



The topic of Town Centre Urban Design was chosen to attract a variety of participants involved in the delivery of the Town Centre First Principle as promoted by the government and signed up to by COSLA. It was clear from participant feedback at previous LAUDF events that if town centres were to be seen as the key location for development and investment then there was a need to understand and learn from current projects within town centres.

The government has produced a range of policies, funding programmes and toolkits focussed on the regeneration and development of town centres as the heart of the community and it was clear that members were seeking practical guidance as to how to deliver the ambition for change so a World cafe approach was selected as an ideal way to cover a wide range of projects which seek to regenerate town centres.

The intention of the session was to provide the opportunity for individuals to hear about a wide range of projects and select the topics most relevant to their own learning and development. Although the sessions are short, the aim of the World Cafe approach is to provide a snapshot of a particular topic that encourages discussion and inspires each individuals personal learning experience which they can then choose to pursue further.

The level of noise and discussion within the room was testament to the benefit of the World Cafe approach and the learning that was captured is articulated through the following resource notes.

Craig McIntyre, Chair

TOWN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN RESOURCE SHEETS

LAUDF 05 | 13 MAY 2015

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

RESOURCE SHEET 01 | Town Centre Urban Design : Your Challenges

From LAUDF 05 Meeting on 13 May 2015



PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES

This initial workshop session, facilitated by forum members, encouraged exchange of knowledge on how Local Authorities are responding to the town centre first principle and other recent Scottish Government guidance relating to town centres. Debate included the challenges for good urban design in town centres. Participants reflected on how their organisations were responding to the increased policy focus on town centre including local approaches to working with the Town Centre First Principle and Town Centre Action Plans. Participants shared their experiences of what had been working well and what could be working better in their places. Participants were encouraged to note key discussion points onto paper covered tables. The following points were recorded:

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Need to de-clutter the streetscape in town centres to aid movement and activity.
- Promote pragmatic parking arrangements in town centres
- Recognise your market catchment and reconfigure the retail mix accordingly
- Need for Scot Govt research on success of BIDS in Scotland.
- Importance of town branding, public events, pop up shops, town centre manager
- 'Shutter Up' project, keeps roller shutters up at night to improve night time economy and look of the town centre
- 'Shop Doctor' project, (Aberdeen Retail Consultant) a one to one critical review of the operation and look of the shops in a town centre, e.g. the hotel inspector model
- Townscape character, heritage and open space should be an important factor in a Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP).
- Important role for Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) in supporting

the town centre first principle, e.g. Wishaw Health Centre NHS Hub originally promoted by NHS and SFT on out of town site however NLC persuaded them to locate within town centre through giving up North Lanarkshire Council library site.

- Importance of public sector investment decisions in terms of locating offices/staff in town centre locations as opposed to cheaper office parks on edge of town (East Renfrewshire)
- A key consideration for town centre strategies/masterplans, but often overlooked, is the importance of wider connections (walking/cycling) to surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Some Local Authorities (LA's) contain very different types of areas with different cultures therefore be wary of promoting a one size fits all approach to town centres.
- City of Edinburgh Council recent restructure seems to work quite well to allow cross working within the organisation focussed on town centre issues.
- Roads/Transport can take the lead in terms of Street Design guidance e.g. City of Edinburgh Council
- Sustrans normally work with Transport Service but also need to work with other services to get the bigger picture
- DM sits at the centre, connects transport, green networks, schools etc. but it is only involved when the application comes in, need for improved communication better use of pre app process.
- Empty homes within town centres are a major issue e.g. Dumbarton has 30% vacant units in the town centre
- Traders/people in other towns need to talk to each other, is there a forum for this to take place?
- How do LA's tackle the issue of building maintenance of private properties in town centres? Challenges of motivating property owners to engage in positive change

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

RESOURCE SHEET 01 | Town Centre Urban Design : Your Challenges

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- What is the role of SDP's and LDP's in identifying the USP of individual town centres?
- How do you deal with competition between towns in the same LA?
- There is still not a common understanding or acceptance of what 'Town Centres First' means for different perspectives/planners/professional.
- Why are some towns buoyant resilient and some not?
- Need to identify potential for exploiting a niche market but everyone can't be a niche town
- Let the town centre play to its own strengths
- Build on each town's character rather than impose a fixed vision/model for change.
- Importance of joint working and open dialogue with the community.
- Attitude of roads engineers to ambition to de-clutter the streetscape through removal of pedestrian barriers, transformation of public realm, need for sensitive internal discussions. The desire to create people friendly high streets and the conflicts with a roads / traffic engineering approaches;
- TCAP's should aim to bring together different agencies/ owners/public together towards a shared vision for the town centre.
- How can the LA influence rateable value in town centres?
- TCAP's should focus on infrastructure and public realm investment as catalyst for change
- Secure community engagement at an early stage in the project in an effort to manage public expectations and aspiration (role for design charrettes?)
- Need to recognise the important role walking and cycling has in revitalising town centres. Need to improve way finding through consistent signage etc.
- The challenge is how to increase footfall within the town centre
- LA should lead by example by relocating staff into town centre locations to increase footfall and spending power
- Every street is a route and not one specific route
- How to promote a night time economy and avoid town centres closing at 6pm when the shops shut....later opening hours, increase in leisure uses.
- Challenges with delivering the 'Town Centres First Principle' where different interests compete
- Issues of levering in funding highlighted - particularly for town centres without conservation status.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Town Centre First Principle

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/TheTownCentreFirstPrinciple>

Town Centre Action Plans

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/towncentreactionplan>

Town Centre Masterplan Toolkit

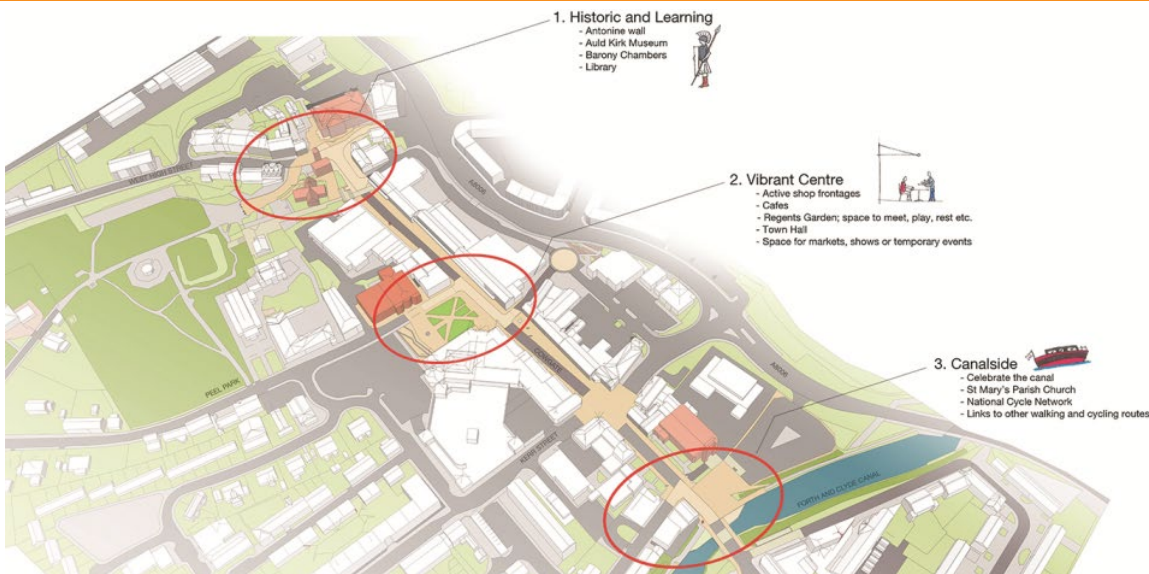
http://www.scotlandstowns.org/town_centre_toolkit

Notes compiled by Craig McIntyre, North Lanarkshire Council. Produced by A+DS on behalf of LAUDF steering group. For more information about getting involved with the Local Authority Urban Design Forum, please contact kate.givan@ads.org.uk

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

RESOURCE SHEET 02 | Proactive planning for street design

From LAUDF 05 Meeting on 13 May 2015



KIRKINTILLOCH MASTERPLAN

Proactive planning for street design

Jennifer Horn, East Dunbartonshire Council and Orla Rooney, Sustrans led a world cafe session on their experiences of implementing the Kirkintilloch Town Centre Masterplan.

Kirkintilloch is East Dunbartonshire Council's main town centre. It was considered to be underperforming, with high vacancy of retail units, vacant town hall heritage asset since 2004. It also had major cultural assets in the form of the Forth and Clyde Canal, Antonine Wall, heritage buildings etc, which offered a good basis for moving forward with a masterplan aimed at activating the town centre and encouraging more people to visit by giving people priority over cars. The Masterplan was fully approved by EDC council in April 2015

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The multi disciplinary approach adopted by EDC was key to the success of the masterplan, mindful of ongoing maintenance costs and functional considerations.
- Importance of learning from others and engaging with public through study trips to as built projects such as Poynton in Cheshire.
- The importance of political buy in and recognition that the masterplan can only be delivered over a phased programme which will take a long time, first phase is the Cowgate in next 18 months.
- The masterplan promotes continuous movement through a shared space as opposed to shared surface approach, this gives more time for people to react as traffic speeds are much slower.
- 20mph speeds achieved via engineering e.g. raised tables, narrowing of carriageway, speed bumps and gateway features

- Q -Will it put drivers off/push them from town centre to the detriment of traders etc
- No given existing bypass all drivers are there for a reason not as a through route, it should only slow drivers down not scare them away.
- Once sceptical transport engineers won over by trip to as built exemplar projects and engagement with colleagues in other LA's.
- All of the transportation design and public realm improvements were designed in house, benefit of having skills and keeping it in house is that the skills learned can be applied to other TC's.
- EDC structure is that planning and transport contained in same service so single boss and clear management support for the vision made things happen.
- Negative feedback from visually impaired groups e.g. importance of driver pedestrian eye contact to inform when someone is crossing not available to visually impaired, £30k for 1 month trial in August 2014.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

More info on Kirkintilloch Masterplan available here...

http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/content/business_and_trade/shopping_and_markets/town_centres/kirkintilloch_town_centre/kirkintilloch_masterplan_consultation.aspx

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/blog/kirkintilloch-masterplan-proposals>

Notes by Craig McIntyre North Lanarkshire Council and Jennifer Horn, East Dunbartonshire Council. Produced by A+DS on behalf of LAUDF steering group.

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

RESOURCE SHEET 03 | Proactive planning for public spaces

From LAUDF 05 Meeting on 13 May 2015



STALLED SPACES

Proactive planning for public places

Lorna Pearce, Argyll and Bute Council and Emma Halliday A+DS led a world cafe session on the stalled spaces initiative. Lorna shared Argyll and Bute's experiences of engaging communities in the reuse of vacant or derelict town centre sites.

Stalled Spaces Scotland is a national programme commissioned by the Scottish Government and delivered by Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS) to facilitate the temporary use of under-used green spaces, stalled development sites or vacant and derelict land in town centres throughout Scotland.

Through this programme A+DS is supporting local authorities to develop their own initiatives, using the knowledge and learning from the award winning Stalled Spaces initiative developed by Glasgow City Council. This supports community groups to create temporary activity on under used open spaces in their town centres. Local authorities throughout Scotland had the opportunity to bid for a small fund to help kick start the project and will also have access to a package of seminars and workshops to support them and the communities in their area to realise their plans. The 6 local authorities selected to trial the initiative are Angus, Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Fife, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire councils.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- What are the implications for the stalled spaces project from the Community Empowerment Bill?
- How are spaces identified and more importantly prioritised by the LA if the available funding is oversubscribed, need for transparency in decision making, how do you choose winners and losers? This is a key issue for any A+DS review of the stalled spaces project.
- How do you envisage the public's attitude to the

temporary nature of the spaces, e.g. call for them to be made permanent if successful against the wishes of the landowner/terms of the legal agreement?

- Certain LA's are suspicious of temporary uses of vacant and derelict land as no matter how temporary the planned project is if the public see it as a success and claim ownership of it will be politically difficult to stop the temporary use.
- The key role for the council in enabling change in these stalled spaces is they can bring a mix of funding and technical skills on how to activate the space once the public has identified a proposed use.
- What about poor quality, under used permanent spaces?
- Re stalled spaces in town centres the town centre first principle should encourage LA's to review their asset management and investment decisions to support town centres.
- How do you manage competition between town centres in a LA?
- How should/do local economies in town centres work together rather than compete?

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

More information on A+DS' stalled spaces programme:

<http://www.ads.org.uk/access/features/stalled-spaces-scotland>

Argyll and Bute Stalled Spaces info:

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/stalled-spaces-scotland>

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Local Authority Urban Design Forum

RESOURCE SHEET 04 | Town Centre Living

From LAUDF 05 Meeting on 13 May 2015



GLENGATE HALL, KIRRIEMUIR

Town Centre Living

Kirsty Macari of Angus Council led a world cafe session on the Glengate Hall project. A historic former church and town hall in the town of Kirriemuir became vacant in 2005 and soon appeared on the Buildings at Risk Register. Through an inventive collaborative process involving Angus Council, P.J Redford Homes and Historic Scotland, the building was successfully refurbished into nine attractive and affordable housing units, significantly enhancing the town centre's identity and vitality. The project was awarded a 2015 SURF award in the 'Town Centre Regeneration' category.

- Importance of joined up thinking in the delivery of a project.
- CARS funded 85% of extent of works as building was a heritage asset.
- Owner application for Empty Home Loan Fund (EHLF) in parallel with CARS with total project cost of circa £650k, 9 x 1+2 bed flats, one year to spend funding for EHLF
- This Loan/Grant combination key to delivery of project
- Glengate Hall project was the catalyst for the rest of the grant system
- Opportunity to open up community dialogue. Community visits, open day etc. Public engagement events stimulated memories/conversation about the town
- Learned lesson to speak to housing colleagues, HS, private owner, in order to bring funding streams together.
- Local owner accepted longer term investment into town centre through agreement to a fixed rent for ten years.
- Customer first principle, importance of asking customers first how to improve town centre.
- Has the project resulted in increased footfall in town centre?

- Was the loss of the hall an issue re community facilities?
- HNDA aware?
- Making connections with other people internal and external to the organisation
- Need to recognise and balance corporate need versus local need
- Do Angus operate generic policies for all towns
- Recognise that there are different opinions and understanding as to what the town centre is and should be.
- Try to move away from a reactive to a proactive approach to development
- Let each part of the town centre play to its strengths
- Recognise the need to look cross boundary beyond the town centre to the adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Who takes the lead on the project? The barriers between disciplines within the organisation, the silo syndrome
- When you engage it is important to get everyone to see and share the vision, dare to be bold on the blank sheet of paper.
- Explore the market niches and rebrand the town accordingly
- Recognise that there is activity that is not just based on retail/consumption/tourism

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Kirriemuir CARS scheme

<http://www.angus.gov.uk/kirriemuircars/>

SURF awards

<http://www.scotregen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2014-SURF-Awards-Publication.pdf>

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Local Authority Urban Design Forum

RESOURCE SHEET 05 | Dealing with vacancy

From LAUDF 05 Meeting on 13 May 2015



PAISLEY HERITAGE, REGENERATION & ASSET STRATEGY

Dealing with vacancy

Elaine Troup introduced Renfrewshire Council's ambitious plans to use Paisley's internationally-significant cultural and heritage assets to turn the town into a key tourist destination. Proposals contained within the Paisley Town Centre Heritage Asset Strategy, use the town's outstanding cultural, architectural and industrial heritage as the basis for a wide-ranging programme of regeneration to benefit the wider area. Plans include the refurbishment of Paisley Museum to become a national museum of textile and costume. Infrastructure projects would take place alongside an expansion of the area's existing cultural and events programme.

- Seeking link with GSA re textile students and graduates being encouraged to occupy a town centre building, part workshop part incubation unit, as part of Paisley establishing itself as Scotland's hub for textile design to capitalise of the international profile of Paisley pattern.
- Need for LA to focus its services and investment decisions on the town centre
- HS changed building repair grant process re conservation areas in deprived areas.
- Benefit of conservation area status re access to grant funding from HS etc.
- Policy versus jobs is a key issue in relation to promoting the town centre first principle e.g. Braehead!
- LA at forefront of shifting focus of town centre away from retail to a cultural and tourism focus in response to Braehead, promote cultural and heritage assets as a driver to increase footfall in the town centre. As retail demand declines and is displaced to Braehead/Silverburn centres.

- Importance of political support for vision e.g. bid for UK city of Culture 2017.
- Importance of engagement with key players such as the University to try and get them to focus investment and operational decisions on activating what exists rather than replicating what exists e.g. no cafe on campus get students to use the high street facilities.
- Assets are not just physical tangible but also social and community e.g. how the town is perceived/valued by its users.
- How to promote/control/improve the evening economy through town centre management and events.
- Need to be bold when considering the future direction or branding of the town centre, local/national/international ambition.
- LA needs to consider its own assets and help to facilitate the reuse of private assets e.g. the developer Days Project where the LA in partnership with the NHS tried to drum up interest in securing a future for redundant NHS buildings in the town centre
- LA needs to assume wider responsibilities as the custodian of the town.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Details of Paisley's Heritage and Asset Strategy

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/webcontent/home/services/planning+and+building+standards/regeneration+projects/pt+-paisleyheritageassetstrategy>

Executive summary

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/bbf62359-ebbb-4397-9f48-2794746ecd9e/pt-PaisleyUntoldStoryExecSummary.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

RESOURCE SHEET 06 | Measuring the quality of outcomes: Edinburgh's Quality Indicators Project

From LAUDF 05 Meeting on 13 May 2015



DALMARNOCK

Design Led Regeneration

Craig Vesey of Clyde Gateway URC presented his experiences of delivering design led regeneration in Dalmarnock.

- There must be clarity and continuity between the vision/framework/design codes for development of specific sites, all must carry through the quality ambitions of the original vision.
- Importance of cross disciplinary working and buy in through-out LA to realise projects.
- Secure community engagement at an early stage in an effort to manage expectations and aspiration (role for design charrettes?)
- Reinforce sense of place through investment in transport nodes and heritage assets via the promotion of catalyst developments e.g. The Olympia.
- Built heritage trust model as a way to maximise value from old buildings
- Promote catalyst developments; the Olympia, Red Tree business centre etc. to demonstrate to the market impact of investment in increase in footfall, activity etc, lead by example in terms of investment to secure further private sector investment.
- You must link physical/economic/cultural/social investment and seek to demonstrate how all are interrelated.
- Focus on action and delivery of key developments early in the process.
- Importance of land ownership to controlling the delivery of the vision e.g. Link investment on Dalmarnock power station site made possible because Clyde Gateway acquired/decontaminated and delivered key drainage infrastructure on the site.

- Need for innovative approaches to funding and joint ventures in order to achieve key developments.
- The framework acknowledged that a 20 year strategy can't be prescriptive but has to be flexible and fluid.
- Clyde Gateway 'Character and Values' document used simple language to promote a vision for change in order to secure public ownership and private investment.
- Importance of LA asset and investment strategy to success of Clyde Gateway project.
- Importance of the Commonwealth Games in terms of raising the profile of the area, infrastructure improvements, new facilities, athletes village etc. A unique once in a generation uplift which had to be capitalised on as much as possible.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

More information on Clyde Gateway's approach:

<http://www.clydegateway.com/>

<http://www.clydegateway.com/downloads/Clyde%20Gateway%20Character%20Values.pdf>

Reports from Design Skills Symposium 2014, which looked at Learning from the East End of Glasgow's preparations for the Commonwealth Games

<http://www.ads.org.uk/features/design-skills-symposium-2014-reports-published>

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