was completed earlier this year and the SG has made an initial response. This work supports the importance given to towns within the National Planning Policy Framework³ – “Within this, we recognise the collective national importance of our networks of rural towns and villages. We are committed to safeguarding our natural and cultural assets and making innovative and sustainable use of our resources.”

2) Town Centre Living

- Following on from the Place Challenge last year in Arbroath, a short life advisory group has been established by STP and Architecture and Design Scotland to develop new approaches and best practice for town centre living – the group includes Homes for Scotland, Association of Local Authority Council Housing Officers, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Heads of Planning Scotland, COSLA, Co op Housing, Scottish Property Federation, RICS, and DTAS. The group will also explore barriers and advise on how these could be addressed and will aim to report back early next year.

3) Vibrant Local Economies

- Small Business Bonus Scheme is maintained and Non Domestic Rates are currently being reviewed nationally.
- We now have 36 Business Improvement Districts and 22 under development.

4) Enterprising Communities

- Healthy High Street programme support (Boots UK, EE, Exterion Media, Greggs, Marks & Spencer, Santander and Wilko) has also been unlocked for Galashiels, Hamilton, Kilmarnock and Falkirk. To date Business Connectors have worked to create social cohesion in their towns with a total of 399 connections made between business and local communities and a leverage value of £290k.

5) Accessible Public Services

- The widening understanding of Town Centre First is leading to many more key services being brought back into town centres and also some innovative co-location and partnership working

6) Digital Towns

- Pilots have been identified in Rothesay, Falkirk, Paisley, Moffat, Perth and Shawlands. (City District)

Update from Scottish Government:

Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government & Housing

Since taking up post in May 2016, Mr Stewart has met with key town centre organisations to get an introduction to their work and to learn how it aligns with Scottish Government policies relevant to his portfolio. Mr Stewart met with Scotland's Towns Partnership on 27 July learn more about their contribution to the Scottish Government's town centre agenda.

Town Centre First Principle

The Scottish Government remains committed to the regeneration of town centres building on the actions set out within the Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP), including implementation of the Town Centre First Principle across the wider public sector. The approach taken by local authorities and wider public bodies to the Town Centre First Principle since its inception has been encouraging. Town centres are being prioritised in public investment decisions leading to positive change. The principle is helping to strengthen the economic viability of town centres by asking for further public investment in them. The relocation of public services in town centres helps to strengthen the private sector investment in those areas. Carnegie Trust UK are the most recent organisation to sign up to the principle.

Evaluation of Town Centre Action Plan Demonstration Projects

The Scottish Government is currently analysing the learning from its town centre demonstration projects, funded through Town Centre Action Plan. The demonstration phases provided funding for projects to test new opportunities for town centre regeneration. Outcomes from these projects are being analysed to learn from what has worked well and made a positive impact for towns. This learning will be used to inform the future direction for town centre activity in Scotland, building on efforts set out in TCAP. A draft report will be published in 2016. There is currently no budget for town centre demonstration projects in 2016/17.

Town Centre Living

A key theme in the TCAP and has potential to contribute to Scotland's 50,000 affordable homes target. Since TCAP's inception, Local Housing Strategy guidance has been updated to encourage local authorities to think about town centres as potential housing locations. There is also an explicit commitment in the Joint Housing Delivery Plan for Scotland to explore the concept of town centre living further. Building on the success of our two test funds, the Town Centre Housing Fund and the Town Centre Empty Homes Loan Fund, the

Scottish Government are working with Architecture and Design Scotland and Scotland's Towns Partnership to scope out how best to progress the town centre living agenda. This work is now underway.

Theme	Activity and Progress
Town Centre First Principle/ Proactive Planning	<p>The Scottish Government Cabinet and COSLA Leaders agreed the Town Centre First Principle in July 2014 and we have seen some great examples such as Falkirk, North Ayrshire, Angus, Aberdeenshire, Clackmannanshire, East Renfrewshire, East Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire.</p> <p>STP, in collaboration with SURF, has agreed to run a national Scotland's Best Town (small, medium and large categories) competition to underpin the importance of the Principle and to celebrate and to showcase and learn from the towns that embrace it.</p> <p>The Sunday Herald has agreed again to be our media partner to run a series of regular features on towns to keep the profile of improvement high and to showcase what is happening across the country.</p> <p>Planning Review On 31st May 2016, the independent panel published their report 'Empowering Planning to Deliver Great Places'. The report outlines the panel's consideration of 6 key themes and sets out 48 recommendations designed to rationalise, improve and modernise our planning system. Scottish Ministers published their response to the report of the independent planning review panel on July 11th, 2016. This work supports the importance given to towns within the National Planning Policy Framework³ – "Within this, we recognise the collective national importance of our networks of rural towns and villages. We are committed to safeguarding our natural and cultural assets and making innovative and sustainable use of our resources."</p> <p>Headline points are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the publication of the independent panel's report, "Empowering Planning to Deliver Great Places" in June, the Government's plans for taking forward a programme of planning reform have begun to emerge. • In their response to the report, published in July, the Scottish Government confirmed ten immediate that do not require legislative change that will be advanced straight away. Work is underway to establish which other recommendations of the panel will be taken forward through legislation and other longer term initiatives. • A series of workshops, themed around the six headlines of the panel's report were held by Scottish Governmnet on 12 and 13 September. The purpose of these workshops was to consider collaboratively how some of the more top line or complicated recommendations from the panel report could be implemented. • The Government has committed to publishing a Planning White Paper towards the end of 2016. • The First Minister laid the Programme for Government in the Scottish Parliament on 6 September. A Planning Bill was not included, meaning that new planning legislation is now not anticipated until the 2017-2018 Parliamentary session.

<p>Town Centre Living</p>	<p>A key theme in the TCAP and has potential to contribute to Scotland’s 50,000 affordable homes target. Since TCAP’s inception, Local Housing Strategy guidance has been updated to encourage local authorities to think about town centres as potential housing locations. There is also an explicit commitment in the Joint Housing Delivery Plan for Scotland to explore the concept of town centre living further. Building on the success of our two test funds, the Town Centre Housing Fund and the Town Centre Empty Homes Loan Fund, the Scottish Government are working with Architecture and Design Scotland and Scotland’s Towns Partnership to scope out how best to progress the town centre living agenda. This work is now underway.</p> <p>A short life advisory group has been established by STP and Architecture and Design Scotland to develop new approaches and best practice for town centre living – the group includes Homes for Scotland, ALACHO, SFHA, HoPS, COSLA, Co op Housing, Scottish Property Federation, RICS, and DTAS. The group will also explore barriers and advise on how these could be addressed and will aim to report back early next year.</p>
<p>Vibrant Local Economies</p>	<p>The Understanding Scottish Places toolkit has had more than 30,000 hits and is used by almost 6,000 on a monthly basis. (40% new users). Along with the Place Standard Toolkit and Your Town Audit, more town centres are benefitting from an evidence based approach and more collaboration.</p> <p>Small Business Bonus Scheme is maintained and the effectiveness of BRIS is continuing to be monitored / terms negotiated albeit Non Domestic Rates are currently under review; reporting to Ministers in July 2017. To contribute to the review, submit comments by 7 October 2016. See Scottish Government website for details.</p> <p>Fresh Start (50% relief for 12 months) extended from unoccupied shops and offices to include pubs, hotels and restaurants but uptake remain slow so we are looking at ways to promote wider recognition of the scheme through SLAED, FSB, Business Gateway and Scottish Chambers.</p> <p>FSB statement on business rates system: “FSB is calling for the Barclay review to radically reform the business rates system. Practically, this means a system that is simpler for businesses to understand and navigate, doesn’t discourage investment or improvement and doesn’t unfairly offer advantage one part of the economy over another. Specifically, we are calling for more frequent revaluations, delaying post-improvement revaluations for two years to ensure the system does not disincentive business investment and highlighting the importance of the Small Business Bonus Scheme. We are also arguing for the Scottish Government to bring all parts of the Scottish business rates system – from assessment, payment, to appeals – onto the mygov.scot system.”</p> <p>SURF - Alliance for Action Site-Specific Updates: <u>Govan</u>: Relevant streams of Alliance for Action activity in Govan include linking local priorities projects and resources to:</p>

- Glasgow City Council's city wide Thriving Places initiative.
- Children in Scotland's food and schools project.
- Transport Scotland's transport hub resources for more active and greener travel.
- Glasgow City Deal investment in a new Govan/Partick bridge.

East Kirkcaldy:

- Linking local priorities projects and resources to the large scale and local authority managed £1M 'Gateway to Gallatown' physical infrastructure investment.
- Supporting community aspirations for greater participation and their own appropriate and accessible community facilities.
- A highly participative Community Budgeting investment process by and for creative community projects.

Rothesay:

- The successful development of the now independent Bute Island Alliance (BIA), and its shared cross-sector vision.
- The successful delivery of an SG-funded Rothesay town centre focused Charrette participative planning process and related outcome report.
- Practical progress on various delivery partnerships, investments and practical projects.
- BIA has become the local coordination and delivery channel for £2.8M second phase Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) resources.
- The Mount Stuart Trust has aligned its £13M Manor House physical, economic and education regeneration investment with the BIA processes and priorities.

Dunoon – Following 6 months of local consultations, HIE and Argyll and Bute Council colleagues have welcomed and approved SURF's positive feasibility report on the prospects for a successful Dunoon Alliance for Action.

Scotland Can Do

Can Do Places and Spaces works primarily with groups wanting to take over redundant buildings in their towns and breathe new life into them by turning them into co-working spaces with a heart and soul and a community benefit.

To date Can Do Places has built a supportive network for these groups. We have worked with Crieff and Peebles groups on their Community Right to Buy and Asset Transfer activity and curated academic research on the size and impact Co Working spaces have on local economies. Finally we organised a policy workshop on home working to co-working on 20th September showing the size of the market and its capacity to reinvent our towns by bringing new ways of working and trading to our towns.

Business Improvement Districts

As of September 2016, there are 36 operational BIDs, with 22 in development. BIDs Scotland is leading the development of the BIDs model across the UK. In 2014 the very first Tourism and Visitor BID this side of the Atlantic became operational, Visit Inverness and Loch Ness, whilst in June 2016 an historic and world's first Food and Drink BID, the East Lothian Food and Drink BID, was approved by ballot. The four Canal and the Isle of Arran BIDs, currently in development, have the potential to further develop the model and its contribution to inclusive economic growth.

	<p>There are now 10,428 businesses involved in operational BIDs across Scotland. The five year terms of all of the current operational BIDs will produce a private sector investment of £27 million, with an additional leverage of almost £11 million from raised income and grant funding. In September 2016, twenty BIDs are investing over £274K in Smart Mobility. Strong Economy Travel promoting European Mobility Week, supported by grant funding of just over £195K from Transport Scotland.</p> <p>As an example of BID innovation, Discover Dunblane is working with its local schools and community on their Education for Life and Work programme to promote employability; Explore Largs levered in £30,000 of investment by Visit Scotland Growth Fund to produce events and marketing for the town – their most recent Food Fest and Largs Live delivering a net economic impact of £331,000 to Largs and district.</p>
<p>Enterprising Communities</p>	<p>Development Trust Association of Scotland (DTAS) : Community Led Town Centres projects - The light touch approach taken by the grant scheme was appreciated by busy community organisations, heavily dependent on voluntary effort.</p> <p>The visioning and actioning exercises sponsored provided excellent value for money and therefore need to be considered and evaluated alongside charrettes and other Scottish Government-funded planning processes.</p> <p>There is not a one-size-fits-all model – communities need to be encouraged and resourced to develop their own plan of action.</p> <p>Timescales need to be kept as flexible as possible, particularly when the grant is to be used to attract match-funding from other sources.</p> <p>While in some cases the (relatively) small grant was used to lever in funding from other sources, this invariably creates tensions in terms of funding periods and reporting requirements.</p> <p>Consultants and other professionals need to learn how to work better - and listen to their community clients. Equally, communities need to learn how to be informed and proactive clients.</p> <p>This demonstration project highlighted the potential role(s) which communities can play in town centre regeneration and the implementation of the Town Centre Action Plan. The experience of the project confirmed the interest of communities in taking on empty or key properties (as per TCAP) but highlighted many other ways in which community anchors can contribute to, and support, town centre regeneration – delivering community engagement, developing new businesses and enterprises, enhancing the cultural and civic use of town centres, finding creative solutions to local problems, providing alternative forms of stewardship, utilising voluntary effort and accessing other forms of funding and finance, etc, etc.</p> <p>Business in the Community Scotland now has five Business Connectors seconded full time from industry (Scottish Gas, Bank of Scotland, MOD, DWP, HMRC) and leveraging business support in the towns of Rutherglen/Blantyre,</p>

Rutherglen/Cambuslang, Scottish Borders, Falkirk and Kilmarnock/Cumnock. In addition to working in the inclusive towns space (schools, social enterprises, third sector) Business Connectors are linked into local BIDs, town teams and local authorities e.g Energise Galashiels, Falkirk Delivers supporting town agendas. Examples of their work include support to the 'Creative Coathanger' cultural event planned for Galashiels in September, youth engagement in town centre design, Hamilton/Stone Opera architects and preparatory work on a community rail partnership (Rail 74) supported by Abellio supporting connectivity and linking communities and business along the Rutherglen to Hamilton rail corridor. This goes before the Minister for Transport for sign off September 16th.

The Healthy High Street programme support has also been unlocked for Galashiels, Hamilton, Kilmarnock and Falkirk. To date Business Connectors have worked to create social cohesion in their towns with a total of 399 connections made between business and local communities and a leverage value of £290k.

In 2016, the **Carnegie UK Trust** renewed its long-term commitment to supporting **'Flourishing Towns' in Scotland**. Combined policy and practice work on towns innovation, public wellbeing, and use of evidence and data is one of the Trust's three strategic themes for the next five years.

In October, Carnegie UK will launch three important pieces of work which we hope colleagues within the Cross Party Group will find useful.

-We will launch, in partnership with SCDI, a multi-year practical programme to help local town partnerships share innovation and creative enterprise and social ideas with neighbour communities. 10 communities from Scotland, the North East of England and Northern Ireland will be supported to build strong bilateral ties with partners towns.

-We will publish 'Turnaround Towns', findings from a research project exploring successful socioeconomic transitions made by comparative towns in North America, Australasia and Europe. This work uncovers new common themes in local leadership and partnership, strategic planning and economic experimentation which colleagues will find interesting.

-We will also publish our online portal and comprehensive 'How To' guide capturing three years of our TestTown programme, the UK's biggest incubation initiative connecting young entrepreneurs with high street business opportunity. We will make all our learning and assets available to every town through this publication, and support more local communities wanting to trial their own TestTown event or project.

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act

Scottish Government: "The Community Empowerment Act will help to empower community bodies through the ownership of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in the decisions that matter to them. It will also improve outcomes for communities by improving the process of community

	<p>planning, ensuring that local service providers work together even more closely with communities to meet the needs of the people who use them.</p> <p>The Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 17 June 2015 and received Royal Assent, becoming an Act, on 24 July.</p> <p>The Act does a number of things including: extending the community right to buy, making it simpler for communities to take over public sector land and buildings, and strengthening the statutory base for community planning. Crucially it can help empower community bodies through the ownership of land and buildings and strengthening their voices in the decisions and services that matter to them.”</p>
<p>Accessible Public Services</p>	<p>Community Empowerment Bill re CPP service provision.</p> <p>The Public Sector Finance Manual was revised late 2014 to include considerations around the town centre first planning principle.</p> <p>NHS Scottish Property Transaction Handbook A revision to the overview section of the handbook will be published in early 2015. This links to the update already published in the Scottish Public Finance Manual.</p> <p>NPF3 underlines significance of towns and STP is leading partnership work with small and rural towns network to bring them under STP umbrella and to secure resource for some pilot projects.</p>
<p>Digital Towns</p>	<p>STP, in partnership with the Scottish Futures Trust, is currently developing a Digital Towns Strategy – this will be a toolkit which shows technology and technical deployment, skills provision, case studies and the development of an ongoing trusted learning hub. It will cover everything from social media approach through to superfast broadband and smart towns, all driven by customer experience and the wider digital strategies being deployed regionally and nationally – e.g. links to Digital Boost and Visit Scotland Platform as part of the World Class 2020 vision.</p> <p>Pilots have been identified in Rothesay, Falkirk, Paisley, Moffat, Perth and Shawlands. (City District)</p> <p>Discussions on the Scottish Government’s Public Wireless Programme and its fit with town centres are on-going.</p>