

Ministerial Foreword



The Scottish Government is determined that our town centres should be vibrant, attractive and safe places where local people and visitors alike want to spend their time and money.

The Town Centre Action Plan is designed to support our ambition, and this report is a snapshot of the progress made by the Scottish Government and our partners in the 12 months following publication of the Town Centre Action Plan in November 2013. It follows the themed structure set out in the plan and it does not reflect all town centre regeneration activity and engagement happening in Scotland. Rather it focusses on those activities which the Scottish Government is responsible.

The progress that we have made in the past year is testament to the commitment of all concerned and I am heartened by the enthusiasm of communities, councils, businesses and the wider public sector in supporting efforts to revitalise our town centres.

A significant milestone was the agreement between Scottish Government and local government on the Town Centre First Principle. Our collective challenge now across all levels of government and the wider public, private and community sectors, is to set out how we will support and embed the principle in policy and practice.

Collectively we have made a good start in delivering the Town Centre Action Plan. And I am looking forward to seeing increased activity over the next year as we continue to create the conditions to support town centre revitalisation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Mackay'.

Scottish Government – Town Centre Action Plan – One Year On

This report is a snapshot of the progress made by the Scottish Government and its partners in the 12 months following publication of the Town Centre Action Plan on 7 November 2013. It follows the themed structure set out in the plan and it does not reflect all town centre regeneration activity and engagement happening in Scotland. Rather it focusses on those activities which the SG is responsible for to put in place the conditions necessary to support local town centre action and delivery.

Theme	Action	What We've Achieved
<p style="text-align: center;">Town Centre First Principle</p>	<p>We recognise that a shared understanding and interpretation of a town centre first principle across the public sector will be key to its success. We will work with COSLA to determine how a town centre first principle will work in practice taking account of other government policy and duties on local government.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government Cabinet and COSLA Leaders agreed the Town Centre First Principle in July 2014. The wording of the Principle is included below:</p> <p>“Town Centre First Principle</p> <p>Town centres are a key element of the economic, social and environmental fabric of Scotland’s towns; often at the core of community and economic life, offering spaces in which to live, meet and interact, do business, and access facilities and services. We must take collective responsibility to help town centres thrive sustainably, reinvent their function, and meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors for the 21st century.</p> <p>The principle requests that:</p> <p>Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities put the health of town centres at the heart of proportionate and best value decision making, seeking to deliver the best local outcomes regarding investment and de-investment decisions, alignment of policies, targeting of available resources to priority town centre sites, and encouraging vibrancy, equality and diversity.</p> <p>We commit to:</p> <p>A collaborative approach which understands and underpins the long term plan for each town centre.”</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/TheTownCentreFirstPrinciple</p>

Town Centre Living

<p>We will commit £2m towards a Town Centre Housing Fund that will act as a demonstration project to help bring empty town centre properties back into use for affordable housing.</p>	<p>Seven projects awarded funding totalling £2.750m under the Town Centre Housing Fund that will create 82 units for affordable housing.</p> <p>We will continue to consider the future of this fund in relation to existing housing programmes.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/housing-fund</p>
<p>We will identify best practice and models of engagement to encourage owners of empty properties to bring these back into use as affordable housing.</p>	<p>Scottish Government funds the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership knowledge hub portal which shares best practice. We continue to part fund empty homes officers based in a number of councils.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/emptyhomes</p> <p>In 2013/14 278 homes were reported as being brought back into use. This is based on reports made to the Empty Homes Partnership by Councils as is likely to represent an undercount of the true figure. This has been achieved without grant or loan assistance.</p>
<p>We will work with COSLA to strengthen Local Housing Strategy (LHS) guidance to support local authorities to consider prioritising housing for town centres and to identify potential for mixed use living in town centres.</p>	<p>LHS Guidance was published in August 2014. Guidance seeks to encourage local authorities to fully consider the role that town centres can play as residential communities.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/08/3070</p>

	<p>We will facilitate and support affordable housing development in town centres through our Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP)</p>	<p>In July 2013 all social housing benchmarks increased by £16,000. Flexibility to award grant subsidies above the increased benchmarks has also been introduced which will enable expensive town centre projects to be brought forward and considered for grant funding.</p> <p>Guidance Notes setting out the process and procedures for the operation of the main part of the AHSP published on 26 June 2014.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/investment/guidancenotes/GuidanceNotes2014/HSGN201405-AHSP-Process-and-Procedures</p>
	<p>We will share learning from our National Community Planning Support Framework Project and the Assets Focused Approaches Project to ensure our towns centres are safer places.</p>	<p>We are working collaboratively with a range of national partners to support community planning partners in Edinburgh, Renfrewshire and Aberdeenshire and community-led initiatives in the Gorbals, Possilpark and Hawkhill. As most crime happens in town and city centres such efforts to reduce offending will make our town centres safer places.</p> <p>We formed a learning network to support policy makers and practitioners work in an assets based way. A Funded Link Up initiative to support community-led approaches in eight deprived areas (See link below). We Published an economic evaluation of Link Up. We Commenced phase 2 of the Building Safer Communities Programme to reduce unintentional injuries.</p> <p>http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/our-funds/link-up</p> <p>http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/our-funds/link-up/portfolio-of-ventures</p> <p>http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/9630/Clarity-Interim-Evlaution-of-Link-Up-2013.pdf</p>
<p>Vibrant Local Economies</p>	<p>We will support the collection and collation of town centre data at a local level, which will aid understanding of their health and performance.</p>	<p>Discussions with stakeholders to work up a potential demonstration project considering town centre data collection.</p>

<p>We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of BRIS (Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme).</p>	<p>Scottish Government is continuing to engage with COSLA on the future of BRIS.</p>
<p>We will create powers for local authorities to establish a Town Centre Investment Zone, using discretionary rates relief to encourage local business. We will consider a pilot scheme for this initiative.</p>	<p>The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill was laid before Parliament on 11 June 2014 and is expect royal assent in May or June 2015.</p>
<p>We will maintain Small Business Bonus Scheme for the life of the current Parliament, removing or substantially reducing the rates burden for many thousands of town centre properties.</p>	<p>We continue to maintain the Small Business Bonus Scheme</p> <p>Many thousands of small businesses in towns pay zero or reduced business rates through the <i>Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS)</i>. The Scottish Government has committed to maintain SBBS for the lifetime of the current Parliament and a recently announced expansion of the scheme to include an additional 4,000 premises.</p> <p>In addition, we propose to create a new power to allow local councils to create and fund their own localised relief schemes, which could allow a council to support town centre businesses.</p>
<p>We will take appropriate measures to create incentives</p>	<p>We expanded Fresh Start rates relief to apply to pubs, hotels and restaurants on 1 April 2014.</p>

	<p>to bring long term vacant premises back into use, including the expansion of Fresh Start rates relief to apply to pubs, hotels and restaurants from 1 April 2014.</p>	
	<p>We will complete the actions identified as part of our review of the entire rating system to ensure the system better supports Scottish businesses, including town centre businesses</p>	<p>On-going- 20 actions identified to be completed or initiated up to 2017 when rates are due to be revaluated. Some have already been completed, others such as review of appeals system are large projects with long timescales</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/09/2234</p>
	<p>We will test thinking with a range of stakeholders to identify support priorities for Business Improvement District (BID) projects and opportunities to expand what BIDS can deliver in alignment with the wider community focus</p>	<p>A new 2 year contract has been awarded for the provision of support, advice and the promotion of BIDs with a focus on BIDs contributing to the wider regeneration initiatives set out in the Town Centre Action Plan.</p> <p>BIDs policy and contract management has now transferred to the Scottish Government Regeneration Unit. This will ensure BIDs are integrated into emerging Town Centre Action Plan policies and the wider community-led focus of the regeneration strategy.</p>

	recommended in the review report.	
	We will encourage entrepreneurship in our town centres through our forthcoming Entrepreneurship and Innovation Framework and through our funding available to third sector organisations.	<p>In April 2014 the CAN DO Innovation Challenge was launched to bring this approach into focus upon the Town Centre First Principle. This initiative is, through exposing participants to inspirational examples of success and innovative ways of thinking, enabling the development of viable local entrepreneurial ecosystems. At the local level public, private and third sector alliances are being fostered in order to create vibrant and thriving town centre economies.</p> <p>http://www.candotowns.org/</p>
	We will work with COSLA and our enterprise agencies to ensure that town centre businesses understand the business support available from Business Gateway, local government and through the enterprise agencies.	Engagement work is progressing with focus maintained through the Local Economic Development Senior Officers Group. A forthcoming Business in the Parliament Conference on 7 November 2014 will feature a workshop on Promoting Economic Development within Communities and will have a strong emphasis on Town Centre economies.
Enterprising Communities	We will carry out a town centre asset audit demonstration project, specifically working with	<p>On-going discussion with partners on feasibility of an asset audit and research into existing or similar activity.</p> <p>The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Parliament in June. This includes provision for a new power for local authorities to grant reliefs on non-domestic rates; and therefore a tool which local authorities can use to promote town centres.</p>

	<p>public sector bodies to model ways in which communities can take occupation of public buildings when they are no longer required by the public body.</p>	
	<p>We will work with Creative Scotland, Historic Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland to identify where specific policies can be aligned strategically to provide further support and opportunities to our town centres.</p>	<p>Scottish Government is working with Creative Scotland, Historic Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland to develop this action. A more fully collaborative approach by the three organisations with their in-depth knowledge and expertise of town centres, can, once fully realised, underpin and enhance our Town Centre First Principle.</p> <p>For Historic Scotland, the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme noted above is a key driver with activity highlighted in 19 LA's including Kilmarnock, Campbeltown and Falkirk. For Architecture & Design Scotland, Start Up Street Pilots & Place Based Reviews figure prominently. For Creative Scotland, Place Partnerships and Creative Place Awards are two notable areas of support.</p>
	<p>We will continue to work with Creative Scotland, Cultural Enterprise Office, Business Gateway, WASPS and other relevant partner agencies and organisations to facilitate support for local enterprise in mixed-use</p>	<p>Scottish Creative Industries Partnership has set up a sub-group to develop a clear and shared view of the range of public sector interventions being delivered across partner organisations in support of the Creative Industries in Scotland and the connections between these. Partners have contributed their expert input to build an initial base 'map' that combines two important dimensions - an overview of key partner interventions linking these across to the key beneficiaries. Each of these are framed under a core theme such as 'Innovation' or 'Skills'. Alongside this the partners are looking at where official growth statistics provide key information on the Creative Industries. This process highlights where gaps exist in capturing data on creative enterprises, including inconsistencies in how registered businesses categorise themselves, and information relating to creative enterprises that are not registered.</p>

	existing town centre facilities	
	We will strengthen existing guidance to respond to the need to provide support for commercial premises that will require to comply with EPC ratings at point of sale and new lease in January 2014 to ensure historic properties are not considered too difficult to deal with and therefore left vacant.	A public consultation will be published on energy efficiency before the end of 2014.
	We will investigate with Prince's Trust (Youth Business Scotland) the potential for setting up a retail space to sell the products of some of the new businesses that the Trust has helped to establish.	Following engagement with the Prince's Trust we have agreed not to develop this action further at this time. However, through our continued engagement with the Prince's Trust we will consider re-visiting this opportunity in the future.

	<p>We will support community-led activity that supports our town centres by strengthening communities to implement initiatives that benefit town centre regeneration.</p>	<p>Through the first round of our Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) we have awarded £9.4m to seven town centre projects. Each project has taken a community-led approach to their regeneration initiatives.</p> <p>The Fund opened again this year and the list of projects recommended for funding in second round will be announced by the end of November</p> <p>Continue to explore, with partners, additional community-led activity that will support town centre regeneration. Discussions with SURF and Development Trust Associated Scotland planned.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-environment/regeneration/investment/capitalgrants/rcgf</p>
<p>Accessible Public Services</p>	<p>We will endeavour to amplify guidance in the Scottish Public Finance Manual to ensure that bodies acquiring and disposing of public sector assets and property consider the degree of priority attached to town centres.</p>	<p>The revised sections of the Scottish Public Finance Manual was published on 20 October 2014. Alongside other changes, the consideration of the Town Centre First Principle was highlighted for decisions on property transactions.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Finance/spfm/PropertyManagement/Aquisitionofproperty</p>
	<p>We will discuss inclusion of the Town Centre First Principle in the NHS Property Transaction Handbook.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that a revision to overview section of the NHS Scotland Property Transaction Handbook will be published in early 2015. Alongside other changes, the consideration of the Town Centre First Principle will be highlighted for decisions on property transactions.</p>
	<p>We will encourage Community</p>	<p>This has to be considered in the wider CPP context of the National Community Planning Group's determination that CPPs should focus on joint resourcing, prevention and community engagement. It also has to be considered alongside the wider need for CPPs to assess their progress on improving CP in their areas. It also has to fit with</p>

	<p>Planning Partnerships to consider how they bring the town centre first principle to the fore when delivering on their current Single Outcome Agreements and when developing further. We will produce information and advice to help CPPs link the 'place' agenda with spatial planning and quality placemaking principles.</p>	<p>proposed changes to CP being taken forward in the Community Empowerment Bill.</p>
	<p>We will work with Architecture + Design Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust to investigate ways of expanding the role of place-based reviews.</p>	<p>We are working to Identify opportunities to collaborate on town centre pilots.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/AandP/Projects/SSCI/Mainstreaming</p>
	<p>We will recognise as part of National Planning Framework</p>	<p>NPF3 was launched on 23 June 2014, it recognises that many towns are crucial transport, commercial and cultural hubs.</p> <p>It recognises the particular key roles of towns for rural, coastal and island communities where development opportunities, employment, homes and services are often clustered, and which act as important focal points for</p>

	<p>3(NPF3) the role that town centres play as integrated transport hubs.</p>	<p>investment and transport connections. NPF3 sets out Scottish Government wants to see the role of these towns strengthened and diversified.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Framework</p>
	<p>We will support local authorities and others with projects to improve bus services through the Bus Investment Fund.</p>	<p>Winning 13 bids in first round announced on 30 December 2013. Projects being supported cover a range of areas across Scotland, including cities, towns and rural areas. Each involves a number of partners. Local authorities, regional transport partnerships or community groups are generally in lead but commercial bus operators and others are also involved in significant roles.</p> <p>Round two is currently underway with 26 bids under consideration.</p> <p>http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/public-transport/bus/bus-investment-fund</p>
	<p>We will work with local authorities and other relevant partners to develop and maintain walking and cycling routes, public realm improvements and cycle parking facilities in town centre areas where high levels of cycling can be achieved.</p>	<p>We are developing further guidance on 20 mph limits and zones in partnership with the Society of Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS). This will provide greater clarity for local authorities on the options that are available to them.</p> <p>Sustrans have received record levels of funding in 2014-15 to deliver a programme of Community Links projects – targeting gaps and deficiencies in local active travel networks, where there is the greatest potential to increase walking and cycling for short journeys. There are 187 partnership projects as part of the current Community Links programme being funded across Scotland, including a significant number focused in and around town centres. Sustrans is working with 31 local authorities and 10 other partners across the country to distribute £20 million of SG funding in 2014-15 and 2015-16, which will deliver projects worth over £40 million due to match funding.</p> <p>In addition, we will be making £5 million available to local authorities and their partners in 2015-16 for an extension of the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places initiative, which will support a range of projects focused on encouraging people to make smarter, more sustainable travel choices. This will build on the significant recent infrastructure investment in walking and cycling routes to encourage and enable people to choose walking, cycling and public transport for short journeys. Local authorities will be asked to target communities in their area, and journeys/destinations, where the opportunity to achieve modal shift is greatest. It is anticipated that, in many cases, this will include travel to town centres and the funding guidance will highlight the opportunity for authorities to deliver on their commitment to the town centre first principle through this type of activity.</p>
<p>Digital Towns</p>	<p>Through a combined public and private sector</p>	<p>Two contracts have been awarded for this project, one covering the Highlands and Islands and the other the "Rest of Scotland" (through SG). Roll out plans being made available progressively via the Digital Scotland website, along with details of Scotland's wider digital strategy.</p>

	<p>investment of around £410 million Scotland's towns will be provided with access to a future proofed fibre infrastructure through our Step Change Next Generation Broadband programme. This infrastructure will enable support for 21st Century learning opportunities, digital healthcare and the growth and development of a vibrant digital economy.</p>	<p>As at July 2014, in the Highlands & Islands programme more than 14,000 homes and businesses in 13 exchange areas in Highland and Moray can already access fibre broadband. In the Rest of Scotland Area, BT has delivered NGA infrastructure to 42,675 premises.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/digital</p>
	<p>We will continue to develop a world-class digital infrastructure that enables our people to connect anytime, anywhere, using any device</p>	<p>Scottish Futures Trust have been appointed since 1 April 2014 to translate the policy of world class digital into a comprehensive delivery plan which involves assessing a range of complex technical, commercial, financial, market and regulatory issues to deliver world class digital infrastructure.</p>
	<p>We will work with our enterprise and skills agencies to help small businesses to</p>	<p>Under the £7m of funding approved projects to date include the Scottish Digital Vouchers Scheme and the Supplier Development Programme.</p>

	better utilise digital technology and stimulate the growth of new and innovative digital / ICT business	
	We will explore potential projects focused on town centre connectivity under the developing Demonstrating Digital programme and actively look for further opportunities to link digital and town centre strategies.	<p>A project group, made up of Scottish Government Regeneration and Broadband Policy areas and the Scottish Futures Trust has been set up to implement demonstration projects in various town centres testing town centre connectivity and best use of new technology for town centre users.</p> <p>The project will explore the opportunity for businesses to participate in revolutionary town centre consumer data analysis, including consumer spend data at town level. This is potentially a technically challenging but highly innovative project with huge potential benefits for stakeholders from private, public and third sectors.</p> <p>The project will also explore the use of local social media platform for towns centres by examining existing software platforms to maximise resultant town centre capability.</p>
Proactive Planning	We will ensure that an updated town centre first planning policy and associated 'sequential test' is included in the final SPP, due for publication Summer 2014.	<p>The revised SPP was published on 23 June. It broadens the town centre first approach to set out the planning system should apply a town centre first policy when planning for uses which attract significant numbers of people, including retail and commercial leisure, offices, community and cultural facilities and where appropriate other public buildings such as libraries and education and healthcare facilities. It sets out the sequential approach, and indicates there is scope for it to be applied in a flexible and realistic way to ensure that different uses are developed in the most appropriate locations.</p> <p>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Policy</p>
	We will identify pilots with interested planning	<p>9 planning authorities from across Scotland are working with us to look at ways to simplify planning processes in town centres.</p> <p>7 different strands to support attractive, vibrant and entrepreneurial town centres will be progressed over the</p>

	<p>authorities who wish to consider collaboration and test approaches which could help simplify planning processes in town centres.</p>	<p>coming year. The pilots will cover a broad range of ideas, covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. development of a Town Centre Planning Protocol i. establishment of a Simplified Planning Zone ii. proactive use of Compulsory Purchase iii. preparation of robust Supplementary Guidance to tackle clusters of Pay Day Loan shops iv. implementation of ideas from the forthcoming Town Centres Masterplanning Toolkit v. incentivising town centre development by reducing the cost of developer contributions in town centres vi. sharing good practice, and development of 'How-to' guides on ideas where planners and the planning service can support town centres. <p>This work will be used to identify and share good practice and approaches, and consider whether there are any relevant issues that need to be addressed.</p>
	<p>We will continue to encourage local authorities and other stakeholders to use compulsory purchase powers to promote sustainable economic growth.</p>	<p>In addition to providing ad-hoc information and advice to acquiring authorities on their use of compulsory purchase as a means of land acquisition, the Scottish Government has been working with Perth and Kinross Council on a pilot programme to support the use of its powers within Perth town centre.</p>
	<p>We will develop a Master-Planning Toolkit, specific to town centres, that includes guidance on specific transport and design details, focusing on the development of quality, accessible public realm and</p>	<p>We have appointed contractors to carry out research on developing a toolkit. A draft toolkit has been developed and has been tested with a group of experts.. Following receipt of the toolkit research, officials in Planning & Architecture and Regeneration will undertake any necessary revisions and prepare the toolkit for publication.</p>

	the use of town assets.	
	We will develop a fund open to local authorities and community and third sector organisations to help deliver community design charrettes focussed on town centres.	Following consideration of submissions to the charrette programme, offers of grant funding were made to 6 charrette projects in 2013/14 and a further 7 town centre charrettes will be supported in 2014/15. The 2014/15 town centre charrette fund is now fully allocated and the charrettes are expected to take place before the end of March 2015.
	Working with Architecture + Design Scotland, we will support a stalled spaces demonstration project identifying temporary uses for sites within town centres.	<p>Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS) has invited local authorities to take part in Stalled Spaces Scotland, a Legacy 2014 programme aimed at supporting local authorities and communities to bring derelict and vacant land back in to temporary use to benefit communities and enhance town centres. Full details are available on the A+DS website http://www.ads.org.uk/access/features/stalled-spaces-scotland.</p> <p>Full details are available on the A+DS website http://www.ads.org.uk/access/features/stalled-spaces-scotland</p>
	We will shortly publish a consultation on planning and telecoms provisions . The consultation will focus on removing unnecessary barriers to telecoms infrastructure provision; in	<p>Consulted on proposals to amend and update Class 67 of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) to simplify the planning process around the provision of essential broadband and telecoms infrastructure.</p> <p>Amendments to the General Permitted Development Order came into effect on 30 June 2014.</p>

	<p>particular it will focus on permitted development (i.e. development where a specific planning application is not required).</p>	
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Town Centre Action Plan – Demonstration Projects

Project	Details	Progress
Town Centre First Principle	Following agreement of the principle by Cabinet and COSLA leaders in July 2014, potential pilots to be scoped to determine the Town Centre First Principle and ways of working in practice.	Discussion with Town Centre First Principle working group (COSLA / SLAED / A+DS / Scottish Futures Trust / SCOTS) to determine potential approach to pilots.
Town Centre Data	Understanding Scottish Places (USP) Data Platform. Carnegie UK led a successful consortium bid (CLES, Stirling University, AMT, STP) to produce the 'USP Platform'. An online data tool to help local authorities and town centre communities determine i) town typology ii) economic interdependencies iii) benchmark data.	Being tested initially within three local authority areas: Fife, East Renfrewshire and East Lothian.

Town Centre Housing Fund	£2.75million fund to bring empty high street properties back into use	<p>7 successful projects announced November 2014 and grant offers issued. Projects expecting to complete over 2014/15.</p> <p>Fife Council – Cupar – 18 Units - £764k Clacks Council – Alva – 17 Units - £782k Kingdom HA – Crieff – 14 Units - £256k Clyde Val HA – Coatbridge – 7 Units £150k CR Edinvar HA – Tranent – 7 Units - £350k Angus Council – Carnoustie – 4 Units £200k East Dunbartonshire Council – Kirkintilloch 15 Units £200k</p> <p>Total 82 Units</p>
Town Centre Investment Zones	Pilot projects with interested Local Authorities to test town centre investment zones.	Pilot dependent on introduction of 'localised rates relief' provision introduced via Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, laid before Parliament on 11 June 2014. Royal assent expected in May or June 2015
Simplifying the Planning Process	Pilots with interested planning authorities to test approaches to help simplify planning processes in town centres.	<p>Discussion to be held with Planning around options for pilot to demonstrate benefits of a more relaxed planning policy around change of use/ signalling a 'pro-enterprise' planning policy enabling and supporting easier business start-up.</p> <p>7 thematic strands identified: 9 local authorities have signed up to get involved.</p>

Town Centre Digital Demonstration Project	Investigating overlaps with current SG Demonstrating Digital pilots with a view to supporting digital towns	Scoping workshop to be held in 2014/15 to determine a Demonstrating Digital pilot.
Town Centre Asset Audits	Development of asset register for towns e.g. public buildings, premises	Two benefits of asset-audit: i) understanding ownership patterns to assist in tackling empty property issues. ii) Understanding economic 'assets' available to a town and how to better utilise these. Interest in a Development Trust-led pilot proposed by DTAS - costed proposal invited in October 2014.
Town Centre Charrettes	Max. £20k grants available to match-fund support town centre focussed charrettes.	Town centre charrettes were offered in 2013/14 and response mainly from local authorities. The 2014 /15 call for ideas also encouraged bids led by community anchor organisations. Recipients in 2014/15 include: South Ayrshire Council, Maybole; West Dunbartonshire Council, Clydebank; West Lothian Council, Whitburn; Falkirk Council & IceCream Architecture, Denny; Angus Council, Carnoustie; P&K Council, Creiff, Aberfeldy and Auchterarder; Dunblane Community Council, Dunblane.

<p>Town Centre Masterplanning Toolkit</p>	<p>Toolkit currently being developed and tested</p>	<p>7 N Architects awarded contract to lead consortium developing the Masterplanning Toolkit.</p>
<p>Stalled Spaces Demonstration Project</p>	<p>Extension of the <i>Stalled Spaces</i> Glasgow Commonwealth Games Legacy project to roll out to other Scottish towns. Focus on identifying temporary use for vacant and derelict town centre sites.</p>	<p>A&DS currently undertaking series of information surgeries for local authorities that have registered interest from across Scotland. http://www.ads.org.uk/access/features/stalled-spaces-scotland</p>
<p>Business Hubs and Connectors</p>	<p>Adaption and development of the SBC Business Hubs to support TCAP</p>	<p>SBC attended meetings with LED, Third Sector and Enterprenreneurial Framework colleagues to hone their original proposal for 'Business Hubs and Connectors' across 4 local authority areas (Ayrshire, Borders, Moray and Angus).</p>
<p>Town Centre Entrepreneurial Initiative: Can Do Towns</p>	<p>Challenge Fund to be developed under the CAN Do Entrepreneurial framework</p>	<p>Town Centre Innovation Challenge Fund being developed as complement to SG Entrepreneurship and Innovation Framework. http://www.candotowns.org/</p>