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A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres

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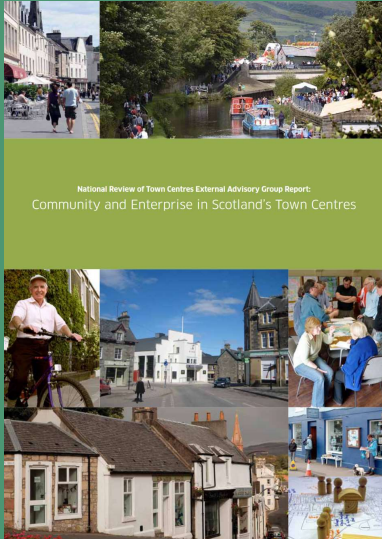


Town Centre Action Plan Review

- Review progress and scope
- Revised vision for towns
- Meets climate change ambitions
- Develops healthier, vibrant, and greener town centres

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National Review of Town Centres External Advisory Group Report:
Community and Enterprise in Scotland's Town Centres

The Last Decade

- National Review of Town Centres
- Town Centre Action Plan
- Town Centre First
- Place Principle
- Place Based Investment Programme



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Enhanced Ambitions

- Community Empowerment
- Climate Emergency
- National Outcomes
- UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Inequalities and Social Renewal



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Source: CACI

Covid-19

- Exacerbated existing inequalities
- Emphasised value of local, neighbourhood and community
- Exposed supply chains and lack of local resilience
- Produced new, simpler forms of working together

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The Vision

“Towns and town centres are for the wellbeing of people, planet and the economy. Towns are for everyone and everyone has a role to play in making our towns and town centres successful”

Recommendations

- Strengthen the existing national policy context
- Stop supporting activities which cause harm to our town centres
- Extend existing activities and approaches to accelerate town centre renewal

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Recommendation 1

Strengthen the formal positioning of towns and town centres in National Planning including requirements to produce town and town centre plans, coproduced with communities and enhance data collection and use at the town and town centre level

- a) Towns and town centres to be included and prioritised in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- b) Town Centre Plans need to be developed and implemented with the local community and with a focus and commitment on the wellbeing of people, the planet and the economy
- c) Develop a revised and enhanced focus on measurement and data for towns and town centres

Recommendation 2

Scottish Government should review the current tax, funding and development systems to ensure that wellbeing, economy and climate outcomes, fairness and equality are at their heart. Potential suggestions for actions include

- a) Amendments to Non Domestic Rates (NDR)
- b) Amendments to VAT
- c) Introduce a digital tax
- d) Introduce an Out-of-Town Car Parking Space Levy
- e) Introduce a Moratorium on Out-Of-Town Development

Recommendation 3

Expanded and Aligned Funding of Demonstration Projects in Towns and Town Centres.

We have an overall request that the Scottish Government continues to seek to expand and ensure further alignment of the funding available. Funding for town centre activities has to be substantial, multi-year and cover revenue and capital spend.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that projects should be focused around themes of

- a) Town Centre Living Expansion – housing sector incentivisation in town centres
- b) Digital Skills and Use in Towns – skills development for businesses and enterprises and extended uses of various technologies to understand and change behaviours in town centres
- c) Enterprising Communities – Strategic Acquisition Fund to alter ownership, development and use patterns in town centres to encourage local small business, community enterprises and entrepreneurship around local and circular economies
- d) Climate Change Response – building on existing programmes in Climate Action Towns, micro-generation, retrofitting of town centres buildings and the alteration of space in town centres for active travel, pedestrian movement, green space and social settings, with a view to enhancing the resilience of town centres against climate change.



The current narrative is too often about the decline or death of the town centre. Decline is overstated and it is not inevitable.

Towns can and should be the heart of the community, delivering for people, planet and the economy.

We need to make this happen. We believe our recommendations, if implemented, can help do this.

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

More information on the Review and its Report (including download) can be found at futuretowns.scot

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