



Turnaround Towns UK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to everyone who gave their time freely to guide us towards inspirational towns and for sharing stories about their places.

Particular thanks to Abram Ward Community Cooperative, Atmos Totnes, Causeway Coast and Glens Council, Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations, Ceredigion County Council, Cymdaithas Cynnal y Cyfnogi Cefn Gwlad Cymru (4CG), Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, Incredible Edible Todmorden, Lancaster City Council, Midsteeple Quarter, North East Lincolnshire Council, The Culture House, The Exchange CIC, The Federation of Small Businesses, The King's Fund, The Stove, West Kilbride Community Development Group, West Kilbride Community Initiative Limited, Wigan Council, and elected representatives.

We are grateful to Jen Wallace, Head of Policy at the Carnegie UK Trust, for her guidance. We would also like to thank all those who read through this report, although we acknowledge that any mistakes are the authors' own.



This report is printed on paper that is FSC certified.

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Foreword

At the Carnegie UK Trust we believe that towns are places to be proud of and places to be excited about. Throughout our current Strategic Plan we have been working to promote the place of towns in public policy and to support innovative practice in town communities.

During this time we have seen towns begin to rise up the policy agenda with announcements of new government funding streams. We believe that this funding will have most impact if focused on the wellbeing of towns, that is putting social, environmental and democratic outcomes alongside the significance of thriving local economies.

Within our towns there is a wealth of ambition, creativity and vision that we must listen to. People are passionate about their places, and their depth of expertise is a fantastic resource. This report celebrates these strengths, through stories of towns which are pulling together to improve their wellbeing. While each town is at a different stage in its 'turnaround' journey, there is a shared vision of what they want their place to be like, and recognition that to achieve these goals requires the collective power of the whole community.

These town communities understand the assets they have – their people, spaces, and energy for change – and they are ready to talk about it. Our 2016 report 'Turnaround Towns: International Evidence' illustrated the importance of towns developing and telling their local stories, and at

the Carnegie UK Trust we are now working to support this practice in 'Talk of the Town', our new programme running from 2019 to 2020.

While the power of the community and local town leaders is on full display in this report, we also highlight the vital role of support from central government and national funders. At the Carnegie UK Trust we champion the role of evidence in informing public policy, and we believe that in order to design support for towns, we need first to understand their particular characteristics and the local networks within which they sit. We need a cross-government vision for towns that shifts power to local areas and provides sustainable and appropriate funding.

This is an opportune time to be talking about what works for towns.

As we face a decade of change for the UK, we believe that a focus on community wellbeing can unlock the potential of every place. What this looks like will differ from town to town, and we hope that this report offers a glimpse of the abundance of local solutions that are already being developed.



Sarah Davidson

Chief Executive, Carnegie UK Trust

Introduction

Wellbeing and towns

The Carnegie UK Trust has been promoting the wellbeing of the UK and Ireland for over 100 years and has long recognised that place has a significant impact on wellbeing at all levels: on individuals, communities and on society.

We believe that wellbeing means that we all have what we need to live well, now and in the future. We think of wellbeing as falling into four domains – economic, social, environmental and democratic. Each of these are fundamentally altered by geography, and so places as well as people are vitally important in creating a flourishing society.

The Trust is one of very few philanthropic organisations to be based in a town in the UK, and we see towns as places of potential. In the UK, two in five people define themselves as living in a town (Wallace & Thurman, 2018). This figure alone makes towns an important part of the UK map, but towns are also places of interesting history, of cultural diversity, of innovation and of local democracy.

In the last decade policy and funding opportunities in the UK have been focussed on metropolitan regions, and although this is welcome progress for cities, the imbalance may be detrimental to towns. It fails to recognise the unique strengths, requirements and opportunities within these places. As *Places with Purpose* makes clear:

“*Smaller cities, towns and industrial communities are not just there to provide workers and consumers for the big metropolitan centres. They are important in their own right and politicians and policymakers ignore them at their peril.*”
(Industrial Communities Alliance et al. 2018)

We agree with this statement and advocate for the place of towns in public policy. Only when towns are supported as places in their own right will they be able to tackle upcoming challenges.

Changing town centres

Despite the significant proportion of the UK population who live in towns, the prevailing narrative in the media has been negative and characterised by reports of steep decline (Pennycook, 2017). Shop closures on the high street regularly feature in the press: in September 2019, there was yet another announcement of ‘crisis on the high street’ featured in the *Guardian*, *Telegraph* and the *Times*, in response to a new survey by the Local Data Company (The Guardian, 2019).

But our high streets and town centres are more than places to shop; they are places where people meet, talk and connect with one another. The Association of Town and City Management has recognised that the future of high streets does not lie in returning to places dominated by retail, but in redeveloping town centres with multiple uses (2019). Inspiring features of transformed town centres include encouraging more people to live in high streets, enabling independent retail, greater community governance of town centre buildings, and increasing the power and control communities have over local decisions.

Changing political prospects

The future of our towns is about more than just the high street, it is also about residents’ access to levers of change and their ability to influence local decisions.

Research on the links between the vote to leave the European Union (EU) and towns found that the towns that had voted to leave were

typically in post-industrial areas with stagnant economies and the squeezed southeast, which has experienced rapid growth (MacLennan & McCauley, 2018). These towns are areas where people feel their concerns have not been heard; places that have been described as ‘left behind’ or ‘left out’.

This is more a consequence of central and devolved UK governments failing to pay proper attention to towns, than EU policy. Analysis of the consequences of Brexit (whatever the exact arrangements of the UK’s departure from the EU) indicates that the towns that voted to leave in the 2016 referendum may be the places that suffer most from the adverse consequences of Brexit. The loss of EU funding, negative impacts on farming, fishing and tourism industries, and a decline in migrant workers may become particular challenges (ibid.).

Upcoming and existing challenges for towns means that it is urgent for policy makers and leaders across the UK to focus on the unique strengths and challenges faced by different places. Policy and funding opportunities designed to support towns should reflect the importance of local knowledge and innovation, whilst providing structural support for all places.

Defining towns in the UK

The four jurisdictions of the UK each define a town differently. Scotland classifies towns as settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 people; in Northern Ireland an urban conurbation is anything over 5,000; and in England and Wales a town is defined by settlement form rather than population size, economic function or historic role – towns have a core, including densely populated areas, and have a minimum of 500 dwellings (Pennycook, 2017). Some towns, like Perth in Scotland and Chelmsford in England, move in and out of ‘city status’, which brings with it different funding and marketing opportunities.

People who live in what might be seen as a small rural village, or a bustling city, may describe their places as a town due to its sense of history or the centrality of the local high street to everyday life. The array of definitions for a town gives a clue to their diverse characters. In a 2018 survey by the Trust, 43% of people in Northern Ireland said they live in a town, 38% of people in England, 37% in Wales, and 35% in Scotland (Wallace & Thurman, 2018).



Background

In 2016 the Trust published a report that brought together case studies of towns from around the world. *Turnaround Towns: International Evidence* highlighted 'what works' for towns, demonstrating the key characteristics of places that are doing well despite the odds (Kelly, 2016).

Closer to home, there are many examples of towns in the UK that are proactively facing challenges such as demographic change, shifting economic fortunes and not enough control over their futures. These are towns where community, government and local businesses have come together to begin to reimagine their town and to create sustainable local economies and resilient communities.

We want to tell these positive stories and are interested in the approaches towns are using to make progress. There are many more stories than we could include in this report, and so we had to select those towns that we felt provided a variety of different approaches to change, coming from different positions and representing different challenges. Many of the towns in this report have gained a public reputation for the improvements they have made and have been featured in the national press; we heard about others through local government networks or our contacts across the UK.

For each of the nine towns, we have documented how the town used to be, what it has become and how it got there (see Box One for the components of each story).

Each town is at a different stage of its transformation, with some just starting to glimpse the positive effects of change, whilst others may already be able to document their impact. Therefore, these stories are not intended to provide in-depth or consistent evaluation of interventions, but instead to provide a snapshot of where towns are today and a narrative of how they got there. These narratives are based on

conversations with people in the towns and on local perceptions complemented by desk-based research.

As we found in our international report, there is a dearth of academic research, analytical frameworks and consistent data about what works for town development. Where possible we have included quantitative data that illustrates the progress a town has made, but our case studies cannot provide comparable data between places and within a place over time.

This report is not intended to be a road map towards a prescribed destination; rather, it is a collection of stories to inspire action, and we hope that each town's journey can teach us about developing better places.

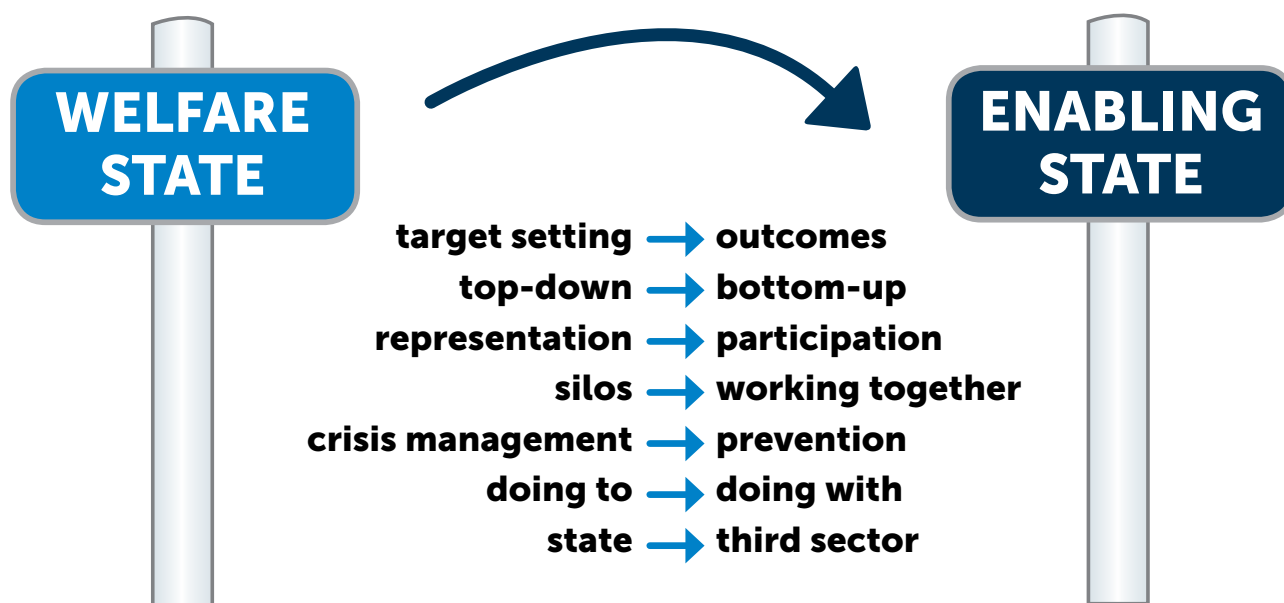
Box One: Ingredients of Turnaround Stories

1. What the town was like before. Context about the town, economic history, past and current role in surrounding region, what decline looked like and reasons for decline.
2. What is the town like now? A description of changes and progress the town has made.
3. An account of how the town got from where it was to where it is now, including who contributed to the journey and the approaches they used.

Enabling places

In 2012 the Trust published *Enabling State*, a report by Sir John Elvidge that sought to understand the fundamental transformations taking place in how we are governed. Rather than focussing on one aspect of change, this analysis drew out the direction of travel across public policy.

Figure One: Enabling State approaches



The Enabling State approach outlines seven shifts (Figure One), which are moving us from the state as a provider of welfare towards a more enabling style of governance. Set within a shift in the relationships between citizens, community and the state, the approach suggests that government, alongside driving the performance of public services, should enable communities to do what they do best (Elvidge, 2012).

Communities, we contend, are best-placed to bring a wealth of local knowledge and collective energy to the decisions that affect them. Moving away from a top-down service delivery model refigures the relationship between people and the state, and offers opportunities for communities to reshape how they interact with all levels of governance.

The transformations at the heart of the Enabling State approach all happen *within* places, are shaped *by* that place and have an impact *on* place: the way our villages, towns and cities develop is a product of the changing dynamics between different groups and of the different values of those groups.

Place, therefore – and in this report, a town – is a prism through which we can further understand these changing relationships. Collaborative local governments enable communities to improve their own wellbeing according to local priorities. Community groups and local enterprise can work with government actors to co-produce more effective services.

In the following stories we report on many of the Enabling State principles in action, including focussing on outcomes, communities participating in decision making, collaboration, prevention, co-production, strengthening the third sector and civil society.

The seven shifts of the Enabling State are drawn out where present in each case study in a summary box, and Annex One presents a matrix of which towns may shed light on which approach.

Discussion

The stories told in this report show the breadth of responses people have developed to transform their towns.

We have highlighted the process of the local changes rather than focussing on the results of a transformation. In this section we reflect on the levers of change across our case studies and draw out wider learning for everyone leading change in our towns.

Community connectors

Many of the towns we have discussed in this report have an organisation that acts as an anchor for the local community. Through design or happenstance, these organisations have developed into a hub within their town. Within this community anchor different relationships and projects intersect, and their multipurpose nature means they work with a cross section of the town with access into different silos of activity. Community anchors have the ability to convene and organise their partners, stimulating local relationships and sparking collaboration.

Set in the high street with a café, as well as a meeting and exhibition space, The Stove in Dumfries employs a group of curators to coordinate a public programme of events and projects. 100 High Street acts as a physical site to cross paths with other people, as well as a connector through which organisations can engage with the community and other local organisations. It has gained a reputation as a facilitator of local planning activities.

Traditionally, anchor institutions are defined by their 'spatial immobility', the fact that they don't operate for profit and by their scale (UKCES, 2015). Community anchors do not necessarily operate at significant economic scale, but have both the connectedness to place and not-for-profit interests of an anchor institution, and work to support the grassroots networks they are part of. They also have an asset that many large-scale organisations

may lack – an agile, responsive and collaborative relationship with the local community. Multipurpose community organisations that operate close to the action may hear things larger or statutory organisations may not, and they may be able to change paths faster based on new intelligence. This means, for example, that organisations such as the Exchange CIC in Morecambe can respond to community feedback about fears around gentrification and incorporate these into their plans.

Spaces for the community

Establishing space for people to connect is a priority for many towns and we found many examples of places taking active steps to create (or re-create) shared spaces for the community. As well as spaces to meet, communities were exploring spaces of shared ownership.

Building the physical infrastructure that communities need – affordable office space and housing, commercial space, conversational space in pubs and cafes – helps to build the social infrastructure that they enable. Places for discussion, inspiration and debate between neighbours is a prerequisite for local action.

In Todmorden local people took over underused outdoor spaces to grow food through 'guerrilla gardening', leading to an understanding between the council and Incredible Edible Todmorden that the town's outdoor spaces can be recovered for community growing, with the local authority issuing 'Incredible' licences to food growers. Local people are engaged with the outdoor spaces of their town and the transformation of these spaces attracts visitors to the town for 'vegetable tourism'!

In both Morecambe and Dumfries, community organisations have worked with the local authority to secure space for them to operate from, as well as to provide a 'common room' function that welcomes the community into the heart of local action.

Both towns are now pursuing spaces that will allow them to provide commercial and residential use to local citizens. In Morecambe and Dumfries this process has come after years of decline and lack of interest from the private sector, in particular from retailers. Instead, local communities have embraced the opportunity this neglect has brought and created available spaces to meet and to organise.

Nominal rents on long-term leases and asset transfers have been vital mechanisms in bringing spaces into community ownership or governance. This step into the formal management of community assets is also a mechanism for upskilling local residents to engage with political processes and converting the soft power of local relationships into formalised wealth.

Imagination and embracing something new

‘Could we do it differently here?’

Across our case studies, towns have displayed imagination and innovation in how they approach the future. In each place there has been a process of recognition that something new is needed – a new purpose for the high street, a new way of organising the economy or a new way of identifying as a community.

The local creative sector is often vital in facilitating this imaginative process, and using playfulness to spark the imagination of the local community and decision-makers within a town. At The Stove in Dumfries this is described as artist-led practice and involves facilitating an ongoing conversation about the future of the town, as well as playing with permission of who can change what.

For many places there is a recognisable sense of ‘why not?’. After years of failed attempts at regeneration, trying something that may seem scary and venturing into the unknown feels like the less risky option than re-treading the same path. For towns such as Todmorden and Dumfries, the community have challenged what is within their remit to change, playing with the demarcation of responsibility between community and government.

But imagination is not just the preserve of the artist, and in Wigan the local authority has reconfigured its relationship with the community through the Wigan Deal, embracing a new public–community relationship built on reciprocity.

In Grimsby the town is turning towards renewable energy to reimagine its relationship with the sea. For a town that was founded due to its position on the edge of the North Sea, the decline of its fishing industry left the town questioning how to move forward. A new chapter for the local economy, based on sustainable industries that offer good quality jobs, complements local cultural organisations, such as the Culture House which is celebrating Grimsby’s connection to Scandinavia built on centuries of trade.

Celebrating local assets

‘What is already here that is brilliant?’

Every town in this report has had a reckoning with its weaknesses and strengths, appraising the ways in which the town could make changes. Whether the answer was growing a community of local enterprises, beautiful natural assets or an emerging industry, each place has appraised honestly what assets it can use to improve its offer for its citizens.

These assets may be unique; however, they do not necessarily need to be. Unique selling points are just that – selling points for people who don’t yet know the town. Although introducing a town to outsiders can bring benefits to the towns, in this report the goal of towns has been to create thriving places where everyone can flourish.

When Totnes created the Totnes Pound, inspired by schemes in the US, it did so to try and encourage people to spend their money locally, ensuring profits circulated within the town (The Independent, 2008). Off the back of its success between 2007 and 2019, the scheme has inspired urban communities in Bristol and Brixton to also adopt a local currency.

Recognising a place’s assets can lead to the development of a town’s story – either an origin tale or its story of triumph against adversity.

In Todmorden Incredible Edible leaders have embraced the power of storytelling, with national and international interest in the town compounding local energy for change (Penabaz-Wiley & Kinoshita, 2017).

Analysis of international case studies has demonstrated the importance of developing a local story, but has warned of the difference between an authentic tale of change and a marketing strategy:

“These stories morph into what the town is ‘known for’, and how it sells itself to visitors. Some places try to go straight for the latter, which might increase tourism, but which rarely transforms the overall fortunes of the towns itself.”

(Kelly, 2016)

Although it may be tempting to combat an overwhelmingly negative story with an overwhelmingly positive one, this may not ring true for the local community.

Moving from silos to working together

Within our case study towns, organisations and individuals have been working together from across the public, private and third sectors with the community. United by a shared commitment to their place they have collaborated on shared projects or they have shared knowledge, resources and opportunities with one another.

Collaboration can grow from pre-existing relationships between individuals that occur organically in towns, where there is inevitably a smaller pool of people than in large cities. The scale of towns also means that information can spread fast and people are able to get stuck in to opportunities.

Through more or less formal routes, individuals and organisations from the across the town were in routine communication, were up to date on each other’s projects and were excited about each other’s events and successes going on in the town. They were proud to be part of a building momentum.

In Grimsby a formal partnership led to the town being awarded a first-of-its-kind Town Deal amounting to £67 million in funding. In Portrush working and funding partnerships between the local authority, Department of Communities, Tourism NI and Translink, working with the R&A Open, boosted the capacity of the town to deliver an unprecedented event in the town to an international audience.

In Morecambe the local authority is celebrating and supporting the energy in the West End of town, where community organisations and social enterprises are revitalising a deprived area and where the prospect of community management presents a viable alternative to retail.

In collaborations across our towns, each partner may differ on their particular priorities – the growth of economic opportunities, preventative investment to reduce reliance on services or a desire for a thriving cultural offer – but in each place organisations developed a shared vision for their town.

Kindness: the relational and the rational

For the towns in this report, the process of change has tapped into people’s emotions about their place. As well as the tangible, rational benefits that an improved economy or better housing might bring, people also cared deeply about building a sense of pride in where they lived. These communities had a sense that they had lost something important, a connection to their neighbours perhaps, or a sense of purpose for their town.

To mitigate this sense of dislocation, our towns have shown the importance of placing values at the heart of change and encouraging community members to reconnect with each other. For example, the creation of the Wigan Deal has been a move towards a more relational way of local authorities providing services to, and with, citizens.

At the Carnegie UK Trust we would describe many of these actions as displaying relational kindness, which:

“[C]an be found in communities, in places where people take more risks to connect than might be considered normal, and where kindness and relationships create a sense of belonging. It can also be found in organisations, with people performing at the limits of, or beyond, their autonomy – in many cases ignoring guidelines or breaking rules to do the right thing, the kind thing.”

(Ferguson & Thurman, 2019)

In Todmorden, Incredible Edible Todmorden has placed values of kindness and sharing at the heart of their activities, encouraging people to work alongside one another, to eat together and to connect with their neighbours. They work with Calderdale Council who have recently chosen kindness as a key theme of work in the run up to their 50th anniversary (Calderdale Council, 2019).

Caring Town Totnes is also embracing the relational aspects of local service provision. A network of over 70 public, voluntary and private care providers have responded to austerity-driven cuts by transforming how the community, and especially vulnerable people, are supported. The group aims to change the culture of care within the town to empower recipients to be active members of the community, as well as to encourage members of the network to attend in their capacity as residents, not just professionals (Transition Network, 2016).

In paid roles and as volunteers the practical actions they are taking to restore that pride can be understood as both rational and relational. Often we shy away from discussing emotions in the same breath as the ‘serious’ stuff of politics and economics. At the Carnegie UK Trust, however, we believe that we need to use both lexicons fluently if we want to bring about lasting societal change (Unwin, 2018).

Working over the long term

Some of our towns can track positive outcomes from work begun over a decade ago – Portrush’s Regeneration Strategy in 2007 paved the way for the success of the Open in 2019, and their current Community Plan spans 2017–2030 (Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2017a); and West Kilbride’s first community meeting was in the mid-1990s. For others, recent achievements are paving the way for future transformations, with Grimsby’s pioneering Town Deal lasting until 2028.

Community organisations are often driven by the desire to be financially sustainable in the long run and to provide economic sustainability for their communities: investments in projects such as affordable workspace and community housing (as in Dumfries, Morecambe and Totnes) have the long-term vision to build the regenerative resources of their community.

The complex economic and political structures our towns are embedded in, and the intricacy of the challenges they face, means that it is impossible to trigger immediate transformational change.

Instead, the actors we have described across our towns are working to slowly craft an alternative future for their place. With a tangible sense of urgency, there is also patience and a commitment to finding sustainable solutions. There is a commitment to learning and evolving tactics based on local knowledge.

Communities are working in the gaps created by the imperfections of the current system – not enough good jobs, no space for the community to meet, not enough money to run public services, poor infrastructure. These can seem like intractable problems.

Rather than relying on received wisdom, these towns are crafting local solutions suited to their place. Familiarity can lead to ingenuity, and the knowledge local people have of their place, their assets and their capacity can lead to futures other people wouldn’t think of.

Town stories

This report includes nine stories of towns undergoing transformation, as shown in Figure Two. These towns are on a journey to 'turn around' their prospects. They have not yet reached a final destination, but they have defined what is important to their town, what needs to be done and how they will do it.

Figure Two: Map of towns



Cardigan, Ceredigion County Council

Cardigan is situated in Ceredigion, West Wales, with a population of approximately 4,000 people. It was home to the first Welsh Eisteddfod – a traditional festival dating back to the twelfth century – and was historically a port town, exporting cloth to Arras in France. In recent years, Cardigan has built on its cultural heritage with a diverse programme of festivals that run throughout the calendar year.

What the situation was

Since the 1990s, not dissimilar to other market towns in the UK, Cardigan has faced challenges as the local retail market changed drastically. The ‘traditional’ market town model was no longer fit for purpose. Situated in a relatively remote part of Wales with limited public transport, Cardigan’s narrative was of a small place with little to inspire local people or to attract attention. The town has a higher proportion of people over the age of 65 and fewer younger adults, placing pressure on public services (Understanding Welsh Places, 2019). Cardigan Castle sat on the banks of the River Teifi propped up by stanchions.

What it became

“The town is home to a number of entrepreneurs and community-led organisations who are addressing the challenges towns face head on, grasping the best of what the area has to offer and building businesses and ventures that make the most of local, sustainable resources: the food, the environment and the culture.”

(Ross, 2019)

Today Cardigan is an example of a town making the most of its assets: its physical landscape, its history, its local resources and its people. Over the past decade, Cardigan has become

a place leading the way with environmental sustainability. A committed and resilient local community has built on the town’s cultural heritage and remote location to create a vibrant place for people to live, work and visit. Cardigan has recently won Street Food Provider of the Year, Rural Enterprise of the Year and Baker of the Year – testament to its success.

Cardigan has several community-owned spaces and a strong third sector, with 27 registered charities in the town – equating to 23 residents per charitable organisation (Understanding Welsh Places, 2019). These organisations, along with small local enterprises, have been pivotal in the town’s progress.

How it happened

Building on Cardigan’s unique historical narrative

Cardigan Castle, which sits in the centre of the town, is an important part of the town’s story but had been neglected: it was described as ‘a source of local embarrassment’ for those who lived and worked there (Wales Online, 2017). Following a 15-year campaign led by local volunteers its restoration in 2015 can be considered key to Cardigan’s new story. The campaign focussed on a clear, simple message: to ‘safeguard 900 years of history’, with the castle symbolic of the town’s cultural significance (Cardigan Building Development Trust, 2019).

Championed by a local couple who were the driving force behind the campaign, the council received an investment of over £12 million from Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake the restoration (Heritage Fund, 2015). In 2017 it won Channel 4's prestigious Restoration of the Year, placing it back in the centre of Cardigan town life.

The castle hosts a variety of events that fuse its traditional history with a modern purpose. With live music concerts, a museum and the much-loved giant, Cardigan Castle attracts visitors throughout the year and has created a new night-time economy for the town, with many other venues such as St Mary's Church which is also home to new festivals and events (Other Voices, 2019).

Rethinking remoteness

In recent years local enterprises that build on and utilise the town's landscape have flourished and are integral to Cardigan's progress. Small businesses, such as the local forager Wild Pickings, clothes upcycler Wench and Wear, Fforest Holidays and EcoShop, have created a vibrant and positive image of Cardigan as an environmentally conscious place, committed to developing sustainable methods of business and tourism.

Addressing the challenge of a remote location, ventures that aim to embrace the natural environment, such as Heritage Canoes that offers canoe trips down the River Teifi, provide new opportunities for visitors to experience the local landscape.

Many businesses support local suppliers by making the most of seasonable, high quality ingredients. The community of Cardigan has worked together to ensure that the strong calendar of events made possible by the restoration of the castle and the community-owned Theatr Mwldan are complemented by the use of local food stalls that enable the town to celebrate its remoteness and provide further opportunities for visitors to learn more about what the town has to offer and what makes it unique.

Building community cohesion

“Much of significance has been driven by the third sector.”

(Rowlands, 2019)

There is a clear ambition to continuously build engagement and cohesion amongst the local community, with many community- and third sector-led initiatives focussing on empowering people to have an active role in their town.

In 1996 Menter Aberteifi was set up by Cardigan Town Council as a community regeneration company 'to promote and implement the successful regeneration of Cardigan Town for the benefit of the community' (Menter Aberteifi, 2019). Menter Aberteifi has continued to grow as an active grassroots organisation in the town, encouraging residents to pursue the changes they wish to see. It has undertaken a community audit of ideas to reimagine Cardigan's purpose, many of which have now come to fruition.

'Tired of having little control over their town', the Social Enterprise 4GC (Cymdaithas Cynnal y Cyfngogi Cefn Gwlad Cymru/ Society to Sustain and Support the Rural Countryside) was set up by a group of volunteers (4CG, 2019). Their ambition – aligned with the priorities set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – is to support and invest in local enterprise to encourage a sustainable local economy. 4CG has developed a range of initiatives, from providing a 'wifi net' across the town, to a click-and-collect service that encourages people to shop locally.



Reimagining a market town

“This has been supplemented with a strong community of those who have chosen to make Cardigan their place to live and work.”

(Rowlands, 2019)

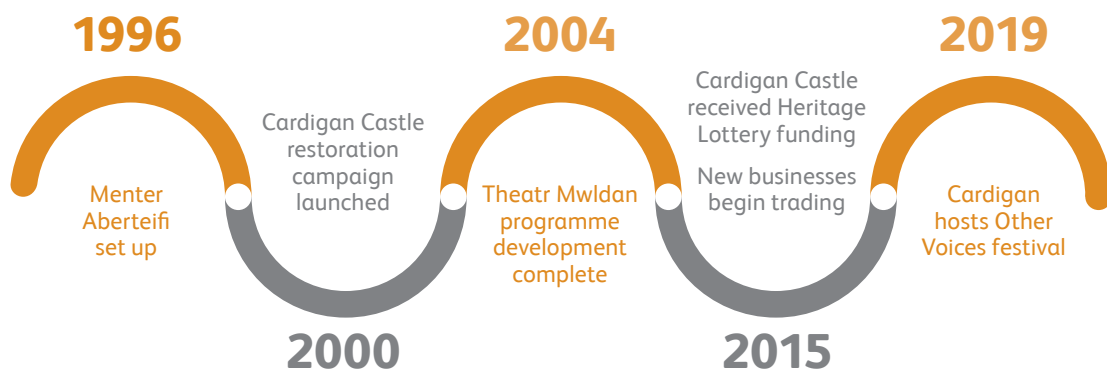
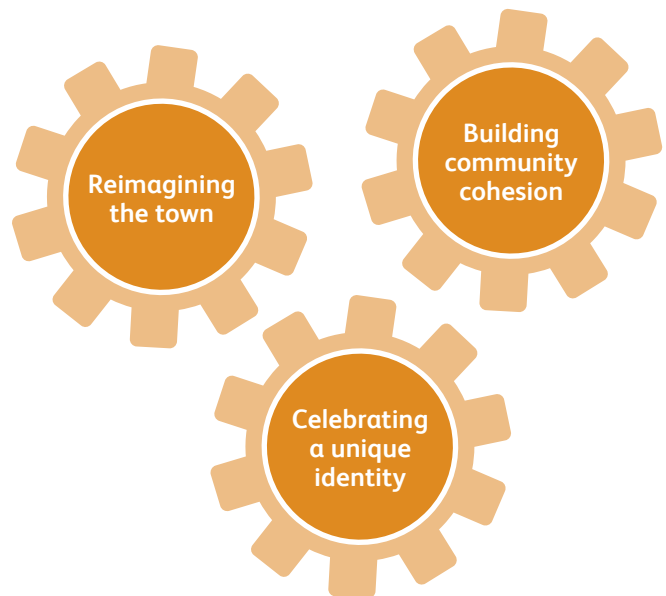
With a vibrant artist community that has put Cardigan on the creative map, the town has attracted new resident artists who have chosen to make it their home. From Theatr Mwldan – a community-owned venue for theatre, cinema,

music and dance – to Cardigan Guildhall, a hub of art gallery and community rooms for hire, the town is working hard to rediscover its purpose for the twenty-first century, whilst remaining true to its history as a market town.

Cardigan is an example of a town continuing to create a story for itself, one that builds on its cultural heritage whilst discovering new ways to attract and engage visitors from across the region and beyond. The town has utilised its assets – its location, resilience and strong charitable sector – to create a place that is responsive to the community’s needs.

Enabling State

Cardigan’s development demonstrates the Enabling State principles of shifting towards community and voluntary sector involvement in the ownership, delivery and management of public provision within the town. Organisations choosing to align with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are creating a joined-up approach to sustainability and local development.



Dumfries, Dumfries and Galloway Council

Dumfries is a town of just over 30,000 people in the south of Scotland. The town is bisected by the River Nith, which runs in to the Solway Firth. Dumfries is a Royal Burgh and market town, and was once home to the poet Robert Burns. The town now hosts the Crichton University Campus, shared by the University of the West of Scotland, the University of Glasgow, Scotland's Rural College, and Dumfries and Galloway College.

What the situation was

Dumfries town centre grew around a thriving market, a busy port and a high street that was home to many residents. The combination of commercial, industrial and residential use brought vitality to the market town known as 'The Queen of the South'.

Through the latter decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the town centre of Dumfries suffered. Residents moving out of the town centre, changing shopping habits and then a recession challenged the viability of the retailers who dominated the high street.

In 2010 a report proclaimed Dumfries had changed 'from clone town to ghost town', turning from a street dominated by chain retailers to a street with increasingly empty shop fronts (New Economics Foundation, 2010). As independents had given way to chains, the chains themselves appeared increasingly vulnerable.



What it became

Today Dumfries High Street is home to The Stove Network, the first artist-led community development trust in the UK. The Stove Network ('The Stove') is working with the community and using creativity to reinvigorate public life in the town centre.

Based at 100 High Street, The Stove incorporates a ground floor café and outdoor area, first floor exhibition space and third floor workspace, and it has been an engine of creativity in the town since 2011.

In 2016 The Stove won a Scottish Regeneration (SURF) Award for Creative Regeneration for its work in renewing the town centre of Dumfries. The Stove has now given rise to plans for a new town block called the Midsteeple Quarter: a project to regenerate the town centre by bringing homes and affordable enterprise space back to the high street. The Midsteeple Quarter project outlines an alternative purpose for small town high streets, where creativity and culture complement the commercial role of the town centre.

Although for now there are still 'To let' signs and empty window in Dumfries town centre, there is also a regular programme of cultural and community events, opportunities for creative employment, and soon there will be homes on the high street.

How it happened

Reimagining the purpose of the town centre

The Stove began in 2011 as a collective of local artists who came together to take on responsibility of a high street property, now leased long term from the council. 100 High Street is now used as a community hub and arts centre, with The Stove dedicated to revitalising the town through harnessing the strength of the local community and local artists. The Stove facilitates creativity in everyday spaces through public art and events in the town centre, as well as providing a hub for community activities at 100 High Street.

The role of the artist, and artistic skills, are vital to the way that The Stove connects with the community. Articulated as artist-led practice, The Stove uses the creative production of a curator to encourage the community-led development of ideas for the town.

The Stove brings playfulness, imagination, conversation and a willingness to take risks to community-led development, with curators acting as both an instigator and a facilitator, hosting community discussions about the future of the town, and maintaining a focus on practical actions from the small to the substantial.

The approach The Stove uses draws on their own connection to the town, including the founding artists and the curatorial team (joint Creative Directors for The Stove) who are still rooted in the community. The Stove offers a model of artist-led regeneration that builds upwards from the community. It isn't a model of regeneration that is community-consulted or community-engaged, but instead it is created by the community itself.

The Stove's activities in the town are for their home audience and reflect their understanding of their home town, rather than for presenting an external image of Dumfries. Together the community and the artists diagnose the problems, imagine solutions and carve out opportunities to make change.

Supporting the creative economy

The Stove offers employment and career development opportunities to artists and creative professionals within the town and the surrounding region. It provides direct employment to a team of curators and staff, offers opportunities for one-off commissions and acts as an incubator for creative young people in the area. The Stove has been responsible for supporting the development of three new arts organisations: Environmental Arts Festival Scotland, Dumfries Music Conference and D-LUX Festival of Lighting.

Creative, engaging, flexible work in the town gives people who may have moved away from the town an opportunity to come home for, as well as giving young people looking for work experience in the creative industries a reason to stay. Blueprint100 offers young people curatorial experience and support over a year, during which they develop the practical application of their skills and contribute to The Stove's programme of public events. Retaining creative talent leads to a multiplier effect that nurtures a vibrant local creative economy.

New civic infrastructure

The work of The Stove has brought new assets into community control. Both 100 High Street, the home of The Stove, and 135–137 High Street (The Oven) in the Midsteeples Quarter have brought new civic infrastructure to the town centre. This repositions it as a centre for community conversations and cultural life, no longer only reliant on retail.

Community-led solutions for local issues – housing for the high street

Many of The Stove projects facilitated discussions with local people about the future of Dumfries town centre. The absence of homes on the high street was a recurring theme in these conversations. People could remember when families inhabited the flats above the shops, creating a bustling community. The residents brought life to the high street as well as custom to the shops.

'A House on the High Street' was a film that explored this change:

“A brighter future for the high street isn't all about shops and shopping. It's about people.”

(The Stove Network & Pile-on Productions, 2016)

A screening of the film organised by a community member led to the formation of a partnership to scope out the practicalities of a community-owned high street block, which eventually led to the planning of the Midsteeples Quarter.

Plans for the block will diversify the high street, combining homes with enterprise spaces for working, making and selling. The project's

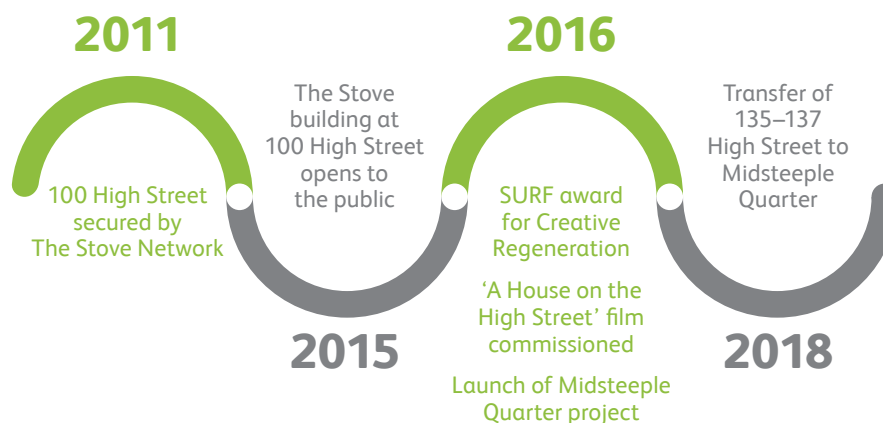
multiple uses will give the community control over commercial and creative opportunities in the high street, as well as giving them power to tackle the housing pressure faced in the town.

Accessing a variety of funds

The Midsteeples Quarter project successfully received funding from Dumfries and Galloway Council's Town Centre Living Fund for the first phase of the project. The asset transfer of the first building – the only publicly owned property in the block – became The Oven. The Midsteeples Quarter project has also accessed funding from philanthropic trusts, Creative Scotland and Scottish Government, as well as the financial support of their community membership.

Enabling State

Dumfries is demonstrating many aspects of the Enabling State approach and change is being led by community organisations with participation from a wide group of people. The local authority is supporting this leadership through the transfer of spaces on the high street into community ownership or management, building the resilience of the town.



Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire Council

Grimsby is a town of around 88,000 people that was founded, according to legend, by Grim the Viking in the ninth century. It is a seaside port town situated in northeast Lincolnshire on the Humber Estuary. It has direct access to the North Sea and a long history of fishing. Today it is the largest fish processor in the UK.

What the situation was

Grimsby has always been a town reliant on its proximity to the North Sea. However, in the 1950s the seasonal herring catch collapsed, followed by an abrupt decline in the cod trawling industry in the 1970s. This was due to the 'Cod Wars' with Iceland, and EU fisheries policy restricting catch quota from Grimsby fishermen (European Commission, 2010) leading to the loss of significant numbers of well-paid and highly skilled jobs in the area. Although there has been a subsequent growth in fish processing and food manufacturing, the prosperity of the earlier decades of the twentieth century have not yet returned to Grimsby.

The decline in Grimsby's economic fortunes has been reflected in its reputation and treatment by the media. Negative portrayals of the town in productions such as Sacha Baron Cohen's 2016 film 'Grimsby' and Channel 4's 2015 series 'Skint' have had a lasting impact on Grimsby. Perceptions of the town – both internal and external – are a challenge in helping Grimsby reinvent itself.

What it became

By 2019 Grimsby has earned the first 'Town Deal' in the UK, securing £67 million of funding from local and national government to regenerate the town. As the only town to be mentioned by name in the Industrial Strategy, Grimsby is enjoying a renaissance in its national reputation.

In 2018 Grimsby also secured significant funding from the Cultural Development Fund, which seeks to support the contribution of the cultural industries to the Industrial Strategy. One of five places to receive funding, the £3.2 million investment will support international cultural events, public art installations and local creative businesses (UK Government, 2019).

Grimsby is also a key player in the 'Energy Estuary' scheme which aims to develop the Humber estuary as the home of green energy in the UK. In 2016 Grimsby topped national green energy league tables, securing the largest proportion (28%) of its energy requirements from renewable sources (The Independent, 2016).



How it happened

Partnership working around a new Town Deal

In July 2018 the Greater Grimsby Project Board secured a flagship Town Deal to receive additional funding directly from central government.

The Greater Grimsby Project Board is a group of prominent local business and public sector leaders. It is led by David Ross, the founder of Carphone Warehouse and a local to the town. The strength of local partnerships formed around a single vision for the town is displayed in the group's prospectus for a deal (Greater Grimsby Board, 2018). The authority conferred on the group by the commitment of both the local private and public sectors allowed the negotiation of the bespoke pilot deal to be negotiated with senior members of government.

The Stage 1 Town Deal, worth £67 million, rewards the 'strong local partnership' (UK Government, 2018a) shown in Grimsby. It focuses on four themes: economic growth; housing delivery; regeneration; and skills and education. The funding, split between local and national commitments, comprises:

- An extra £2 million from the government's Local Growth Fund for major road improvements
- £65 million of investment (£35 from North East Lincolnshire Council and £30 million from national government) to support the regeneration plans for Grimsby town, including the historic Kasbah area in the former docks. This includes money from Homes England and also from Historic England for the Heritage Action Zone, which is match-funded by the council and supported by the landowner, Associated British Ports (InvestNEL, 2019).

The deal has been hailed as inspiring other coastal towns, such as Blackpool, to seek a similar funding arrangement (House of Lords, 2019).

Championing culture

Alongside the development of the Town Deal, Grimsby's creative community gathered under the banner of the Culture Works consortium. The coalition lobbied the local authority for a Culture and Heritage Framework for the county. The framework aims to leverage Grimsby's cultural assets to improve health, education and economy outcomes for the area. It was the result of concerted relationship building between the not-for-profit, private and public sectors in the town.

With a Culture and Heritage Framework now in place, in early 2019 Grimsby was selected to be one of five areas to receive £3 million funding as part of the Cultural Development Fund. The Fund, part of the Creative Industries Sector Deal, is designed to support places to realise their potential as 'creative centres' (UK Government, 2018b)). In Grimsby this will be used to support the heritage-led development of the town centre, support for local creative businesses and also a programme of flagship events.

Although Grimsby is in a local authority identified as having amongst the lowest engagement with arts activities in England (Arts Council England, 2011), it has a wealth of creative talent represented in this network. Amongst these are the Culture House, an arts organisation working with local communities to celebrate their local stories and support artistic aspirations. The Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce supports the consortium and is a member of Culture Works, acting as a link between the private and creative sectors in the town.

Embracing industrial change – reimagining the relationship with the sea

Following the decline of fishing in the twentieth century, and left with a large number of skilled workers seeking employment, Grimsby's relationship with the North Sea, and Scandinavia, has transitioned towards green energy.

The Humber Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) strategy to capitalise on their natural assets – 'accelerating clean growth on the energy estuary'

– positions the towns that surround the Humber as the home of sustainable energy infrastructure in the UK and a leader in practical efforts to decarbonise and meet the government’s Net Zero target for 2050 (Humber Local Enterprise Partnership, 2019).

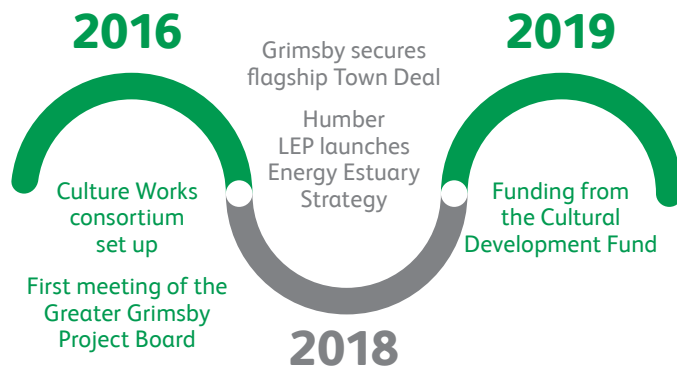
Ørsted, a Danish renewable energy company with its UK headquarters in Grimsby, has been a champion of the opportunities that clean energy can bring to Grimsby. Cooperation between Ørsted, the local authority and the landowner (Associated British Ports) is creating increasing numbers of jobs in wind energy, with Grimsby situated as a maintenance hub servicing the growing windfarms in the North Sea.

Maintenance of the current windfarms has already provided opportunities for local people to enter skilled work, and future plans include developing the estuary as a leader in decommissioning of wind power infrastructure.

In Grimsby the Town Deal, the championing of culture and heritage, and the Energy Estuary all offer new hope for the town. The negative portrayal of Grimsby in popular culture has arguably done real harm to Grimsby – not least to the confidence and aspiration of its residents. However, positioning the town as a place that can innovate to deliver change for its residents has borne fruit.

Enabling State

In Grimsby change is happening built on strong partnerships around a shared vision for the town. The Grimsby Town Deal came about due to close working relationships between central and local government, the community and the business sector. The partnership that has developed between the creative sector and the local authority is also bearing fruit through funding opportunities.



Morecambe, Lancaster City Council

Morecambe is a seaside town of around 35,000 people in Lancashire, North West England. It is situated within Morecambe Bay, just a few miles from Lancaster. The town developed around the former village of Poulton-le-Sands during the mid-nineteenth century after a new railway started to bring visitors to the seaside resort. Tourism continued to dominate the town's economy into the late twentieth century.

What the situation was

By the end of the twentieth century Morecambe had suffered years of decline. Visitors were staying for shorter periods of time and spending less money, and formerly popular guesthouses and tourist attractions fell into disrepair (The Independent, 1992). A fairground set to revive the town's fortunes in the early 1990s – at a cost of £2.6 million to the council – closed after only four months.

The significant reduction in tourist numbers removed the town's purpose. In addition to denting the economy, the decline in visitors damaged the town's sense of identity.

The densely populated West End of Morecambe is amongst the 20% most-deprived neighbourhoods in England and has significantly higher levels of private renting (associated with housing insecurity) than the rest of the county (Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions).



What it became

In 2019 Morecambe is a place with a mission: socially engaged community enterprise is blossoming in the West End, and the Eden project has announced a development to transform the seafront with a northern outpost.

In the West End the Exchange CIC offers a hub of creative and community life, encouraging people to drop in, converse and grow ideas.

More Music – the Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation for the region – continues to enable musical excellence as it has done for over 25 years, and the Morecambe Fringe has just celebrated its third successful year. The 'Vintage by the Sea' festival in 2019 attracted 30,000 visitors over two days (Blade, 2019) and the renovated art deco Midland Hotel, which dominates the promenade, now runs conferences and local events.

Morecambe hosts a Big Local project under the coordination of the West End Million. This is a grant of at least £1 million pounds over a decade to be spent as the community thinks best to boost its capacity and resilience.

Morecambe has faced challenges familiar to many seaside towns: a hollowing out of the local economy, an increasingly dilapidated built environment and a poor image of itself. The local community has responded by harnessing socially minded enterprise in the town, building community connections and improving the wellbeing of the town.

How it happened

Uniting around a catalyst and building a sense of momentum

There is a sense of a critical mass of like-minded community enterprises developing in Morecambe's West End (Lancaster Guardian, 2018a). These diverse organisations share a commitment to making Morecambe a creative place where everyone in the community can thrive. They are united by their belief that Morecambe is rich in cultural and social value, and with the commitment of local people the town can also thrive economically. As numbers grow, the sense of momentum has caught the attention of local government and national press, further contributing to the buzz around Morecambe's revival.

The social capital that Morecambe is rebuilding was displayed in late 2017 when, in response to a news broadcast on the reality of poverty in town, a call-out was made from the community to gather together and build a response.

“Piles of coats, jumpers and other donated clothes grew on oblong tables in the corner. People filtered into rows of seats on the old dancefloor ready for a start that kept getting delayed as more people arrived.”

(Sheffield, 2018)

Hundreds of people gathered, spurred on by the belief that the economic hardship they were facing just wasn't good enough for their town (ibid.).

Local leadership, responsive to community needs

This community response was facilitated by Morecambe's local leaders, who worked with the community to develop imaginative solutions to the town's challenges.

The Exchange CIC was created as a response to one set of local challenges – the lack of space for and representation of creatives in the town. Identified by people who had been brought up in Morecambe or close by, the founders of the Exchange knew the town, its obstacles but also its assets. They were confident that a community hub would allow people to come together to share skills and support one another.

The Exchange CIC originally envisioned creating studio space for the community. However, responding to local feedback, local creatives instead wanted a gallery and shop front. Today the Exchange is an arts hub for the town, offering an open space for the community to meet and create together. Beyond catering just for the artistic community, the Exchange acts as an incubator for local ideas and a resource for the whole community, using an agile do-it-yourself approach to developing solutions to shared challenges (Lancaster Guardian, 2018b).

The Exchange recognises that assets owned by the community are an important part of developing collective economic security. Fears around gentrification have sprung from people worrying that improvements to the town may lead to displacement, and the Exchange are now exploring options such as community-owned housing through a community land trust.



Community ownership is collective wealth

Community ownership of commercial space is also seen as an important route to economic prosperity, allowing Morecambe residents to co-create their own professional opportunities. With the support of the local authority, the Exchange is currently leading feasibility work into taking on a former department store in the West End to convert it to an affordable work space, supported by the Coastal Revival Fund.

The council, who in previous years wished to see the store returned to private commerce, now see the community as offering a chance to build on local energy to improve their own area; to 'test' community-led solutions; and to offer better viability for the site through more diverse funding opportunities (Lancaster City Council, 2018).¹

¹ See Sheffield (2018) for a full discussion of Community Wealth Building activities in Morecambe.

The development of local wealth is supported by Lancaster City Council. Developing the relationship between the council and the community into one that is increasingly built on partnership rather than just investment (Lancaster Guardian, 2018b) relies on the development of community anchor institutions such as the Exchange CIC and the anchoring networks that are formed by the density of community enterprise in Morecambe. This creates a route through which local residents can work with the local authority to realise their own ambitions for their town.

Enabling State

Morecambe is demonstrating many of the Enabling State principles, including moving power to the community through encouraging participation, action on local issues and increased community ownership of assets. This bolsters the resilience of the community to respond to local challenges. Community groups, funders and the local authority are working together to ensure Morecambe is a thriving town for all its residents.



Portrush, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Portrush is a seaside town on the north coast of Northern Ireland, just to the west of the Giant's Causeway. It has a population of around 7,000 people. Once a fishing village, during the Victorian times it became a popular holiday and day-trip destination. The town centre sits on a mile-long peninsula and is surrounded by three beaches: East Strand, West Strand and White Rocks.

What the situation was

By the early 2000s Portrush, similar to many traditional seaside towns, had experienced a serious decline in visitor numbers. The attraction of easy and affordable air travel to reliable summer sun had dented the appeal of the seaside town.

The impact of this was felt in employment opportunities in the town. Although the tourism industry provided jobs for 12% of the working population (in hotel and catering) – a significant proportion compared to the borough and Northern Ireland average – available work was highly seasonal (Portrush Regeneration Group, 2007).

Based on the 2001 census, Portrush's score for the crime and disorder ranking within the Index of Multiple Deprivation was the second worst in Northern Ireland. This was attributed to the town's night-time economy and high student population (ibid.).

What it became

In 2017 89% of Portrush residents rated the town as a good or excellent place to live (Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2017b).

In 2019 Portrush hosted the 148th Open Championships at the Royal Portrush Golf Course. This international event represented the culmination of over ten years of regeneration work by the local authority, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Executive's departments and agencies. The Open attracted £17.5 million of investment from the Northern Ireland Department for Communities to enhance the town centre, which went alongside the £5.6 million development of the train station, courtesy of the Department for Communities and Translink (Forbes, 2019). Sheffield Hallam University has estimated the Open could bring in up to £80 million to the economy (The Irish News, 2019).

Perceptions of improvement to the public realm in the run up to the Open were rated as 'Good' or 'Very good' by 98% of survey respondents (Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2019a).

The appeal of the natural beauty of Portrush's beaches, the attraction of outdoor activities such as surfing and connections to the nearby Giant's Causeway complemented a line-up of 'big ticket' events such as the annual North West 200 (a motorcycle road racing event held in the area since 1930s). The success of the 2019 Open – which attracted almost 237,000 visitors – was preceded by the 2012 Irish Open, which had 130,000 spectators.

How it happened

Celebrating local assets

The regeneration strategy for Portrush has built on a clear recognition of local assets. The natural environment and opportunities for outdoor activities are routes to creating a locally distinct and sustainable base for tourism.

In 2007 Coleraine Borough Council (the local authority at the time) launched a regeneration strategy for Portrush that focussed on maximising the benefits from tourism. Led by a cross-sector partnership, the regeneration strategy outlined the opportunities for the area and identified Portrush's abundant local assets, including:

- The surrounding natural environment, including three beaches within the town, as well as nearby Portstewart Strand and the Giant's Causeway
- The appeal of outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, surfing, boating and sailing
- The opportunities presented by golf tourism, which focussed on the Royal Portrush Golf Club. The Club has two separate courses, one of which (the Dunluce Links course) is considered to be amongst the best in Ireland.

Planning and funding in partnership

Portrush is the largest seaside town along the Causeway Coast and it is now returning as a significant economic driver in the region. This is the result of sustained planning and partnership work across the public sector and with local businesses for over a decade.

Since the launch of the Regeneration Strategy the local authority for Portrush has worked in close partnership with the Northern Ireland Executive, its departments and its agencies: in particular the Department for Communities, Translink and Tourism Northern Ireland. This has enabled collaboration around shared goals and priorities and led to significant levels of funding for regeneration projects.

The Irish Open, held in Portrush and neighbouring Portstewart, paved the way for the immense logistical challenge of the 2019 148th Open, which attracted 237,000 spectators over four days to a town of less than 7,000 people. This was the second highest Open visitor numbers ever outside St Andrews (Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2019b).

The town received £17.5 million of investment as part of an ongoing regeneration programme, including £6 million for public realm improvements, £500,000 to local businesses for shop front refurbishments and £5.6 million for a new train station (BBC News, 2019).

Despite some criticism of the event ticketing system, which didn't allow visitors to leave the site and return on the same day, the impact of the event on the reputation of the town will have a significant impact over coming years.

The R&A estimates that around 600 million households will have watched the Open (The Telegraph, 2019), and it has pledged that after a 68-year absence from the town, Portrush will return to the Open's roster 'for many years to come', with some predicting a return to the town in just five years (The Telegraph, 2019).

The onset of community planning in Northern Ireland has further embedded place-based collaboration in the planning process.



Long-term thinking

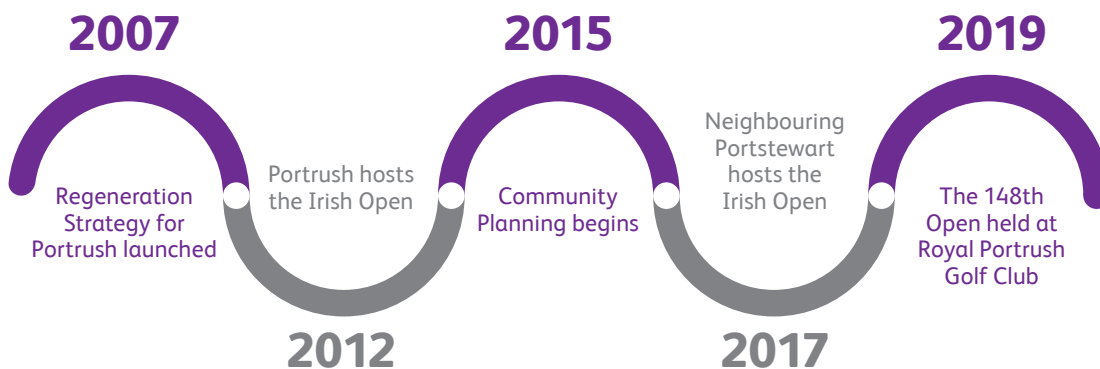
The long-term approach to the regeneration of Portrush, beginning in 2007 with a partnership-led regeneration strategy and building to a successful international sporting event, has built public confidence that the area is improving for tourists, residents and local business. Through demonstrating the capacity of the town to host large sporting events over a number of years,

Portrush has managed to pull off a globally significant sporting event that saw 237,000 spectators descend on a town of 7,000.

There is a strong sense that the town is improving rapidly. Although the success of events such as the 148th Open are internationally eye-catching, the sustained efforts to make the most of local assets and improve the town centre over a long period is reaping rewards with visitors and locals alike.

Enabling State

The regeneration process in Portrush has built a long-term strategy to boost the economy of the seaside town in order to improve outcomes for its citizens. In prioritising growth over the long term, the local authority is encouraging upstream prevention of local challenges. The strategies that have led to success have been developed in partnership with different public bodies at local and central levels and with local businesses.



Todmorden, Calderdale Council

Todmorden is a town at the head of the Upper Calder Valley, with a tributary of the River Calder flowing through it. The river was the historical boundary of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The town's geography and situation – close to Manchester – contributed to it thriving in the industrial age with cotton and wool mills. Now it has a population of around 15,000 and many people commute to nearby cities to work.

“Incredible Edible was a crazy dream that became a reality. An experiment born out of frustration and concern about our children's tomorrows that has created a platform where people of all ages cultures, incomes and abilities can offer their gifts to build something kinder through food and the power of small actions. Todmorden was the first community to come together to use the Incredible Edible model... and what an impact they have had.”

Pam Warhurst CBE, Chair of Incredible Edible Ltd.
(Morley, Farrier, & Dooris, 2017)

What the situation was

Todmorden flourished during the nineteenth century and its history as a Victorian industrial town can be seen in buildings such as the grand town hall that straddles the two counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire. When the mill closed in the twentieth century, Todmorden lost its economic base.

At the start of the twenty-first century residents' concerns about the town's decline increased. Two major voluntary services closed in the town and a sense of being ignored developed.

What it became

Led by two community champions, a group of activists began to reconnect the people of Todmorden and to revitalise the town. They created Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET) with the aim of using and growing food to support the community and the local environment.

The activities of IET have led to the flourishing of the community's social, economic and environmental wellbeing according to an evaluation by the University of Central Lancashire and Manchester Metropolitan University (Morley, Farrier, & Dooris, 2017).

Volunteers with IET now grow herbs, flowers and vegetables in public spaces throughout the town. This 'guerrilla gardening' has changed the look of the town, taking over derelict areas and spare corners. It is a very visible mark of the community's activity and IET has encouraged 'vegetable tourism' to show off the community gardens to visitors, leading to an increase in visitor numbers (Penabaz-Wiley & Kinoshita, 2017). IET also organises events and activities, such as a Festival of Light and a literary festival.

More people in the community participate in shared activities than they did previously and 'active engagement ha[s] increased markedly' (Morley, Farrier, & Dooris, 2017). Encouraging local sharing of resources has led to spin-off initiatives, such as a scheme to loan equipment like tables and chairs, and coming together to build a bus stop shelter.

Businesses and local farms have benefitted from the focus on producing and buying local produce (ibid.). IET has spawned several social enterprises in the town – the Incredible AquaGarden and Incredible Farm – which have also been highlighted as important to the local community through teaching and training (ibid.). The local secondary school now has two commercial-size polytunnels with dedicated workers to look after an orchard and bee hives (Commission for

Architecture and the Built Environment, 2011). The school has integrated growing into the curriculum and has applied for a specialist status for agriculture and land-based industries.

Todmorden is increasingly working with Calderdale Council, which has become the first in Britain to issue ‘Incredible’ licences to grow food on spare land.

IET has led to other places in the UK and worldwide trying the Incredible Edible model. By 2017 there were reportedly 125 UK towns and 500 international Incredible Edible towns (Penabaz-Wiley & Kinoshita, 2017). Todmorden residents see IET as putting the town ‘on the map’. They are increasingly proud of the place they live in, which they believe has encouraged people to care more for the local environment (Morley, Farrier, & Dooris, 2017).

How it happened

Community action

IET is a bottom-up movement that began because a group of committed volunteers came together and said that they could no longer rely on outsiders – bankers and the government – to support their community and local businesses (Clear, 2019). They had to act, to use their own resources and to build their resilience from the ground up.

They describe themselves as ‘radical community building in action’, working without staff and resisting chasing external funding (Incredible Edible Todmorden, 2019a). IET was deliberately started with no outside resources. It has kept this focus and has promoted working together using the strengths of the community. This reflects the belief that ‘when money comes in, community engagement stops’ (Clear, 2019).

IET generates income from paid tours around the guerrilla gardens, from community activists being paid to speak about IET, and from hosting events and conferences (ibid.).

Bringing people together

IET is an inclusive movement that brings people together through the growing and sharing of food:

“It breaks down barriers between people by focusing on something that we all love and need – food – because it is inclusive.”

(Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2011)

IET encourages a wide range of residents to be involved in gardening the town and twice a month around 50 people turn up to tend the plots. The gardening brings benefits, including social contact, exercise and time in the outdoors. After the session IET hosts a meal, for people from all backgrounds and communities. IET has also reached out to the community in other direct ways, for example by helping people during the floods in 2012 and 2015.

The instigators of IET say that the growing together has ‘modelled sharing’. It has developed an open loan scheme for equipment – tents, tables, chairs etc. – which anyone can borrow for free. The scheme has benefitted a range of local clubs and helped to bring them together. It has helped the community to understand and support IET.

IET acts as a connector – matching people’s assets and willingness to provide practical support to different individuals. It has over 370 volunteers on its database and if a community member needs support IET uses social media to recruit volunteers – ‘the muckers’.

Visionary leadership

IET emerged from the ideas of community members concerned about their town’s decline. They began to bring people together and connect them to their place through food growing.

The leadership of IET has been a catalyst in setting a vision for change for the town and embedding values into the movement’s ways of working, shown in their mottos of ‘action not

words; we are not victims' and 'don't wait for permission' (Penabaz-Wiley & Kinoshita, 2017).

Eleven years later, one of the founders is still leading IET and is championing Todmorden to residents and the wider world, whilst another is promoting Incredible Edible internationally.

Working relationally

In the last five years, the importance of kindness when meeting people's needs – from recycling to providing social care services, to baking and sign making – has become increasingly obvious to the leaders of Incredible Edible Todmorden (Incredible Edible Todmorden, 2019b). As one of the IET members said:

“It is really beautiful to be known as a

town that's kind.”

IET gives kindness awards to people who support the town in many different ways, from the best shop front and market trader to activists and the Chair of the Wellness Centre (Incredible Edible Todmorden, 2019b).

The potential of kindness to improve community wellbeing is displayed in Todmorden, where the community's ambitions for the town and the projects they undertake are characterised by a strong sense of value. The blending of relational and rational language is also becoming a focus of Calderdale Council, Todmorden's local authority, who have developed a Kindness Strategy. IET says 'kindness is written large in everything [the Council] do' (Clear, 2019).

Enabling State

Flexibility has allowed IET to act in ways that larger, statutory organisations may find more difficult. It is an example of a bottom-up movement that is filling the space between people, communities and larger institutions. IET is owned by the community and makes the most of local people's talents and local assets – starting with green spaces. It embodies the idea of doing with, rather than doing to and is adept at meeting the needs of a range of people.



Totnes, South Hams District Council

Totnes is a market town in Devon with a population of approximately 8,000 people. The town is situated within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is around 21 miles from Exeter. Totnes is built on a hill rising from the west bank of the River Dart, separating it from the suburb of Bridgetown.

What the situation was

Despite the media image of Totnes as the 'capital of new age chic' and 'Britain's town of the future' (The Guardian, 2011) evidence from the Office for National Statistics tells a more nuanced story, with the town having faced challenges of higher levels of young people receiving workless benefits (7%) compared to the national average (5.5%) (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Approximately half of the population held an annual income of less than £20,000, with many classified as unemployed or in low-paid work (Atmos Totnes, 2015).

Between 2007 and 2010, the closure of the Dairy Crest milk factory and a decrease in local government positions had a significant impact on the Totnes economy, with the loss of over 2,500 jobs (ibid.).

What it became

Totnes today is a place with an ambitious and thriving community. Those who live and work within the town are striving to address its challenges and to make it an inclusive place to live with a sustainable local economy.

The community has been inventive in the design and delivery of initiatives that will directly benefit those who live there, and they strive to address the town's challenges.

It was amongst the first Transition Towns, a local movement that has led to multiple other projects, such as the famous Totnes Pound and

REconomy (a drop-in workspace for start-ups). Totnes has a thriving local ethical economy; it is a vibrant hub for music, theatre and art; and it has a community committed to leading change from the bottom up.

Totnes is also a Caring Town, where services and the community work together to support those most in need.

How it happened

Community ambition and ownership

“We want spaces to protect, own, use and manage... spaces available for all to come together and to do what they're good at.”

(Lodge, 2019)

When the Dairy Crest Factory closed in 2007, the building was set to be demolished and land sold to developers. But the people of Totnes wanted to prevent this local asset being taken out of the community and saw it as a space with potential to bring the people of Totnes together (Atmos Totnes, n.d.).

The Totnes Community Development Society set up Atmos Totnes and led a series of campaigns between 2007 and 2014 to bring the site into community ownership. Their ambition was to provide a space for members of the community and to create affordable homes and employment opportunities.

In 2016 Atmos Totnes led one of the first Community Right to Build Order processes in England, striving to give more control to local people. Forming part of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations contained within the Localism Act 2011, the process involved consulting with the people who live and work in Totnes on the future plans for the site. Eighty-six per cent of those who voted agreed that the project should be granted planning permission (Totnes Community Development Society).

The town has driven a culture change and worked to strengthen local institutions – beginning a shift in power that gives more control to the communities of Totnes.

Creating a regenerative local economy: Transition Town Totnes

Totnes was one of the first Transition Towns, a movement founded by Rob Hopkins and launched in 2006. Initially set up to promote local resilience in the face of climate change and peak oil, Transition Town Totnes now coordinates an extensive range of local projects that covers areas such as housing and energy, health and wellbeing, and waste and resources. Projects include Incredible Edible, which utilises unused spaces in the town to grow fruit and vegetables, and REconomy Centre, which is a drop-in workspace for start-up enterprises.

The impact of this programme has gone beyond that of the town itself. Transition Town Totnes led the way and now forms part of a global transition network, with initiatives from around the world sharing knowledge and ideas. It is a community-led charity with an ambition to strengthen the local economy, reduce the town's environmental impact and build resilience for the future by addressing issues relating to cheap energy.

The Totnes Pound

The Totnes Pound, which grew out of Transition Town Totnes, ran between 2007 and 2019. It demonstrated the ambition of the community to build a regenerative local economy that circulated wealth locally (Barrett, 2019). The project was driven by a small group of residents and aimed to encourage people living in Totnes

to shop locally, with over 30,000 Totnes Pounds circulating throughout the 12 years of the project (Transition Town Totnes, 2019).

The project started with 300 notes shared out in a Transition Town Totnes meeting. Initially 18 local traders accepted the currency and, 12 years later, the project ended with over 7,000 notes in circulation and 75 businesses participating in the scheme. The principles behind the project were to increase the resilience of the town's economy and to highlight the importance of shopping locally. Throughout the lifetime of the project it helped to showcase the community's independent traders and to put Totnes on the map, inspiring others across the world to follow suit, including the Bristol Pound and the Brixton Pound.

In 2019 the Totnes Pound scheme closed, due in part to the rise of the cashless economy. Celebrating the scheme's legacy with a party, the Totnes Pound steering group described the 'experiment', which drew on the local heritage of Totnes Union Banknote from 1810, as 'a real success' that 'provoked reflection on the importance of the local economy'. The group's commitment to supporting the local economy continues under the REconomy banner which provides workspace and a Local Entrepreneur Forum and has developed a Local Economic Blueprint (REconomy, n.d.).

Providing the conditions for a resilient local community

Caring Town

Totnes has a diverse community with a higher proportion of people over the age of 65 than the national average (Atmos Totnes, 2015). In 2013 Caring Town was established as a partnership of local public, private and voluntary sector organisations with a shared vision to care for the Totnes community. Providing a hub of services ranging from counselling to sports and fitness, legal issues, emergency help and voluntary opportunities, it aims to achieve a fundamental shift in how the community looks after each other and themselves, with everyone in the Totnes community – regardless of age or background – able to easily access the health and social care they need.

Aware of the increasing evidence surrounding the positive impact of strong, resilient communities, Caring Town set out to alleviate the pressures faced by local health and social care services due to ongoing budget cuts, alongside the modern challenges of social isolation and an ageing population, which is a significant challenge for the town due to its demography of older and younger people.

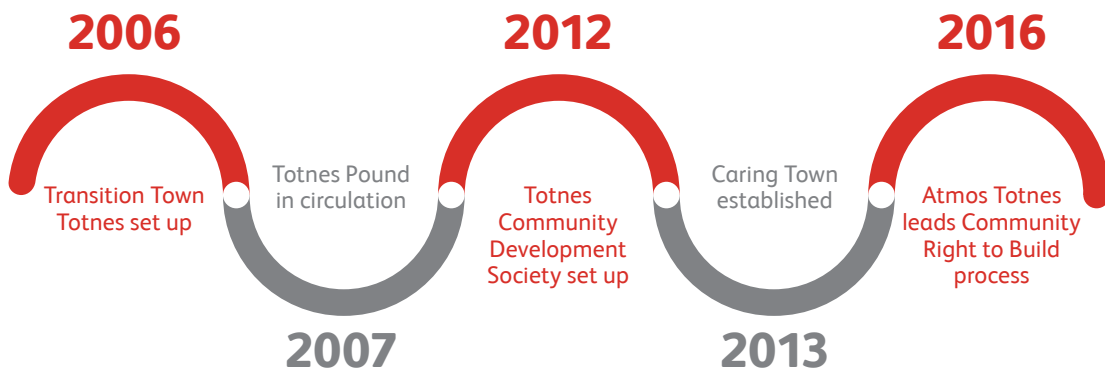
Encompassing a diverse range of projects, the partnership has successfully co-designed and commenced two community-supported services. Faced with gaps in the provision of adolescent mental health and social isolation, they started

a social prescribing trial with local surgeries and provided 'Caring Town Connectors at the Mansion', which is a service connecting local people and service providers. Fundamental to the design and delivery of these activities was the principle of building a resilient local community.

Totnes has utilised its character and longstanding creative reputation by building on the skills of the people who live and work in the town. It has turned creative visions into innovative ideas and initiatives that aim to make Totnes an inclusive place to live, with a sustainable local economy.

Enabling State

Totnes is a town demonstrating the Enabling State principles of participation and community ownership. With a resilient local community, it explores innovative collaborative approaches, moving from siloed working to working together, as in the Caring Town project. As one of the first towns in England to go through a Community Right to Build process, the town is leading the way in terms of shifting the power to local communities.



West Kilbride, North Ayrshire Council

West Kilbride is a small coastal town in North Ayrshire, 30 miles southwest of Glasgow, with a population of around 5,000 people. Historically associated with weaving, it became a popular tourist destination after the late 1800s.

What the situation was

Twenty-one years ago, West Kilbride was a small town on the West Coast of Scotland that had lost its purpose. It had been superseded as a holiday destination for Glaswegians, who had begun to holiday abroad rather than go 'doon the watter'. It was becoming increasingly unknown to outsiders and uncared for by locals.

Much of the high street was boarded up and public spaces, such as the public gardens, were neglected. Several places had been vandalised and people were increasingly demoralised.

What it became

The town has become Scotland's only Craft Town. In 1998 the community and local councillors held a public meeting to determine what to do about the town's declining physical infrastructure and social wellbeing. Out of this, the West Kilbride Community Initiative Limited (WKCIL) was born.

WKCIL realised the town needed a vision to reflect the changing nature of the local economy away from the large industrial employers like Hunterston Power Station and more towards small specialist businesses. The Craft Town now boasts artists' studios and a craft centre, the Barony Centre, which has a café, studios, exhibition space and shop and runs courses and training. The centre is open six days a week, displaying art to visitors even if the artists' studios are closed to the public, and it attracts about 20,000 visitors per year.

This has transformed the look of the town and diversified its economy. The main street is re-energised, with new businesses growing out of the Craft Town concept and the studios. There is now a variety of shops, such as an award-winning bridal outfitter, a sweet maker, a small gallery, an architect, a deli and an ice-cream shop. The pub has been upgraded and the station café is about to open again as a bistro.

In 2015 West Kilbride won in the Village Category of the Great British High Street Awards because it 'shone out for transforming itself as a craft village, for supporting local artists and for turning around the village with creativity and enthusiasm (Great British High Street, 2015).

A volunteer group formed the Friends of Portencross to buy Portencross Castle as a public asset. Despite being told the purchase would be 'impossible' (Hutchison, 2019), they were successful and initiated a search for funding for its repair (Portencross Castle, n.d.).

The town now looks cared for and the garden areas are planted and maintained by volunteers. The physical transformation has been led by WKCIL, who now care for 17 green spaces around the village. It has bought a local quarry, which has a greenhouse, polytunnels, a community orchard and a wildflower meadow.

As the town centre and green spaces have improved, West Kilbride's drive and achievements have been recognised in many awards, and people have been increasingly attracted to live in West Kilbride. The Director of WKCIL said:

“It’s growing as a creative village, so people are attracted to it now’ ‘...once your town starts to improve, it is more attractive for opening small businesses’... ‘a lot of new people think it’s delightful: there is so much to do here.’”

(Hutchison, 2019)

How it happened

Developing a catalyst project around a unique identity

West Kilbride’s efforts to turn itself around is an example of developing a clear proposition – A Craft Town – which can bring people in the town together and attract businesses and tourists. West Kilbride has stuck to this and developed a distinctive identity, which, crucially, is more than just a hook to attract visitors:

“We’re very careful about who we choose to rent the studios to... we don’t want to become an artificially themed town.”

(Coast Magazine, n.d.)

The Craft Town identity has been maintained despite setbacks along the way. At first it was a struggle to find the resources to open the studios on the high street and then, over ten years later, to deal with the legacy of the Barony Centre refurbishment, which was developed with a sizeable grant, but without a clear plan for ongoing viability.

The continuing clear focus is mainly due to the WKCIL and the hard work of its members and volunteers in other community groups.



Thinking long term

From the start, WKCIL said that the purpose of the Craft Town was to revitalise the area and develop a dynamic and financially sustainable community. It started slowly, with refurbishing one shop on the main street, and has grown over the years. It has become an anchor institution in the town. WKCIL has recognised that involving residents has ‘not only resulted in physical regeneration, but has led to a sense of community pride and local people taking responsibility’ (The Scottish Community Development Alliance, 2007).

WKCIL and others have recently begun to address the sustainability of the Craft Town and its organisations, many of whom rely on older people as volunteers. The groups are trying to reach younger people and are encouraging local makers and people with specific organisational skills to join the Board of WKCIL.

Throughout the process of change, WKCIL has focussed on the assets of the town. In 1998 WKCIL began with mapping the assets of the town. Through this, it recognised that there were green spaces in the centre that, if tidied up, would signal to the town that WKCIL was committed to action. It therefore formed an environmental group to do this, which is supported by the local authority’s Streetscene Service and now looks after 17 garden areas.

From the start WKCIL accessed grants to develop the Craft Town, starting with money from the local Moffat Charitable Trust that purchased the initial studios in the high street. Over time it has developed its skills in applying for grant funding from a variety of sources, including public sector funding and a Big Lottery Grant, which allowed the group to redevelop the ninth century Grade ‘C’ listed derelict church into the Barony Centre for arts and exhibitions. As the grant funding was not intended to be long term, WKCIL has focussed on generating its own income. It has expanded its partnerships, accessing support from business agencies and North Ayrshire Council to establish realistic income targets; increase income from the shop, exhibitions and café; and develop other income streams such as art mentoring.

Working in partnership

As WKCIL and the town have journeyed towards a more sustainable future, community involvement may have waxed and waned, but there have been some notable achievements. The judges in the Great British High Street Awards said:

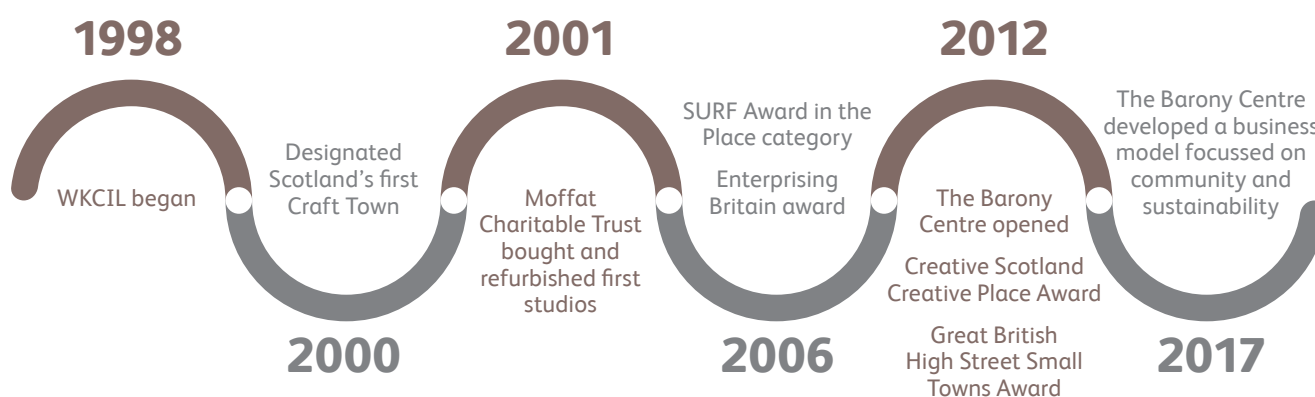
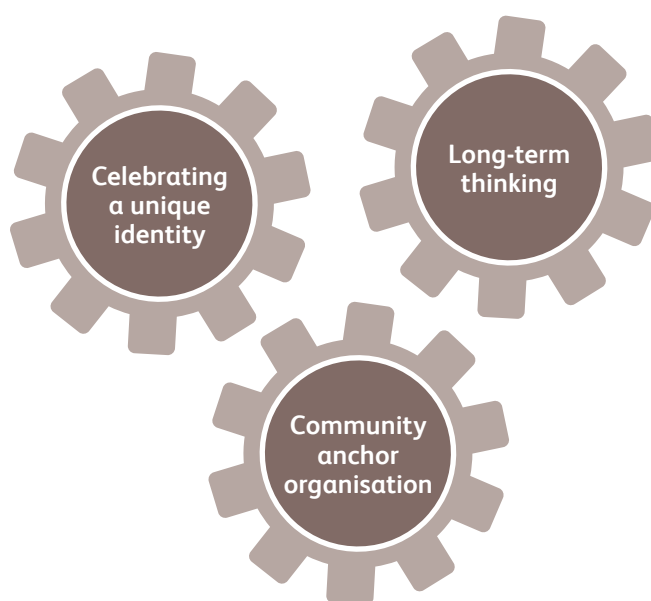
“The local community demonstrated consistent examples of collaboration in both formal and informal structures, and in particular in their applications for support and funding for local projects.”

(Great British High Street Awards, 2016)

A partnership called The Development Group in West Kilbride aims to bring together different local groups. This started as a meeting between the Barony Centre, churches and other community organisations to avoid inadvertently competing for funding. Now the group brings together all the organisations that have an interest in the ‘social and economic development of the town’ (Hutchison, 2019). Different groups in the town are now increasingly working together, making the most of new opportunities, such as Visit Scotland Year of Coast and Waters, 2020.

Enabling State

West Kilbride demonstrates the Enabling State approach by focussing on the assets of the town, from its green spaces to its small businesses. It has shown a shift to local leadership through the creation and sustainment of a local development trust which supports joined up working. The WKCIL spearheaded a unique identity for the town – Craft Town and purchased town centre buildings with grant funding leading to the development of a derelict church into a locally managed art centre.



Wigan, Wigan Council

The Metropolitan Borough of Wigan is in Greater Manchester and has a population of almost 325,000. Wigan town is in the centre of the Borough and has a population of 90,000.

“Small things can make a great deal.”

(Wigan Council, 2019a)

What the situation was

Driven by central government austerity policies after 2010, Wigan was faced with making cuts of over 40% in its budget between 2010 and 2017 (Jordan, 2019). After two years of slicing from each budget the council decided that this strategy was unsustainable. Austerity didn't

appear to be going away and they would need to make more savings. This drove them to consider the ways they could revolutionise how the local authority worked with the community of Wigan.

What it became

Wigan Council created an informal, principles-based deal between the local authority and citizens. In The Deal, Wigan Council made straightforward pledges and asked the public to



Our part

- Keep your Council Tax as one of the lowest
- Help communities to support each other
- Cut red tape and provide value for money
- Build services around you and your family
- Create opportunities for young people
- Support the local economy to grow
- Listen, be open, honest and friendly
- Believe in our borough

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Molyneux'.

Councillor David Molyneux, Leader of Wigan Council

Your part

- Recycle more, recycle right
- Get involved in your community
- Get online
- Be healthy and be active
- Help protect children and the vulnerable
- Support your local businesses
- Have your say and tell us if we get it wrong
- Believe in our borough

Signed



Our People

Our Place

Our Future

Figure Three: The Deal. Source: Wigan Council

reciprocate by taking actions that save costs and increase people's participation in communities (Figure Three).

Through The Deal, the council has made significant changes in its public service provision that led to it being voted as Council of the Year 2019 by the Local Government Chronicle.

The Deal encourages preventative (as well as immediate) care services and for citizens to become more involved in their local area and social enterprises. The council has provided a range of support for this, including the 'The Deal for Communities Investment Fund', which has financed a range of projects from alternative day-care provision to a credit union. For example, Abram Ward Community Cooperative received a three-year fund from The Deal in its first year to bring community hubs together. The money came with capacity-building support, initially through Locality, but now from local mentors and champions also taking part in The Deal. Abram Ward Community Cooperative says that one strength of The Deal's funding is that:

“They don't just give you the money and say, “see you in 6 months' time”, instead there is an ongoing and strong relationship with the council.”

(Baxter, 2019)

Measurable changes in health and wellbeing have been achieved, with healthy life expectancy improving between 2009 and 2011 and also between 2015 and 2017, at a time when it is generally declining across England (Arden, 2019). Budget savings of about £140 million have been realised, without a decline in the provision or quality of services. The former Chief Executive credits these improvements to the council 'thinking differently' (Naylor, 2019).

As Wigan's Deal matures, a new plan for the next ten years has been co-produced: The Deal 2030. This has been called 'A Plan for Place' because it reflects a move from The Deal to place-based activity, which supports more cross-sectoral working (Wigan Council, 2019b).

How it happened

Co-production of services

On the face of it The Deal has leveraged budget savings at the same time as improvements for the local population through strategies like increased volunteering and recycling, but the pivot has been the change in the nature of the relationship between the council and citizens.

It began with a relationship change between the staff delivering frontline social care services and those in receipt of services coming out of a project supported by Nesta and the Local Government Association in Scholes neighbourhood in 2012. The project used ethnographic techniques to listen to what service users really wanted, and it led to wider recognition across the council of the value of this type of bottom-up approach (Nesta, 2019).

Listening to people, relinquishing some power and control, and enabling service users and frontline staff to make decisions about services and support has evened the playing field between service providers and citizens. It is in line with the principles of co-production, which demands that skills and experience of recipients of services are recognised in programme design and delivery. Co-production of services is an approach that recognises the strengths and assets of citizens: 'working with' rather than 'doing to' people, which has been the significant change in Wigan (Naylor, 2019).



Strong vision and leadership

The co-production approach to working was strongly taken up and led across the organisation by the executive leadership team. For The Deal to work, the council had to become less risk adverse and more open to experimentation. In effect, the Wigan Deal is an example of the move from transactional to relational services (Unwin, 2018).

Within The Deal, the council pledged to freeze council tax, a regressive tax widely seen as having negative impacts on those least able to pay. The council has stuck by this part of The Deal, showing at a borough level how serious it is about change.

Cross-sectoral partnerships

Crucial to the success of The Deal has been the taking a broader view. The King's Fund points out that there has been 'a shared way of working across all of the services operating in a place' and it makes the case that, although in Wigan it was led by Council, what's crucial is not the organisation but the behaviours and outcomes it seeks (Naylor, 2019).

This cross-sectoral way of working is in line with a greater focus on place, as the crucible for development and service provision. This has been recognised in the council's vision for the future: The Deal 2030.

The New Local Government Network has summarised the learning for government as:

“Thinking broadly across the idea of human connections rather than looking through the lens of a single organisation or Ministry or initiative, that would be a start. Perhaps it would only work as slow process, focusing on one outcome at a time, allowing for mistakes and corrections, listening.”
(2019)

Evolving and responsive

The Deal has evolved over the last six years.

The ethnographic training was rolled out from a small section of frontline staff right across the organisation and the focus on values and relationships has grown and the staff have changed. There was – and is – a call for residents to volunteer in libraries, sports facilities and other community facilities, and there is investment in supporting people to bring their own community-based ideas to light.

The council has made significant efforts to communicate The Deal (through a variety of media) to inform and involve citizens in the new informal contract. This can be considered as a factor in making the change happen, but there is still work to be done. The independent research by the King's Fund indicated that not all citizens know about or feel they have benefitted from The Deal, implying that the efforts to engage need to be continued (Naylor, 2019).

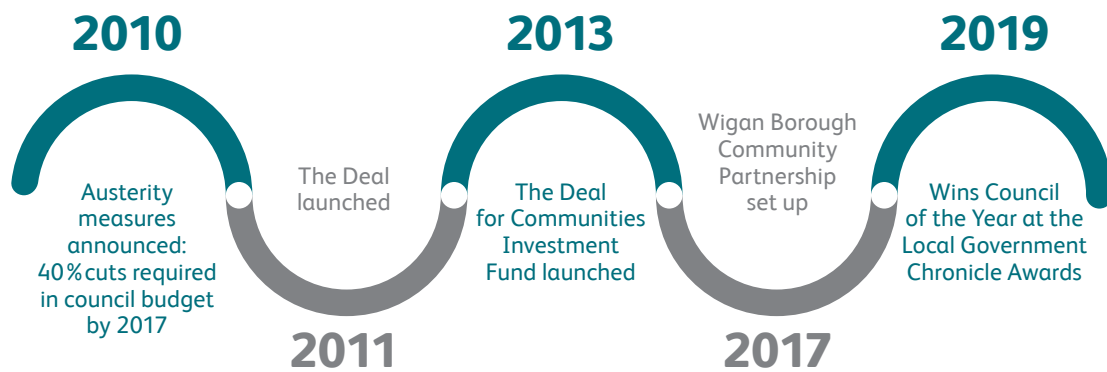
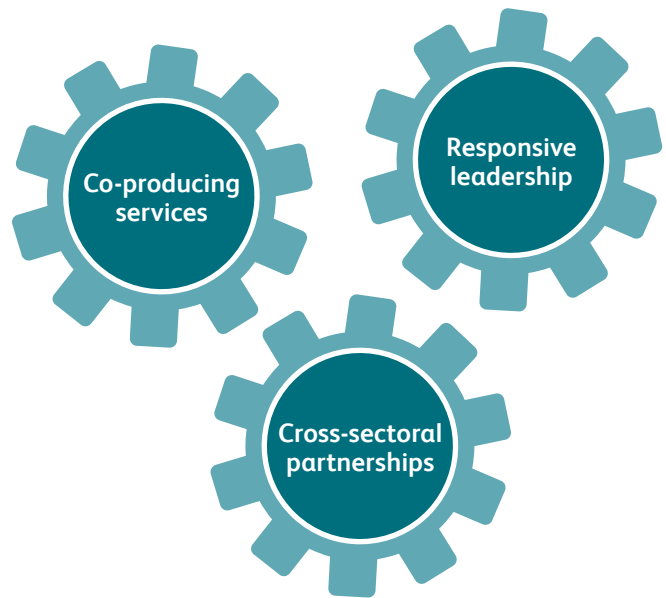
In response, the council ran the Big Listening Project last year, which spoke to 6,000 people directly and collated 10,000 'brilliant ideas' (Wigan Council, 2019b). A noticeable finding from the community conversations was the positive stories people told about their home:

“One of the things that came out loud and clear was how proud people are of the borough.”
(Wigan Council, 2019b)

The Big Listening Project's findings, including people's pride in place, was the basis for The Deal 2030, which sets out both the need for people to come together to support everyone in Wigan. This focus on reaching all parts of the community might help The Deal gain traction with sectors of the community that haven't heard of it and don't feel they are well served by the council.

Enabling State

Wigan's Deal exemplifies the Enabling State as it has focussed on enabling citizens and service users to take greater control of local services and assets. Wigan Council, through seeing the assets of its community, is moving away from doing to and more towards doing with. It has gone beyond engaging with citizens, asking them what they want, to supporting them to participate, whether in social enterprises or the care and support for young or vulnerable people.



Conclusion

The nine stories in this report illustrate some of the levers towns can use to nurture transformational change in their communities. In each case, change has grown out of a local appetite for a different way of working and a readiness to embrace something new, with local solutions emerging that are owned by the town. Whether as a reaction to a catalyst event, the determination not to miss out on an opportunity, or the pain of witnessing the economic decline of a beloved place, towns across the UK are working to become better places for tomorrow.

Changes – from the subtle to the dramatic – are most sustainable when they are owned by the community, but the importance of robust

support from ‘outside’ the town should not be underestimated: local priorities in each instance were bolstered by timely interventions suited to that place at that time. National policies that are designed to support local development should be evidence-based, but they should also respond to the particularity of place that makes our towns unique.

We hope that these stories will encourage readers to reflect on how an appetite for change and collective action can be fostered in *their* town, and that when green shoots begin to emerge, they are supported by relational and enabling governance structures.






























Annex One

Enabling State principles in action

The towns in this report featured many of the Enabling State principles in action, including focussing on outcomes, communities participating in decision making and leading change, collaboration, prevention, co-production and strengthening the third sector and civil society.

This matrix presents which towns may shed light on which approach.

Cardigan	  	Todmorden	  
Dumfries	  	Totnes	  
Grimsby	  	West Kilbride	  
Morecambe	  	Wigan	  
Portrush	  		

Key:



From target setting to outcomes



From top-down to bottom up



From representation to participation



From Silos to Working Together/ Integration



From crisis intervention to prevention



From recipients to co-producers / from doing-to to doing-with



From the state to community ownership and management

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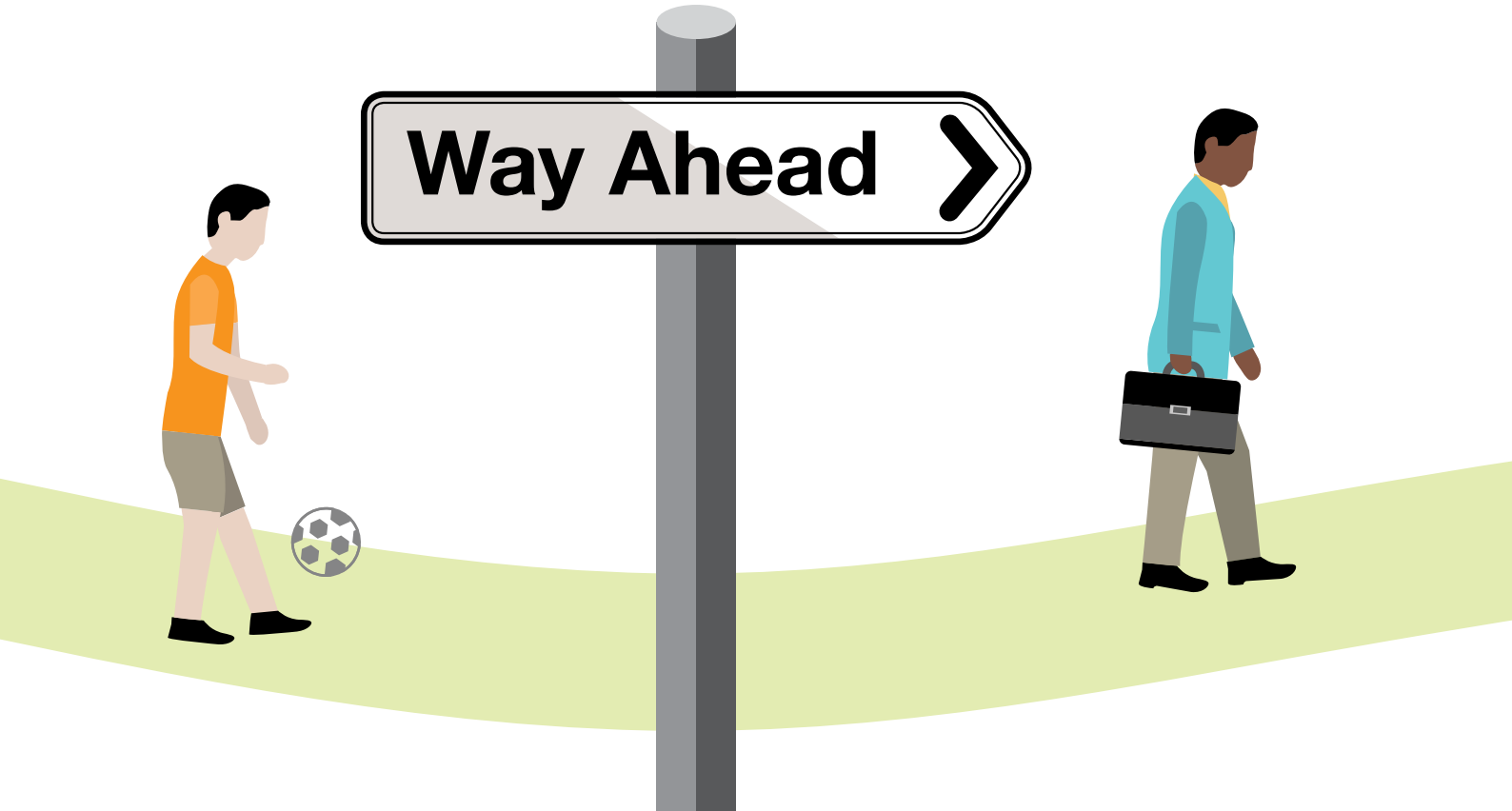
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November 2019



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