

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2017, 12.30PM – 2.00 PM

COMMITTEE ROOM 1(CHANGED FROM CR2), THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

kindly supported by CGI UK

Attendees and Apologies (Appendix 2)

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

John Scott welcomed all to the meeting including colleagues, Deputy Convener, Gillian Martin MSP along with Peter Chapman MSP and Graeme Simpson MSP.

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

The Minutes were proposed by Gillian Martin MSP. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

3. Digital Towns

A copy of any presentations received is available on the Scotland's Towns Partnership website or from the Secretary. The following summarises main points only.

3.1 Digital Towns Strategy – Phil Prentice, Chief Officer

Digital is important in terms of the town centre agenda and is a key strand of the Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP), the overarching policy relating to towns. The digital public policy team got together with STP to build digital guidance for towns, which launched today. It includes small scale to large infrastructure case studies, the technology available and skills information. See Scotland's Towns Partnership web for information. People need to be more ambitious around digital, deploy more budget, be more strategic. This is a live platform and as and when there is more best practice/deployment to report on, it will be added to what will be a national resource – please use it. Now is the time to embrace digital technologies to improve our towns centres.

3.2 Maggie Morrison, Vice President Public Sector, CGI Scotland

There will be 70% use of digital by 2050. Towns and cities face social economic and environmental challenges. CGI believes in future town and city design, key is building with and around citizens so people feel part of the approach, creating openness and collaboration, sharing and engaging communities, promoting open local data. In Edinburgh, CGI is working with partners CityFibre and Commsworld to improve schools estate; some now have 150 times faster access, which transforms their way of learning. CCTV estate can be a platform for the 'internet of things' e.g. a tourism guide, publishing info like Strava, what bus routes people use – and using this information for local government planning. In Helsinki much of the data has been used to optimise transport routes and create a neutral carbon footprint. The use of technology can also be used to help with challenges of health and social care budgets.

3.3 What Does Digital Mean for Towns? - David Wallace, Regional Director, Major and Public Sector, BT

Key is collaboration and sharing of ideas; creating the right framework – WiFi on the High Street is just a given now especially for the young, bringing services together. In Glasgow lamp-posts are energy efficient, can monitor safety, transport, detect air pollution, and provide WiFi. Felixstowe haulage logistics is informed through real time marrying up of traffic information, weather reporting and shipping location.

Towns face a lot of challenges such as scale and budget. BT is looking to provide funding to support a collective of like-minded towns. Scotland's Towns Partnership will launch more details on this.

3.4 Digital Renfrewshire - Diane Webb, Project Manager, Digital Assistance, Renfrewshire Council

The #DigiRen project stemmed from an awareness that the area had high digital exclusion - viewed as socially exclusive. People who benefit most are those who face social inequality already – disabled, long term health conditions, older people, long term poverty-affected. Getting it right for the people facing the long term barriers first, will make a difference for everyone. The council set up a £7.5m project aimed at tackling poverty, an aspect of which was digital strategy development. This changed to digital *participation* - more empowering and sustainable. An overarching digital strategy tackling digital exclusion and developing local relationships, encouraging buy in, to create a movement and call to action. It is important to ensure everyone has the opportunity to reach digital potential to access health, social and cultural benefits. It could be simply to contact family and friends but even to set up a business. A targeted approach meant that getting it right for those excluded first, would ensure it was right for everyone. A map was created highlighting the most-excluded areas.

They signed up to the SCVO digital participation Charter; created two digital posts – recruiting digital volunteers to coordinate and set up coding clubs, and a digital participation officer based in the community to set up digital skills classes for older people and people with disability.

There is now public WiFi for Paisley, Johnstone and Renfrew in libraries, community centres and public areas. A key barrier had been public access to internet. People now feel they are being listened to. The Council wants to create reasons for people to stay in towns – making towns accessible, positive seamless experience from outside to inside space. They also partnered with UWS and the college to enable 'eduroam' across campuses.

The WiFi platform provides better data on movement, helping to improve and monitor impact of some initiatives; pushes info out so people know what's happening in the area and for Paisley 2021. They are working to further improve with the help of local supplier Boston Networks. Scottish Futures Trust helped fund some of the installation.

The project has created an opportunity for community benefits and local employment.

3.5 Digital Support for Renewable Towns - Brian Walker, Principal, Energy Edge Consulting

Energy Edge is an energy consulting firm, acting as a trusted adviser to end users. Services focus on:

- On and offsite generation support
- Energy tendering
- Demand response programs
- Sustainable energy initiatives.

Yesterday's power grid -

- Traditionally a "one-way" interaction between consumer and utility
- Consumers use power when they need it

- Utilities generate and deliver power to meet peak demand
- Building generation is the primary method of meeting new demand.

Tomorrow's smart grid would be described as -

- Tomorrow's smart grids will have a two way flow of information
- Consumers will receive price signals and make informed decisions on consumption
- Leverage technologies to change how & when energy is consumed
- Utilities can better integrate new generation technologies like wind and solar
- Overall a better link between consumer and provider

Towns, cities and large universities have a large footprint. Look at ways to optimise costs and usage. Consider infrastructure developments and use energy in way never used before.

3.6 Discussion

John Scott (JS) for Diane Webb (DW): Regarding rollout and identifying digital divide, are other local authorities doing this, and tackling it? DW is aware of Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire. The approach that Renfrew is taking is different, as they are working across public, private and third sector, as well as the university - so all had a say in what it could look like.

John Lee (JL) for DW: To what extent does the strategy depend on private sector providers like BT? DW would like to build further private sector links – at the moment working through Renfrewshire Chamber. David Wallace of BT added that they are working with a range of local authorities just now and collaborating through Scotland's Towns Partnership.

JS for Brian Walker (BW): With a move to electronic cars, is power storage scheme for cars feasible. BW: The goal is large scale battery deployment. It may be possible to discharge back to the grid in a small way to homes for example. Solar charging stations in car parks will become more common-place, with excess energy being sold back to grid.

In response to Langbank Community Council, DW said BT is addressing issues around provision of constant regular speed of broadband. DW offered to speak to the community council personally.

Ian Todd asked about CSR assets. DW said this is something they are looking into to make the business case for investment of time through CSR. BT also have a number of initiatives. For example, e.g. tech-savvy children training teachers who weren't.

David Kirk (DK) – although it is possible to work from home, many travel to Edinburgh. Is there a mismatch? Phil Prentice (PP) suggests we could be using to our advantage; reducing our carbon footprint; giving people more time at home especially for towns like Linlithgow, Kirkcaldy, Falkirk. Towns will then benefit from people working in their home or town hubs. Companies like CGI and BT are allowing employees to do that. It is down to public sector in particular to start to embrace it. Maggie Morrison (MM) agreed but stressed that it is not something tech companies can solve. The technology has been there for more than a decade. It is a cultural change that is required.

JS emphasised that Scottish Parliament has huge ambition to really increase broadband speed and access, and make us internationally competitive. DW confirmed that Openreach Chief Executive has spoken about major capital investment for Scotland in 2018. More info to come.

4. Town Centre Action Plan Update – Phil Prentice, Chief Officer, Scotland's Towns Partnership

Key date for diary – Scotland's Towns Conference – 21 November, Paisley Town Hall.

During summer recess, on behalf of the Cross Party Group, STP runs the MSP Connectors programme, brokering MSP visits across Scotland's towns.

All presentations and meeting papers will be shared online and the digital guidance was launched today and is online. We now need to be ambitious, collaborative, strategic. Work collaboratively to deliver better places and experiences. Festival of Ideas is a great example of what towns should be doing.

5. Any Other Competent Business

JS thanked all speakers for their interesting contributions and CGI for supporting refreshments.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in Committee Room 1 on, Wednesday, 7th June from 1830 - 2000. The theme to be discussed is Inclusive Towns.

APPENDIX 1 – RECORD OF 8 MARCH 2017 AGENDA

Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres

12:30 – 14:00, Wednesday, 8th March 2017

Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament

AGENDA

Digital Towns

Refreshments kindly supported by CGI Scotland

- 12:15 Meet in Parliament reception area
- 12:30 Refreshments
- 12:40 Welcome and Opening Remarks – John Scott MSP, Convener
- 12:45 Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Cross Party Group & Matters Arising – John Scott MSP, Convener

Digital Towns

- 12:50 *Digital Towns Strategy for Scotland*: Phil Prentice, Chief Officer, Scotland's Towns Partnership
- 13:00 Maggie Morrison, Vice President Public Sector, CGI Scotland
- 13:10 *What Does Digital Mean for Towns?* - David Wallace, Regional Director – Major and Public Sector, BT

- 13:20 *Digital Renfrewshire* - Diane Webb, Project Manager, Digital Assistance, Renfrewshire Council
- 13:30 *Digital Support for Renewable Towns* - Brian Walker, Principal, Energy Edge Consulting, LLC
- 13:35 Discussion
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- 13:50 Any Other Competent Business
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- 14:00 Close of Meeting

Date of Next Meeting – 7 June 2017 (18:00 – 20:00, CR5) – ‘Inclusive Towns’

APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR THE CPG ON 8 MARCH 2017

Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres Attendance 8 March 2017, 12:30 – 14:00, Committee Room 2

Attendees

Jamie Baker, East Lothian Council
Simon Baldwin, Destination 66
Neil Barrington, Langbank Community Council
Elaine Bone, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Ray Boyle, New Consensus
Leigh Brown, ATCM/Perth and Kinross Council
John Corbett, SAOL
Karen Davidson, Kingsgate Shopping Centre
Peter de Vink, Midlothian Council
Alexandra Dewar, Weber Shandwick
Ian Doctor, Clackmannanshire Council
Tom Donaldson, One Dalkeith
Lisa Edwards, Dunfermline Delivers
Julie Foster, Boston Networks
Ian Fowell, Scottish Small Towns Group
Maxine Fraser, Retailers Against Crime
Felix Gibson, 802works
Gregor Graham, East Dunbartonshire Council
David Grove, Fife Council
Rachael Hamilton MSP
Bill Harvey, Kirkcaldy4All
Alistair Hilton, Dundee City Council
Jennifer Horn, East Dunbartonshire Council
Jianfeng Huang, Glasgow Caledonian University
Steve Hunt
Lawrence Hunter, Clackmannanshire Council
Jordan Jarvie, Town Centre Activities Ltd
Tom Johnston, Scottish Chambers
David Kirk, Cupar Development Trust
John Lee, Scottish Grocers Federation
Gordon Lindhurst MSP
Kirsty Macari, Angus Council
Gillian Martin MSP
Jacqueline McArthur, Falkirk Council
Kyle McBurnie, Town Centre Activities Ltd
Scott McEwan, Boston Networks
Joe McGarrigle, Langbank Community Council
Fiona McMichael, CityFibre
Cath McNally, Lloyds TSB Foundation
Dominic McNally, Virgin Media
Sandra Montador-Stewart, Fife Council
Loretta Mordi, Museums Galleries Scotland

Maggie Morrison, CGI
Bill Motion, Energy Edge
David Motion, UTEC Survey
Stewart Ness, West Lothian Council/Linlithgow BID
Steven Paxton, Voluntary Action Fund
Phil Prentice, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Colin Proctor, Scottish Futures Trust
Andrew Ralton, Midlothian Council
Derek Rankine, SURF
Pete Reid, Falkirk Council
Brian Robertson, Highland Council
Ewan Robertson, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Dennis Rodwell
Philip Rolink, Town Centre Activities Ltd
Angus Ross
Bill Sadler
John Semple, East Ayrshire Council
Craig Scott, Boston Networks
John Scott MSP
Tom Sneddon, Development Trusts Association Scotland
Ian Todd, People Scotland
Sunil Varu, Queensferry Ambition
Andrew Walker, Fife Council
Brian Walker, Energy Edge
David Wallace, BT
Diane Webb, Renfrewshire Council
Andy Wightman MSP
Keith Wimbles, Voluntary Action Fund
Gina Wilson, Carnegie UK Trust
Heather Wolfe, Parliamentary Assistant for Jeane Freeman MSP

Apologies

George Adam MSP
Angela Blacklock, Scottish Grocers Federation
Pete Cheema, Scottish Grocers Federation
Jeane Freeman MSP
Tony I'Anson, Stirling BID
Davy Lawson
Graham Marshall, Future Hawick
Angus McDonald MSP
Tom McLaughlin, BT
Terry Monaghan
Frances O'Neill, GlobalTreasure App
Douglas Scott, Scottish Borders Council
Phil Sykes
Julie Twaddell, Prestwick Community Council
Michael Vickers