

Scotland's High Streets: the Bigger Picture

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Scotland Loves Local



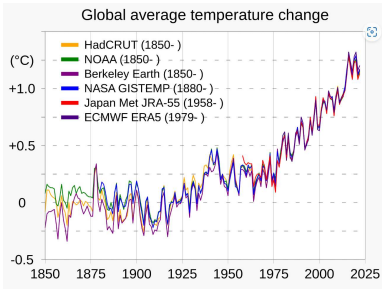
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In 75 months it will be 2030

Climate Emergency
Net Zero

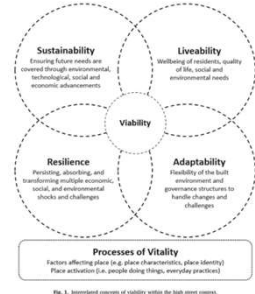
Just Transition
20% reduction in car kms
Active travel – wheeling and walking
20 Minute Neighbourhoods
Wellbeing Economy
Community Wealth Building



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- Are we doing the “easy” things not the necessary things?
- Are we asking the right questions?
- Are we failing to act?
- Are we focused on the symptoms not the causes?
- Are we altering the fundamentals?



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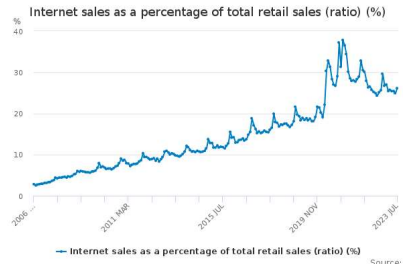
60 Years of Hurting Towns and Town Centres

- Decentralised
- Disaggregated
- Car-dependent
- Land hungry
- Commercial and Residential Developments (and Local and Central Government)



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Not only car-based competition



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The Retail World has Changed

Over half of BHS stores still vacant two years after closure

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We Have Chosen This

- Climate change is man made
- The state of our town centres is a social and economic choice
- We can choose NOT to do this

BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

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Town centres and climate change

Policy frameworks only go so far and loopholes to exploit
 Business as Usual Predominates
 Attitudes unchanged
 Sticking plasters for town centres

- > Car parking
- > "Too expensive"/"wrong time" to implement change
- > In-built biases and prejudices (LTN, Cycling, LER)
- > Follow the money - externalities
- > Money driven campaigns - DRS, "Tourist tax"




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Scotland

National Review of Town Centres (2012)
 Town Centre Action Plan (2013)
 A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres (2021)
 Town Centre Action Plan 2 (2022)

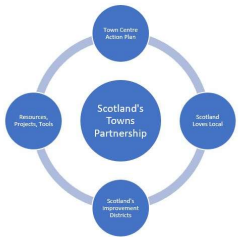


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Scotland's Towns Partnership

Figure 2: Scotland's Towns Partnership 2023

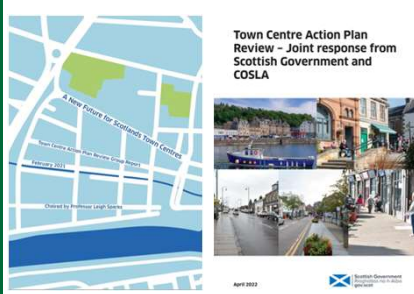


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A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres

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




Town Centre Action Plan Review - Joint response from Scottish Government and COSLA

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Why we won't succeed if BAU

1. The economy and society have changed
2. The pre-pandemic situation was not working
3. Existing operations will continue to do harm unless deflected and there are no disincentives for doing (or proposing new) bad things
4. We need to be a more inclusive society and economy and not an extractive one
5. Need to get serious if national policies (CWB, 20 Minute, Wellbeing, car kms) to be delivered, let alone dealing with climate change
6. Focusing attention on one part of the problem (in town) and ignoring the alternatives (out of town) and enablers (local services, transport) will reinforce adverse behaviours


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Recommendation 1

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

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


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Recommendation 2

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

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

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Recommendation 3

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

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


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Recommendation 3

We recommend that projects should be focused around themes of

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

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- What sort of places do we need?
- What sort of society and economy do we need?
- Resilience – for whom?
- Public/private leadership and governance?



The mosaic, by artist Alan Boyson, was created in 1963 as part of a new department store. It comprises almost a million pieces of Italian glass on a 66ft by 64ft (20m x 19.5m) concrete screen and depicts three stylised trawlers spelling out Hull with their masts.

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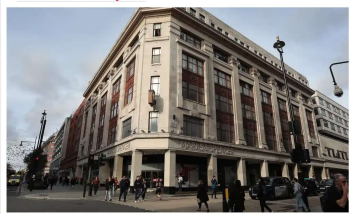
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Marks & Spencer M&S begins legal action after plan to rebuild Oxford Street store blocked

Michael Gove last month refused permission to demolish and redevelop store near Marble Arch in London

Business live - latest updates

Sarah Butler
#govehullismine
Thu 31 Aug 2023 14:27 BST



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A Stirling Case Study

Large Proposed Out of Town Food, Retail and Office Development

Combined Elements so as to "not fit" into separate sites or in-town

Flawed Retail Impact Assessment – 40% of Stirling's population could not get to it

"There's a cycle path planned"

Four councillors voted to give it permission despite officers recommending rejection

Called-in and refused by Minister (Nov 2022)

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In Conclusion


Local efforts will only go so far

Systemic, structural change is needed to really make a difference across our range of places

Things are working in some places despite the system – just think what we could achieve if the system helped us?

What does that mean for leadership and governance?



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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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