

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

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 18:00 – 20:00, Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Committee Room 4, Scottish Parliament

*Refreshments kindly supported by Turner & Townsend*

## 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Convener, John Scott MSP welcomed all to the meeting including Jeremy Balfour MSP. Apologies noted from Gillian Martin, Deputy Convener and Neil Bibby MSP and Phil Prentice STP Chief Executive Officer. Jill Cronin is in attendance in place of Phil Prentice.

Attendees and Apologies are noted in Appendix 2.

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

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held 14 March, were accepted by Pete Reid Falkirk Council. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

## 3. Towns – The Future: Living, Low Carbon and Digital

**Jill Cronin, Strategy Manager, Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP)**, updated on key areas and introduced today's discussion topic,

The transition of Business Improvement Districts to Scotland's Improvement Districts is progressing well and a final session of key stakeholders will take place later this month. STP will spend the summer building a new revitalised platform of supports, shaped by the intense period of stakeholder consultation.

This evening's theme is Future Towns. In brief, STP is undertaking pilot work in these areas as follows-

**The Future High Street** – STP is a key consultee for the recently launched Grimsey Review into the future of the nations' High Streets. STP is working specifically on a project with Renfrewshire Council, Scottish Government and Revo (formerly British Council of Shopping Centres) to see how a typical Shopping Centre can be redesigned for 21st Century use.

**Town Centre Living** – the Partnership is focused on repurposing redundant space within town centres, particularly as retail continues to disinvest alongside banks, travel agents and other typical traditional uses. Over last 18 months, in close partnership with Architecture and Design Scotland we have engaged a consortium of relevant stakeholders including Homes For Scotland, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Federation of Master Builders, Co Housing, Association of Local Authority Housing Officers, Shelter, RICS and RTPI to look at how we can start building houses aimed at the ageing demographic, as well as starter units for younger people. It is hoped that National Guidance will be issued early Autumn.

**Low Carbon and Sustainable Towns** - a pilot in Cumnock is well underway looking at how wind, solar, improved housing, transport and energy master planning can be used to create economic opportunities whilst reducing costs and carbon footprint. We hope to issue a best practice guide once complete.

Digital - following on from the success of last year's Digital Towns Programme, further work around digital and the new improvement district model, aims to show how joined up technology can improve the fortunes of a typical Scottish town centre.

In general, STP will shortly be launching an updated version of the Understanding Scottish Places (USP) diagnostic tool, which will incorporate better data on greenspace, heritage, housing, digital. The Partnership has also launched its 2018 CPD and media series so please keep engaging via [www.scotlandstowns.org](http://www.scotlandstowns.org).

Finally, Scotland is sending a key delegation to the World Towns Summit in Berlin on the 18th-20th June to focus on how better economic models can be developed using town centres as the driving force. John Scott announced earlier, the launch of the MSP Connector programme. Please contact STP to get involved as an MSP or host.

### **Towns – the Future: Living**

Presented by Diarmaid Lawlor (DL), Director of Place, Architecture and Design Scotland and Steve Malone (SM), Architect, Architecture and Design Scotland.

Highlights are detailed below, with a presentation available on the STP website.

SM highlighted the benefits and barriers around town centre living and the aim to create 'caring places'. Through the town centre living project, service design work was carried out to create solutions for housing and communities; and ways in which town centres can support care through promoting a sense of place, worth, support and purpose.

To build a narrative around the caring place, service designers created personas with varying worries and needs. Within a small sample there are different needs and levels of dependency; translating to different forms of living requirements with implications on cost, place and resource.

Choice is key to a caring place. The town centre can become the core of a caring place; with better social wellbeing and outcomes.

Care can be hyper local, local and regional; resonating with the National Performance Framework – recognising wellbeing, dignity and compassion.

Town centres can be designed to socialise care in terms of home, places to meet, to do things, and a place to access care and support.

Realistic medicine – in essence, “doing with, rather than to, people”; supporting people's needs in different ways; building conditions for socialisation. Shift from medicalisation of loneliness to the socialisation of choice. The key message is that, we need to move from what to how, and repurpose what we already have.

The discovery phase is now nearing completion to be followed by a demonstration pilot phase. DL made a call for any organisations able to collaborate on ideas, partnerships and support.

### **Towns – the Future: Low Carbon**

Presented by Graham Campbell, District General Manager, SP Energy Networks (SPEN), and Scotland's Towns Partnership Board Member.

Highlights are detailed below, with a presentation available on the STP website.

Heat and transport are biggest contributors to CO<sup>2</sup> in the UK today - not power. Core to a low carbon future–

- Consumer behaviour needs to change.

- Decarbonisation of heat and transport. Electric vehicle readiness.
- A reliable, cost effective grid. Decentralisation of energy.
- Resilience and security.

Scottish towns can be part of a smart, low carbon energy network of the future.

SPEN has committed to voluntarily contribute up to £15m, funding initiatives that support Scotland's ambitious green energy plans.

Priorities of the Fund:

- Renewable and low carbon innovative solutions
- Transport – supporting the uptake and infrastructure provision of Electric Vehicles
- Local energy systems – local solutions to match generation and demand
- Learnings and data to assess future impact of low carbon economy
- Provision of affordable energy for consumers – tackling fuel poverty
- Low carbon job creation

There is a need for more action – the market for decarbonising heat is not responding quickly enough.

GC calls for widespread engagement to ensure towns can adapt to and be at the heart of a low carbon future. In summary -

- A reliable, cost effective grid at the heart of our low carbon future.
- Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to work towards EV readiness and have a number of key flagship projects in development.
- The debate on decarbonisation of heat is underway, and a wider expansion of electric heat pumps could play its part.

### **Towns - the Future: Digital**

Presented by Simon Baldwin Director, Destination 66 and Bill Harvey, Manager, Kirkcaldy4All Business Improvement District; sharing findings on the future of digital towns following on from a recent STP pilot project. Highlights are detailed below, with a presentation available on the STP website.

The digital towns pilot programme looked at 8 projects, covering 21 towns, BIDs and cities, centred around,

- encourage new strategic collaborations
- improve digital participation and skills
- create scalable best practice for digital deployment in towns/town centres and city neighbourhoods

Digital services would bring a multitude of reasons and benefits to residents, business, visitors, employees, leisure, public sector and third sector.

However, the single biggest factor shared by all consulted was their inability to see how digital services could be funded – not only in the short to medium term but beyond current budget forecasts. There is a lack of long-term funding available for towns to adapt to the digital age.

Research looked at all options and demonstrated that no single existing funding channel could be relied upon beyond a 1 – 2 year timeframe to deliver and support all that's being sought.

Leading to the conclusion: to create scalable best practice for digital deployment that will foster new, strategic collaborations and improve digital participation and skills – a new, sustainable model is required. Proposed is an 'improvement district' model, funded via the same mechanism as a traditional Business

Improvement District - namely charging a percentage of non-domestic business rates - to create a single focus delivery utilising digital and social media platforms, free public realm Wi-Fi and data analytics.

### Discussion

Pete Reid, praised speakers and pertinence of subjects which are faced in town centres being brought to these meetings with the help of STP. He commented that there seems an opportunity to create a different form of citizen participation that can be monetised. What is the barrier to realising creation? We probably need to be radical and bold – perhaps this could be encouraged and government-led. John Scott MSP challenged resourcing issues.

In response, Graham Campbell said in terms of energy, the infrastructure is there – we just need to be a bit smarter in how it's used.

Simon Baldwin – pilot projects demonstrate and prove what works on small scale and so reduces the fear. Following up on this, David Amos, Islands Growth Deal was interested in how it would work commercially. In response, through the existing BID infrastructure.

Diarmaid Lawlor commented that we should not think in terms of sunk costs but in value creation - to create a different form of economy, energy etc. Otherwise we are left with numerous disconnected systems.

John Scott MSP asked Steve Malone (SM) about having to content with healthcare resourcing and ageing demographic. SM suggested that this is why what they're doing is so important. Preventative health measures will be key and positively using technology to predict health needs of the elderly in the future.

Simon Baldwin added that at local level, the improvement districts model, can help to support a community hub with digital capability which health professionals can use as a conduit to share information.

Diarmaid Lawlor highlighted that in terms of new models for town centre living, an example in Utrecht, illustrates how intergenerational peer communities help create capability across generations. For example, fast digital adoption and smart tech use to support people living at home. Whatever age you are, town centres are a fantastic space to provide this environment.

Graham Campbell highlighted SPEN's priority scheme goes way beyond the expected, including supporting travel in bad weather, shopping, providing food.

Linton Smith Falkirk BID asked how a digital BID and original BID relate to each other. Would there be two levies? Bill Harvey explained that they view it as a proposal as to how their BIDs progress. It complements all that they do and is a means of communication. However, a digital BID could be standalone and a concept that could be rolled out to anywhere in Scotland. It needn't replace a BID unless they choose to go in that direction at next renewal. A digital BID can also have a wider catchment.

Jill Cronin added that with the relaunch of the new BIDs model, it will be very much about the range of options, not a one size fits all.

Alex Fleming, BID Manager for Falkirk, commented on her enthusiasm for what has been discussed. It is heartening to see how far down that line Falkirk is. As they move to BID version four and consult with levy payers, much more of the holistic approach spoken about tonight will take place.

John Scott MSP thanked this evening's talented and eloquent speakers, acknowledging their enthusiasm.

### **4. Any Other Competent Business**

Rhona Gibb, Paths for All highlighted that they are about to launch a new £2m fund called, smarter choices, smarter places – it is for communities and other organisations, with grants from £5k to £50k, based on 50%

match funding which can be in kind. The criteria are based upon behavioural change and active travel. This may be particularly interesting for BIDs. The same funding remains but for local authorities application.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 26 September from 1800 - 2000.

## **APPENDIX 1 – RECORD OF 13 JUNE 2018 AGENDA**

### **Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres**

**18:00 – 20:00, Wednesday, 13th June 2018**

**Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament**

### **AGENDA**

#### **‘Towns - The Future: Living, Low Carbon & Digital’**

**Refreshments kindly supported by Turner & Townsend**

- 17:45 Meet in Parliament reception area
- 18:00 Light refreshments
- 18:15 Welcome and Opening Remarks – John Scott MSP, Convener
- 18:20 Minutes of the Meeting of the Cross Party Group held 15th March
- Matters Arising from the Minutes

#### **Towns - The Future: Living, Low Carbon & Digital**

- 18:25 Introduction
- Jill Cronin, Strategy Manager, Scotland’s Towns Partnership
- 18:30 Living
- Diarmaid Lawlor, Director of Place, Architecture + Design Scotland
- Steve Malone, Architect, Architecture + Design Scotland
- 18:45 Low Carbon
- Graham Campbell, Director of Generation for Scotland, Scottish Power, and Scotland’s Towns Partnership Board Member
- 19:00 Digital
- Simon Baldwin, Director, Destination 66
- Bill Harvey, Manager, Kirkcaldy4All Business Improvement District
- 19:15 Discussion
- 19:35 Any Other Competent Business
- 19:40 Close of Meeting followed by Refreshments (Depart by 20:00)

Date of Next Meeting and AGM – September 26 (18:00 – 19:30) – ‘Towns: The Evening Economy’

## APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR THE CPG ON 13 JUNE 2018

### Attendees

David	Amos	Renfrewshire Council
Jamie	Baker	East Lothian Council
Simon	Baldwin	Destination 66
Jeremy	Balfour	MSP
Gordon	Bell	The Retailer
Elaine	Bone	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Rhona	Brown	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Graham	Campbell	SP EnergyNetworks
Thomas	Cochrane	North Lanarkshire Council
Janice	Connelly	Shotts Community Council
Evie	Copland	The Stove Network
John	Corbett	SAOL
John	Cowan	Real Retail Solution
Jill	Cronin	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Lisa	Edwards	Dunfermline Delivers
Cllr Ian	Ferguson	Fife Council
Alex	Fleming	Falkirk Delivers
David	Gear	East Dunbartshire Council
Rona	Gibb	Paths for All
Andrew	Grieve	Weather Proofing
Bill	Harvey	Kirkcaldy4All BID
Colin	Henderson	CityFibre
John	Howie	NHS Health Scotland
Pamela	Humphries	North Lanarkshire Council
Diarmaid	Lawlor	Architecture + Design Scotland
David	Lindgren	Essential Edinburgh
George	Linton-Smith	G W Smith Properties
Alison	Jones	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Kirsty	Macari	Angus Council
Brian	MacDonald	SURF
Steve	Malone	Architecture + Design Scotland
Alexa	Martin	Stirling Council
Kenny	McCreary	South Lanarkshire Council
Fiorella	Modolo	Wardell Armstrong LLP
Cllr Lynne	Nailon	South Lanarkshire Council
Stewart	Ness	West Lothian Council
John	Park	
Pete	Reid	Falkirk Council
Gemma	Richardson	Pagoda PR
Ewan	Robertson	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Mark	Rowley	Scottish Borders Council
Lorna	Scott	NHS
Calum	Strang	Church of Scotland
Paul	Surgenor	Pagoda PR
Donna	Sutherland	Aberdeenshire Council
Wiktorija	Szulik	Wardell Armstrong LLP
Ann	Weir	North Lanarkshire Council

## Apologies

Neil	Bibby	MSP
Donald	Campbell	
Stephen	Campopiano	WSP
Andrew	Cottle	
Peter	de Vink	EFGH
Jennifer	Fingland	Cycling Scotland
David	Fryer	Torry Development Trust
Jenny	Gilruth	MSP
Tony	Mallaghan	North Lanarkshire Council
Gillian	Martin	MSP
Benny	McLaughlin	Turner Townsend
Phil	Prentice	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Julie	Procter	greenspace scotland
Tom	Sneddon	DTAS
Prof Leigh	Sparks	University of Stirling
James	Trolland	
Cllr George	Turnbull	Scottish Borders Council