

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL MIXED USE TOWN CENTRES

INVESTMENT LED REGENERATION: MISSION STATEMENT

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Airdrie



Cumbernauld



Motherwell



Coatbridge



Shotts



Kilsyth



Bellshill



Wishaw

*“First life, then spaces,
then buildings - the other
way around never works”*
Jan Gehl

Executive Summary

North Lanarkshire aims to support sustainable growth and build a strong, vibrant and inclusive economy that works for everyone. Town centres are a key element in delivering this ambition and creating the places, town centres and the facilities where people want to live, learn, work, invest and visit. The vision statement for each town will be underpinned with an investment programme, new funding and a committed delivery plan.

Our towns and our needs and use of our town centres are changing. Planning for change needs to address a shared sense of place and identify how to build stronger mixed-use centres that are active, accessible and appealing and support new investment whilst empowering local communities and civic activity.

“Towns have the capability of providing something for everyone only when they are created by everyone”

Town Centre Vision Plans

The Vision Plans will look to reposition town centres as mixed-use centres adjusting the historic focus on retail floor space to a broader mix of investment and use that supports a cluster of local services, town centre living, retail, and employment activity.

Re-thinking Places - Promoting a Fresh Dialogue

This-Mission Statement seeks to start a process for exploration. It seeks to connect some key trends, highlight key and emerging issues and set a framework that can help to facilitate debate around what our town centres need to be. The debate needs to promote participation and raise ambitions but equally have a **clear focus on the mechanism, partnership funding and routes for delivery.**

Town Centre Vision Plans need to set a route-map for re-investment and physical change and put local needs at the heart of future planning.



Community Plan

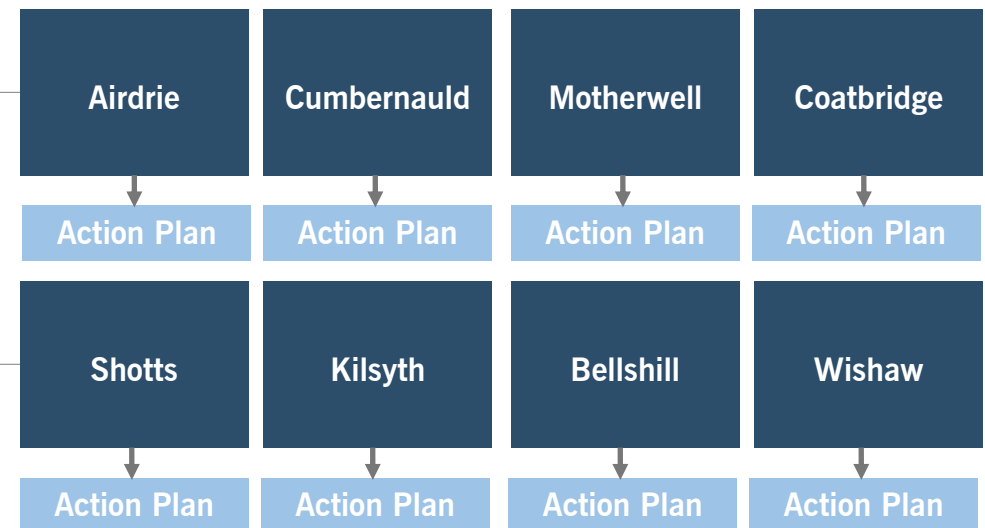


Local Plan



Mission / Vision

Place Vision & Strategy



8 Town Centre Action Plans

1.0 Introduction

North Lanarkshire Town's Visioning project has brought Council services together to explore the North Lanarkshire Town Centres in terms of place-making, investment and local community needs.

Our towns and our needs and use of our town centres are changing. Town centres have always changed and adapted to the needs of their communities and the associated economic and societal context within which they operate. Planning for such change must address long-term trends and recognise the need for new approaches. It needs to identify how to build more resilient town centres that are active, accessible and appealing and support and empower local communities and civic activity through a shared sense of place.

Town Centre Vision Plans

North Lanarkshire Council is seeking to reposition town centres as **mixed-use centres**, adjusting the historic focus on retail floor space to a broader mix of investment and use that supports a cluster of local services, entertainment and leisure, town centre living, retail, and employment activity.

To do this, the Council wishes to produce Town Centre **Vision Plans** for each of its eight town centres. This will involve engagement with communities within each town but also, importantly, with stakeholders likely to be influential in delivering change. These include existing and potential developer interests, business and property interests, the housing sector, community services and community interest groups.

Vision Plans will seek to establish a clear vision and bring forward specific project measures with a stronger focus on how to deliver them. Each Vision Plan will be supported by an **Action Plan** which will focus on the shorter term delivery of projects, and will allow for monitoring of progress.

Re-thinking Places - Promoting a Fresh Dialogue

This Mission Statement seeks to begin a process for exploration, to inform and set the scene for the preparation of the Town Centre Vision Plans and their associated Action Plans. It looks to connect some key trends, highlight important and emerging issues and set a framework that can help to facilitate debate around what our town centres need to be.

The debate needs to support ambition but also have a **clear focus on the mechanism, partnership and routes for delivery**. The Town Centre Vision Plans need to set a route-map for re-investment and physical change and put local needs at the heart of future planning.

*“A good Town is like
a good party -
people stay longer
than really
necessary, because
they are enjoying
themselves.”*

Jan Gehl



Changes in Consumer Preference

2.0 Town Centre Key Trends & Challenges

North Lanarkshire Town Centres are facing a new set of challenges as a result of fundamental changes in the commercial environment.

Retail changes brought about through a combination of e-commerce, consumer preferences, out-of-town and regional shopping centres are changing the demand for town centre retail space. Many local centres are over-retailed with high levels of shop vacancies and declining levels of investment in what historically were busy and enterprising centres. These changes are anticipated to continue and accelerate as more services shift to an on-line offer (e.g. banking, betting, services).

Growth in food and beverage (cafés, take-aways, restaurants, etc.) and specialist service retailing (beauty salons, hairdressers, nail bars, etc.) has backfilled some of the under-utilised space but is unlikely to provide the additional demand for long-term sustainability. Retail change is evidenced in both reduced town centre footfall and lower town centre retail spend.

Changes in retail are not the only change impacting on town centres. A range of other social trends associated with work patterns, movement and digital connectivity also impact directly or indirectly on town centres. These include:

- **Demographics**
Changing household structures, decreasing household sizes and an increasingly aging population.
- **Leisure & Leisure Time**
Changing patterns in leisure time and demand for leisure, entertainment, retail and other associated services and activities.

- **Transportation and Active Travel**
Increasing recognition of the benefits of stronger connectivity, reduction in car dependency and greater support for active travel choices.
- **Participation and Social Media**
Extended choices for participation and engagement through social media.
- **SMART Centres**
Development of digital networks and the internet of things.
- **Health, Well Being and Inclusion**
Greater health awareness, the challenges of poor health and changing lifestyle patterns for health and inclusion.
- **Energy and Environment**
Air quality challenges and the transition to low carbon transport and energy use.
- **Green Networks**
Strengthening focus on connecting up communities through strong green networks and community links.

Within North Lanarkshire the current trends and opportunities show:

- **Population Growth**
Modest population growth within most of the eight core settlements.
- **Employment Growth**
Employment growth tracking the national level but with stronger focus on towns / transport interchange focus.
- **Major Infrastructure Enhancement supported by City Deal**
Major investment programme in infrastructure, including education, housing health and digital services.
- **Rail/ Road/ Green Network/ Active Travel /Digital**
Major (recently completed) road and rail upgrades and enhanced connectivity – physical and digital.
- **Education / Colleges**
New investment in schools, colleges, local universities.
- **Key Growth Sectors**
Key growth in construction, health and social care and strong manufacturing and distribution sectors.
- **Global Businesses**
North Lanarkshire is identified as a key location for Inward Investment / Strategic Business Location
- **Regional Sport and Leisure Facilities**
Developed national facilities and leisure assets (Ravenscraig)

National Policy Agenda for Town Centres

The Scottish Government has sought to ensure the vitality of town centres through its response to the **National Town Centre Review**. It's Town Centre Action Plan (2013) identified the need to develop a strongly collaborative approach based on closer engagement and a series of measures to promote Town Centre Living, Vibrant Local Economies, Enterprising Communities etc.

The '**Town Centre First**' Principle emerged from this debate. This seeks to put the health of town centres at the heart of decision-making processes. The Government joined with local authorities and other public bodies to sign up to this principle.

The Town Centre First Principle recognises the importance of town centres to communities and seeks to address the need that town centres are vibrant, attractive, safe and appealing places where local people want to spend their time and money.

The principle encourages all public bodies to put the health of town centres first and to promote pro-active planning policies for town centres that encourage public, private and social enterprises to be creative in how they:

- create and retain jobs
- support the local community
- support town centre living
- contribute to creating a sustainable, low carbon environment
- realise locally agreed visions and plans

The Town Centre Action Plan also recognised that town centres are distinct entities and that their regeneration would require tailored solutions rather than standardised top-down solutions. The situation, assets and opportunities of each town needs to be analysed and understood, in the context of the need for community ownership of the issues and solutions.

Various tools and mechanisms have been developed at the national level to support the self-analysis of places and towns and to provide a method of beginning conversations about change. These include the Town Centre Toolkit (Scotland's Towns Partnership), the Place Standard and Understanding Scottish Places (USP), which are described later in this report.

Town centre services (local government, libraries, parks), and leisure amenities (e.g. theatres, music venues, restaurants, cafés) have an increasingly important role in attracting people into their town centres. Footfall is higher still where there are people living within the town centre. Rediscovering the 'mixed use' role of town centres is fully compliant with a 'Town Centres First' Principle.

Creating successful mixed-use centres is fundamental to wider regeneration activity within North Lanarkshire that is seeking to tackle wider economic and social disparities. Rethinking the roles and re-provisioning of mixed-use centres requires a new focus on people, place and business activity within town centres.

High quality attractive urban centres are successful for many reasons. They involve a 'loosely structured partnership of interests' which when aligned successfully delivers a diverse mix of use with strong appeal. A framework is required that supports investment activity. Future regeneration activity needs to facilitate partnership across a range of interests that can support re-investment and looks to promote imaginative and quality initiatives that can help to make mixed-use centres destinations of choice.

Place making is a key element of regeneration and is a powerful agent of change. Successful places support stronger economies. They sustain communities and assist in the delivery of a wide range of outcomes including civic life, employment, healthy lifestyles, low carbon living and create key destinations for residents, visitors and inward investment.

Creating places that are active, accessible and appealing meets a wide range of user needs. Research consistently shows that people are attracted to centres that include a vibrant mix of retail, services, cafes and restaurants but also looks to places that are interesting to browse, explore, enjoy the atmosphere, participate in events, dip into culture and be part of a sense of place.

North Lanarkshire Council Progress to Date

North Lanarkshire Council is fully committed to the Town Centre First Principle in its own investment decisions and in its role as planning authority guiding private and public sector investment.

North Lanarkshire Council, with partners, has invested over £30million (2008-2018) in a wide range of public realm, townscape and environmental improvements in North Lanarkshire's town centres and through initiatives such as the Kilsyth and the Kelvin Valley Action Plan and a number of Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) and partnership projects.

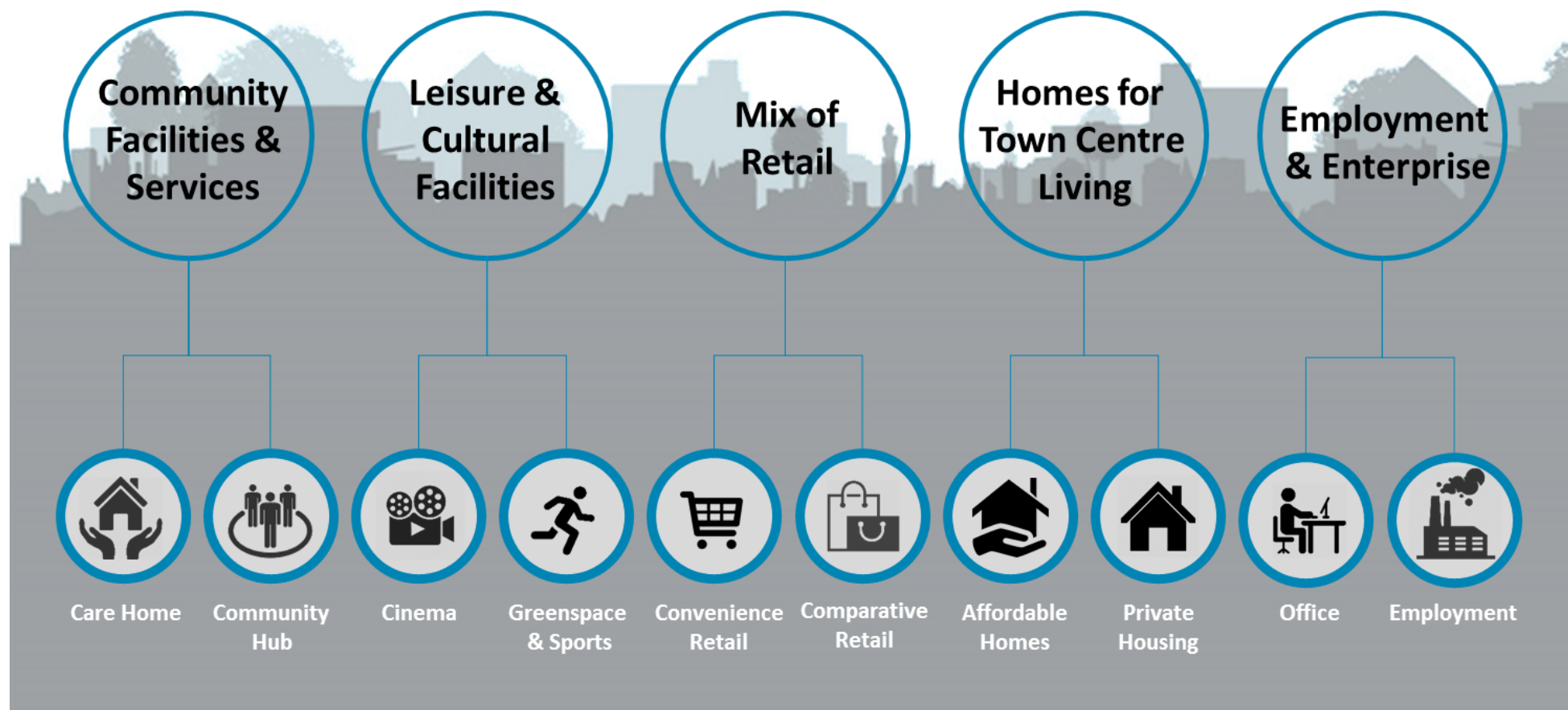
The Council has always followed a phased approach to regeneration, and in advancing its existing Town Centre Action Plans has looked to promote a 'learning environment' to test thinking, monitor outcomes and learn the lessons for future phases. The Council have secured significant successes but are aware that future challenges for many of its centres will require a much stronger stimulus and bolder interventions.

Opportunities have been created through positive policies and a clear focus on an **Ambition for Growth** through the Council's Economic **Regeneration Delivery Plan**. This is based on four priorities:

- increasing and improving the quality of housing supply,
- supporting business and investment,
- creating a connected place and
- regenerating town centres and communities.

The Economic Development Plan recognises the added value in developing links between the themes with town centre regeneration supported through direct housing investment, support for business and industry and infrastructure investment. In terms of town centre regeneration, the focus will be on the eight town centres that are identified in the Local Development Plan.

Key Elements in Successful Mixed-Use Centres



Mixed-Use Centres: Investing in economy, communities & place

New Approach to North Lanarkshire Town Centres

North Lanarkshire Council believe that, together with its partners, it will need to adopt a more pro-active approach and develop a new model for mixed-use centres. Developing quality public realm, promoting niche retailing and the evening economy, and supporting leisure and events to address long-term trends of town centre retailing will not be enough for North Lanarkshire's centres.

The scale of change over future decades will require bolder interventions. The legacy of the New Town planning (Cumbernauld), 1970's transport planning (Motherwell), Business Re-structuring (Airdrie, Coatbridge, Wishaw) and future changes associated with large footplate supermarket (all centres) will require re-thinking the existing urban pattern.

The needs of communities within Lanarkshire's town centres will not be addressed simply through local support measures and enhanced public realm. Retaining current levels of retail space erodes market value and creates a weak market for investment, enterprise and innovation.

A new model needs to be developed that provides a broader foundation for town centres, securing a stronger demand for goods and services and more active promotion of renewal and re-investment. Sustaining weakening retail and service functions, linked to the over-supply of retail consented building and property within centres, depresses yields and weakens investment and will not be supported.

The new approach will need to adopt more interventionist thinking that accepts both the success and limitations of current activity. Major re-structuring will need bolder measures and inevitably these will need to be progressed in partnership with the private sector or through programmes aligned with public investment by utilities, transport bodies and community planning partners.

The Local Development Plan

Planning has a key role in supporting the Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan. The Proposed Local Development Plan promotes a new policy approach to development within all its urban centres to provide greater flexibility, innovation and a more diverse land-use mix within "Mixed-Use Centres" that reflects a commitment to:

- Support a range of uses appropriate to help maintain the role the centre provides to the community;
- Ensure development levels do not compromise the Town Centre First principle relating to significant footfall;
- Support a greater range of uses and improvement to the physical environment through Town Centre Action Plans.

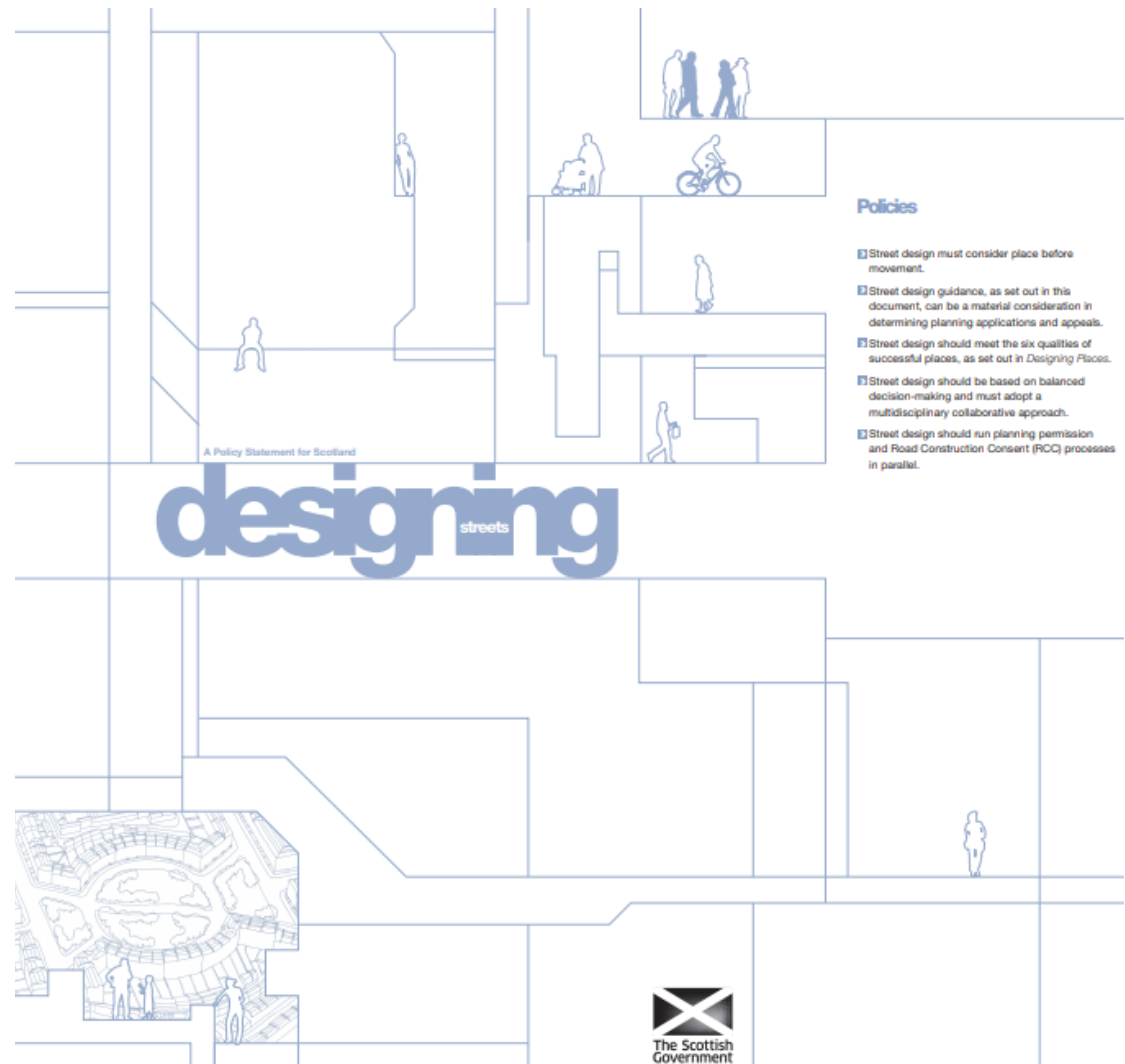
The Local Development Plan 2018–28 aims to ensure there is sufficient land for development needs, business growth and investment, new homes, and retail and leisure uses and sets out policies for the development and use of land.

The new Local Development Plan policies explicitly support:

Mixed-Use

The Council will encourage development which promotes the sustainable development of town centres, consistent with safeguarding heritage and quality of environment and that supports its living, working and visiting populations. Within each centre a mix of uses consistent with encouraging place quality, vitality, and function will be promoted.

“Towns have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”
Jane Jacobs



Designing Streets is a policy and guidance document published by the Scottish Government in March 2010

3.0 Town Centre Liveability & Place-making

The towns and settlements that are the most attractive to visit are invariably those that are most attractive to live in.

They are attractive both in terms of their function and place quality and typically offer safe accessibility, a range of things to see and do, good places to meet, good local shopping, a range of places to eat and drink, all mixed with local activity and cultural events.

The primary aim for all towns should be to create places that are positively attractive across a mix of people for living, working and spending leisure time in. In other words, they should aim to be exceptionally liveable.

Attributes of Liveability - Towns that can offer a quality mix associated with a combination of the following attributes:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe and welcoming • attractive • socially cohesive and inclusive • environmentally sustainable • offering affordable and diverse housing • range of local employment • education (pre-school / primary + high school) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public open space and green networks • local shops • health and community services • leisure and cultural opportunities • accessible by public transport • walking and cycling infrastructure • adaptable and enterprising |
|--|--|

Attributes of Liveable Urban Centres

Liveability is an increasingly used term which reflects the wellbeing of a community and comprises the many characteristics that make a location a place where people want to live now and in the future. There are a wide range of factors that enhance a community and make it a desirable place to live, as set out in the table (below, left).

Changing the nature of our town centres needs radical thinking whilst building on the legacy from previous generations and promoting well integrated new solutions that address our future needs for liveability. These include areas of renewed focus such as Health and Well-being, Town Centre Living, Safe and Active Communities, Local Enterprise, Sustainable Transport and Greenspace Networks.

North Lanarkshire's vision for its town centres must look to embrace change and recognise town centres as strong locations for living. This requires a whole town approach, building on extending the Town Centres First Principle and looking to influence all factors and attributes of liveable places. The Council are seeking to do this through direct investment, planning policy tools, support for community initiatives in collaborations with private and public sector partners.

Designing Places

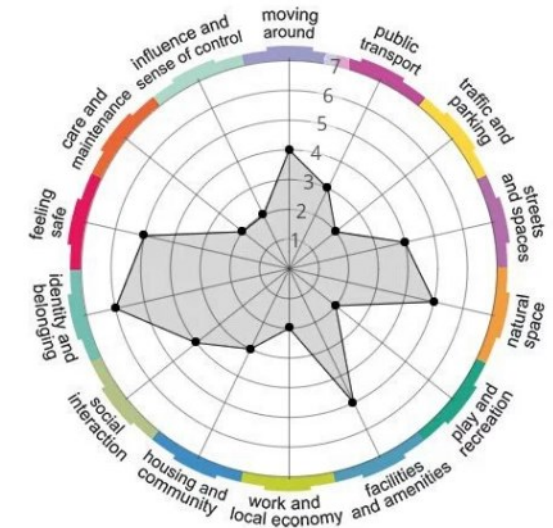
Building on best practice and lessons learnt, national guidance identified six qualities of successful places which continue to underpin the Scottish Government's approach to delivering good places, and are particularly important and applicable to town centres.

- **Distinctive**
 - Building on the core character and qualities of place
 - Safeguarding and enhancing the use and condition of historic buildings
- **Safe and pleasant**
 - Addressing severance of movement, limiting vehicular speeds and ensuring safe access and mobility
 - Creating an appealing 'heart of the town'
- **Easy to move around**
 - Focussing on good, local accessibility and connections between places
 - Ensuring lighting, active travel choices and waymarking meet local needs
- **Welcoming**
 - Creating town gateways and ensuring that the centre is clean and well presented
 - Good signage including signing car parks and wider town attractions
- **Adaptable**
 - Supporting and embracing change
 - Developing a diversity of activity
- **Resource efficient**
 - Addressing town centre functionality and good transport connections
 - Quality new build securing long-term value

The Place Standard

The Place Standard (developed by Scottish Government / NHS Health Scotland / Architecture & Design Scotland) is a tool which provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. It allows a dialogue about the physical elements of a place (buildings, spaces, transport links, etc) alongside an assessment of social aspects (local empowerment, safety, social contact, etc).

The tool lets communities, public agencies, voluntary groups and others find those aspects of a place that need to be targeted to improve people's health, wellbeing and quality of life.



Place Standard Tool

Place-making connects people and place and all aspects of development and the qualities which make it specific to where it is. These must be fully considered in the planning, design and delivery of change within our urban fabric. This helps to ensure we manage the process of change in ways that respond to the needs of both current and future generations and provides new places to live, work, share and enjoy that are well referenced and rooted into the fabric of the place.

The Town Centre Toolkit

The Scottish government working with The Scottish Towns Partnership, COSLA, A+DS and Scotland's Improvement Districts (BiD), can offer a breadth of support, skills and resources to support Town Centre planning. The Town Centre Toolkit (Scottish Government, 2015) provides a framework for tackling town centre regeneration. It has been prepared to inspire, with ideas and examples of how people and organisations can make their town centres more vibrant and economically viable.

The Town Centre Toolkit sets out principles and case studies and these are grouped under three main themes: Attractive, Active and Accessible are key attributes that all town centres must deliver to offer a positive choice to people.

To attract people and investment, town centres have to offer better choices in lots of ways – what they have to offer, how pleasant they are to be in, and ease of access. We are living in a time of fast paced change, economically and socially. Town centres need to keep pace with changing habits and lifestyles.

The new model seeks to support and extend ideas within the Town Centre Toolkit particularly around areas of inward investment, business investment and public-private partnership arrangements. Key themes for delivery within the toolkit and with strong applicability to North Lanarkshire include arrangements to support:

- Business and enterprise
- Town centre living
- Public services
- Retail, leisure and culture
- Marketing and promotion
- Digital strategies

Guiding Principles

For North Lanarkshire Town Centres the focus is on transformational change towards mixed-use. Mixed economies and mixed places encourage interaction, and deliver opportunities for enterprise and business activity, innovation and creativity through the mix of activity, the random interactions thereby created, and the stronger role and civic functionality of the centre. The following provides a set of guiding design principles for the preparation of supplementary planning guidance, Town Centre Action Plans, and in ensuring the successful application of the mixed-use centres policy. Principles may apply to some of the town centres more than others.

- **Mixed use centres HIGH 'PLACE' FUNCTION**
Centres will have a High 'Place' Function as explained in Designing Streets. This means that street design should prioritise the walking environment over the flow of motor vehicles and provide ample space to accommodate a mix of civic activity. This does not mean pedestrianizing the town centre, but it does mean limiting carriageway space and slowing vehicles, with a priority around key nodes and along streets with high footfall.
- **Mixed use centres HIGH 'COMMUNITY' FUNCTION**
Centres will have a HIGH 'COMMUNITY' FUNCTION as described within Town Centre Toolkit—Successful Town Centres. This means ensuring local businesses and residents are engaged and can participate in the future planning of their towns through charrettes, action plans, development planning and community activity.
- **Mixed use centres HIGH 'ECONOMIC' FUNCTION**
Centres will have a HIGH 'ECONOMIC' FUNCTION as described in ASPIRE Change Programme. This means pursuing opportunities for business, investment and growth that address economic inequalities and supports a physical delivery regeneration and infrastructure programme which invests and supports physical regeneration, business development, growth and sustainable town centres; high-quality places and sustainable economic growth.



Appealing Mixed-use Town Centres

4.0 Developing Mixed Use Centres

North Lanarkshire Council proposes to define all town centres as 'Mixed-Use Centres' and to adopt a policy approach in the new Local Development Plan that supports land-use change and supports town centre living.

North Lanarkshire has eight existing town centres each presenting differing challenges and opportunities. The scale of restructuring and the needs and role of town centres will require them to adopt a significantly broader investment model.

North Lanarkshire Council consider that it, alongside a range of partners and investors, will need to adopt a more pro-active and interventionist approach if it is to secure its objectives of regenerating and restructuring the centres as strong and sustainable places.

Town Centres Mixed-Use Objectives

The approach to securing regeneration through a broader mixed-use approach has a strong partnership element. Restructuring towns like Cumbernauld, Motherwell, Coatbridge and Airdrie needs to build a wider base of stakeholder involvement capable of unlocking the barriers to investment. A key lever will be the North Lanarkshire Homes Delivery Plan but other commercial, leisure and private sector housing will also form key supporting investments.

The Council twin objectives are as follows:

- *To promote high-quality mixed-use development that will strengthen town centre appeal, attractiveness and accessibility with a strong focus on the support for town centre living and new investment supporting the needs of local communities, business growth, service and leisure functions and developing quality of place.*
- *To increase the supply of good quality and affordable housing across all North Lanarkshire's town centres to meet housing needs, including the provision of special needs and affordable housing, while ensuring that new town centre housing co-exists alongside the business activity and an appropriate balance of uses is maintained.*

Priorities within the future Town Centre Vision Plans will be on delivering SMART (Specific/ Measurable/ Actionable/ Realistic/ Timed) project initiatives with identified partner organisations (private/ public/ third sector) that can:

- Create liveable centres
- Secure high-quality new investment
- Improve accessibility and connectivity
- Enhance green network, support active travel and enhanced public realm
- Bring under-utilised assets into positive use
- Be innovative in delivery and funding



Quality Greenspace Parks & Spaces

Developing Mixed-Use Visions based on Clear Principles

Developing the vision and setting out the Action Plan for each of North Lanarkshire's Town Centres is the next step. Much information already exists but the emphasis needs to be more holistic and enabling rather than setting policy initiatives and an action list for the Council and a limited group of partners.

Futures cannot be wholly predicted but the principles that guide our future town needs must address the appeal of place – liveability and wellbeing reflecting the key needs of each centre aligned with key targets of our national agenda associated with environmental quality, inclusive opportunity, connectivity, low carbon futures, skills and developing sustainable community growth.

Town Centre Delivery Principles

- **Town Centre First**
A whole town, 'town centre first' approach needs meaningful integration of economic development, enterprise and regeneration strategies that connects with key investors, stakeholders and communities
- **Shared Vision for Change secured through Engagement**
A strong, shared vision, strategy and delivery plan needs to be developed across a wide group of stakeholders, communicating the vision and the core project deliverables.
- **Partnership Action with a Clear Delivery Programme**
Developed to offer a clear strategy for the Town Centre, building on a clear evidence base and appropriate engagement with key community, business and public sector stakeholders, and prioritising SMART proposals that are feasible, deliverable, address need and opportunity and fundable.
- **Promoting Distinctive Bespoke and Innovative Approaches**
Regeneration needs to address distinctiveness of local economies and shape strategy and interventions in a manner that builds on the economic and social environment and special qualities of a place.
- **Seeking to Build Additional Capacity & Investment Momentum**
Creating momentum, building confidence and securing positive 'feel good' value from participation requires a quality engagement. Delivering successful outcomes may require new partnership approaches and new mechanisms to support and build additional capacity and investment interest.



Town Centre Living

Supporting Policy Framework

The mixed-use vision will look to develop a mosaic of land uses supporting each centre's vitality, character and role. The mix will reflect each town's history and character created by the changing patterns of land use and the application of design guidance. Design Guidance tailored to each town centre will ensure new development secures appropriate human scale and patterns of use that support footfall and activity and enhance the experience at street level.

Mixed use developments need a visioning process which protects flexibility of function over time. Promoting mixed-use and encouraging single use conversions require adaptability of buildings and the built fabric with the design consideration given to structure, floor plan and section depth, services and building standards.

Developing in the Local Development Plan 'parameter' plans may assist in communicating areas of opportunity to the development partners, ensuring Town Centre Visioning is appropriately co-ordinated with the Local Development Plan.

- **Town Centre Areas Policy**

The Council will support development in Town Centre which maintains and enhances the character, attractiveness, vitality and accessibility of the centre and contributes to its role as a core service centre. The Policy requires:

- a) well designed proposals which maximise the potential of the site in accordance with any relevant site development brief and/or other guidance

- b) a use or a mix of uses appropriate to the location of the site, its accessibility characteristics and the character of the surrounding area
- c) a contribution to the provision of any other measures and facilities made necessary by the development including public realm or greenspace enhancement in the immediate vicinity of the site
- d) the creation of new civic spaces and vehicle-free safe pedestrian routes where achievable

- **The Council will develop Town Centre Action Plans**

Each of the eight Town Centre Vision Plans will be supported by a Town Centre Action Plans. The Council will work with local stakeholders with the intention of developing guidance to provide more detail on the acceptable form of mixed-use development (massing, height, layout, materials, parking etc.) within the eight existing town centres.

- **The Plan for North Lanarkshire**

The Plan for North Lanarkshire brings together the previous council Business Plan and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The Plan for North Lanarkshire informs the Local Development Plan (LDP) as a key mechanism to support shared partnership priorities together with our actions and approaches. These priorities reflect the partnership's commitment to working with local communities to plan, design and deliver public services to achieve positive outcomes for North Lanarkshire residents.

Town Centre Strategy	Potential Vision Plan Objectives
Airdrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing a close-grained character which reflects the distinctive spatial pattern of the historic town core Support for a mix of uses including housing, offices, small business units, a hotel, shops, food and drink premises and community facilities New buildings, including landmark buildings, which respect the historical grain supporting infill between Stirling Street and the A89
Coatbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide mixed use development comprising residential, office, small business units, retail, leisure, community and tourist/visitor facilities improve north-south linkages within the centre in particular provide a strong pedestrian/ cycle link to the Station
Cumbernauld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure a more integrated mixed-use centre and less dominating form than currently exists, with new buildings that offer new streetscape and human scale Provision of business accommodation (offices), hotel, housing, leisure and cultural uses Secure a new civic space that creates a focal point within the site and public, pedestrian routes that will strengthen and re-establish links with the surrounding area Attract high quality, high profile developments which will contribute towards economic prosperity for the region replacing the former tax office development
Motherwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a new civic space that creates a focal point within the site and public, pedestrian routes that will strengthen and re-establish links with the surrounding area,
Wishaw,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide new residential units, office floorspace, and ground-floor uses such as commercial leisure, community and health facilities and small-scale retailing
Kilsyth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate the edge of the centre with new residential units, office floorspace, supporting ground-floor uses such as commercial leisure, community and health facilities
Bellshill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop stronger opportunities for transport interchange connecting public transport modes, active travel and vehicular access. Consolidate the edge of the centre with new residential units, office floorspace, supporting ground-floor uses such as commercial leisure, community and health facilities
Shotts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate the central core of the town and connections with residential neighbourhoods and greenspace

- **Developing Housing Stock and Affordable Homes**

A key element for North Lanarkshire is the provision of both affordable and open market housing and a balance of tenures within town centres, creating both a diversity and a future adaptable housing stock. The commitment within the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018-2023 can support town centres and includes both the Scottish Government's supported Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) and the NLC's new Build Programme.

- **Developing Stronger & More Resilient Local Economies**

Town centre regeneration requires a holistic approach. Local access to a range of employment, access to services and community infrastructure, good public transport connections, digital services are all key elements of creating liveable towns and creating the demand that addresses barriers to growth and unlocks investment. An element of this wider vision needs to strengthen local capacity and ensure town centre policy supports inclusion and local access to housing, employment and services and supports the wider policy agenda for inclusive growth.

Developing Town Vision Plans

The draft Local Development Plan commits to the preparation of Town Centre Action Plans. These delivery focused plans will build upon the previous Town Centre Action Plans and be guided by a clear Town Centre Vision Plan, informed through community and stakeholder engagement. The Town Centre Action Plans will align the varied policy strands associated with:

- (a) Spatial Planning (LDP)
- (b) The Plan for North Lanarkshire (PNL) and,
- (c) Property and Estate planning including V&DL

The Vision Plans should seek to create a new level of integration between land-use, spatial and community planning, with development planning and the re-investment opportunities associated with land and building assets.

- **Extending Town Centre Engagement**

A new model for town centre engagement is required that extends participation and is more meaningful and targeted at the various groups that need to be engaged to secure delivery. Early engagement and early identification of strategic opportunity should be supported. Traditionally the charrette format has witnessed limited private sector / business and investor interest and focussed substantially on community planning and design interests.

Local understanding and community, resident and user views are critical and strongly support visioning but property owners, businesses, other public sector service providers and investors have only exhibited limited engagement and participation.

Developing the engagement model around a staged process with initial visioning followed up by workshops on project briefs may support stronger participation from partners and investors. Testing and developing a revised format for engagement, and development briefs within the eight town centres could facilitate innovation and investment and create value for other centres.

- **Plan for Change**

Town Centre Masterplans have traditionally offered long term vision and goals but have been short on the process and mechanisms that support delivery. Securing the ambitions of the Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan and a vision for North Lanarkshire's Town Centres is going to require a more pro-active vision process with stronger partnership activity across all groups (private sector/public sector /third sector) and a clearer focus on development agreements, delivery, programme and implementation.

Stimulating demand by re-building the resident population within town centre catchments and leveraging the Council's housing investment will both support housing objectives and provide a necessary stimulus for the demand for goods and services within centres.

The vision plan needs to become a key identifier of viable deliverable projects that are SMART in their conception and can be defined setting a clear 'route map' for implementation. A pipeline of projects for each centre needs to be developed with the public sector providing an enabling and facilitating role and using the leverage of direct investment to support priority projects. Key areas that need to be addressed include:

- **Property / Land Assembly**
Identifying where land and property assets need to be consolidated or re-structured to enable development. Developing a detailed understanding of the town centre asset in terms of ownership and use and looking at re-purposing buildings / making more positive use of assets.
- **Development Briefs and Site Marketing**
Town Centre Action Plans have too frequently been broadly aspirational and fail to engage with the private and third sectors. The Vision Plans should be pro-active documents, setting Development Briefs and allowing market interest to be identified, tested and advanced. Promotion of opportunities through direct marketing and creating new opportunities in procurement to identify investment partners needs to support design and development briefs.
- **Re-purposing Space and Buildings**
Identify positive uses and activities that strong mixed-use centres offer and how these operate within the centre. How might these be optimised and consolidated – what buildings are suited to conversion or re-purposing with new activity at ground and upper floors – what wider community and local third sector needs could be accommodated and how can activity clustering support place appeal and footfall.
- **Development Agreements & Partnering**
Identifying partnership opportunity or alternative routes to releasing value in property and buildings that will bring buildings back into positive use and unlock investment. Using public sector and NLC Housing Programme as a catalyst for re-investment securing significant civic or under-utilised assets and re-purposing buildings for mixed-use and town centre living.

- **Intervention & Application of CPO Powers**

CPO powers to purchase land compulsorily are an important tool for local authorities and other public bodies to intervene to acquire land needed to enable projects that are in the public interest where this would otherwise not be possible by reason of land ownership.

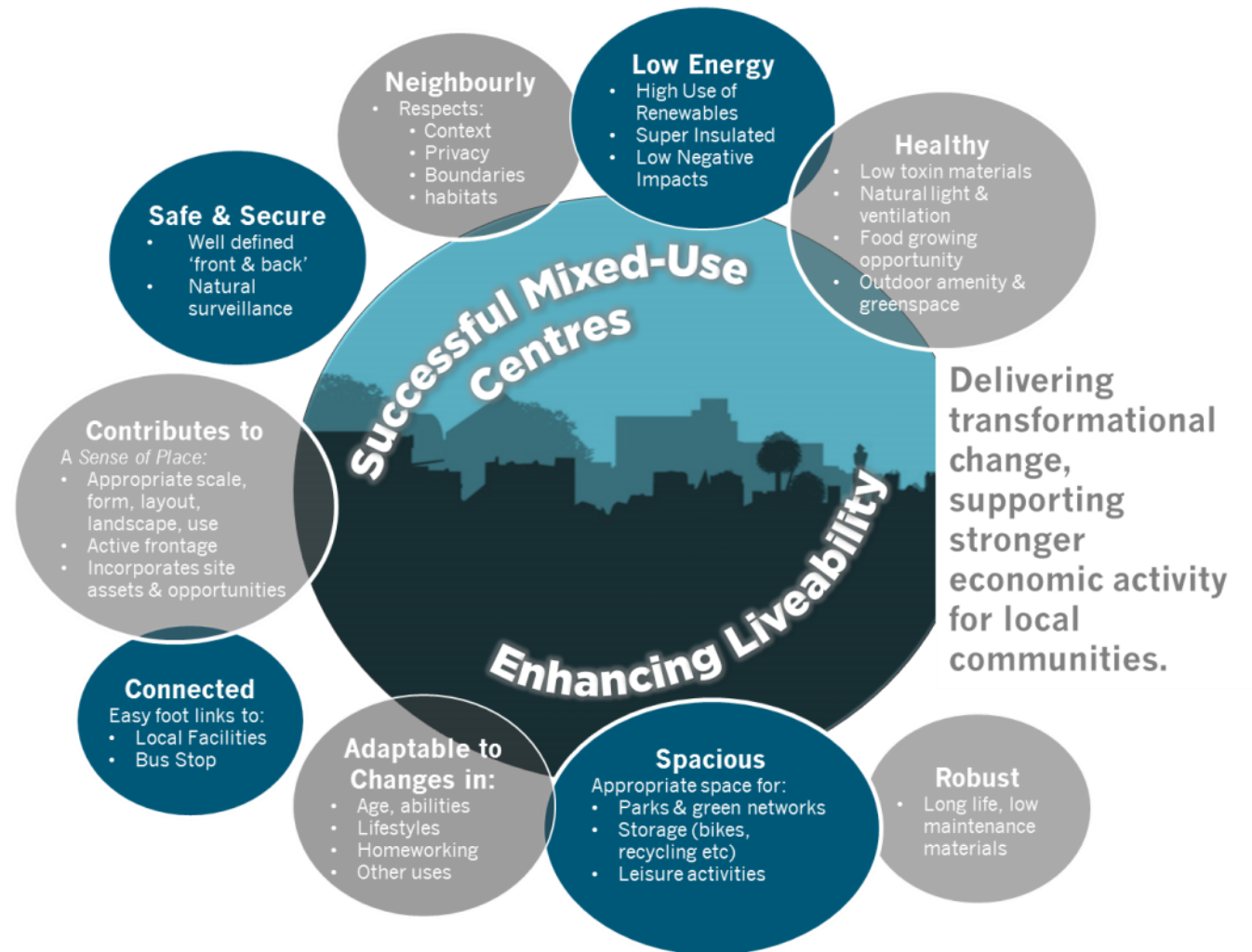
Compulsory purchase powers are important for helping to deliver housing development and town centre regeneration that create high quality places where people want to live, work and invest. Such projects will deliver social, economic and environmental improvement for the public benefit and, used properly, these powers can aid effective and efficient regeneration, the revitalisation of communities, and the promotion of inclusive economic growth. Transforming our centres will typically look to acquire or work within development agreements but the CPO route needs to be part of the possible interventions to secure Town Centre Vision Plan outcomes.

- **Monitoring & Evaluation**

North Lanarkshire Council will look to identify key performance indicators and develop and monitoring & evaluation framework to allow feedback , identify best practice, innovation and success factors.

“Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful towns for children, we will have a successful towns for all people.”

Enrique Penalosa



5.0 VISION PLANS FOCUSED ON DELIVERY & PLACE QUALITY

In seeking to develop new Vision Plans for North Lanarkshire's town centres the Council is mindful that place making is complex and to be delivered successfully requires the participation and active involvement of a very wide range of stakeholders.

Town centres service many needs and ownership, historic assets, business activity, community needs are never the same with regeneration solutions dependent upon the context, character, status and local needs of each centre. Each Vision Plan should seek to address the issues outlined below in order to ensure they are exemplar documents which reflect the Council's ambition to deliver transformational change towards every town centre becoming a vibrant and sustainable mixed use town centre to meet the needs of the people of North Lanarkshire.

Vision Plans

Recent Town Centre Action Plans and the associated charrette and engagement activity has tended to focus heavily on aspirations rather than delivery. Engagement has frequently been partial, securing local engagement but ignoring the more difficult challenges of private/public sector investment and better understanding the barriers to investment partnering and unlocking difficult but important sites.

While a common vision for more liveable, more attractive, active and appealing centres is understood, the mechanisms to deliver it and the funding, partnerships, procurement routes and delivery models are more challenging. The Vision Plans need to explore in more depth a limited number of 'catalytic projects' and present viable project proposals that can be market tested and advanced with partners to full project feasibility.

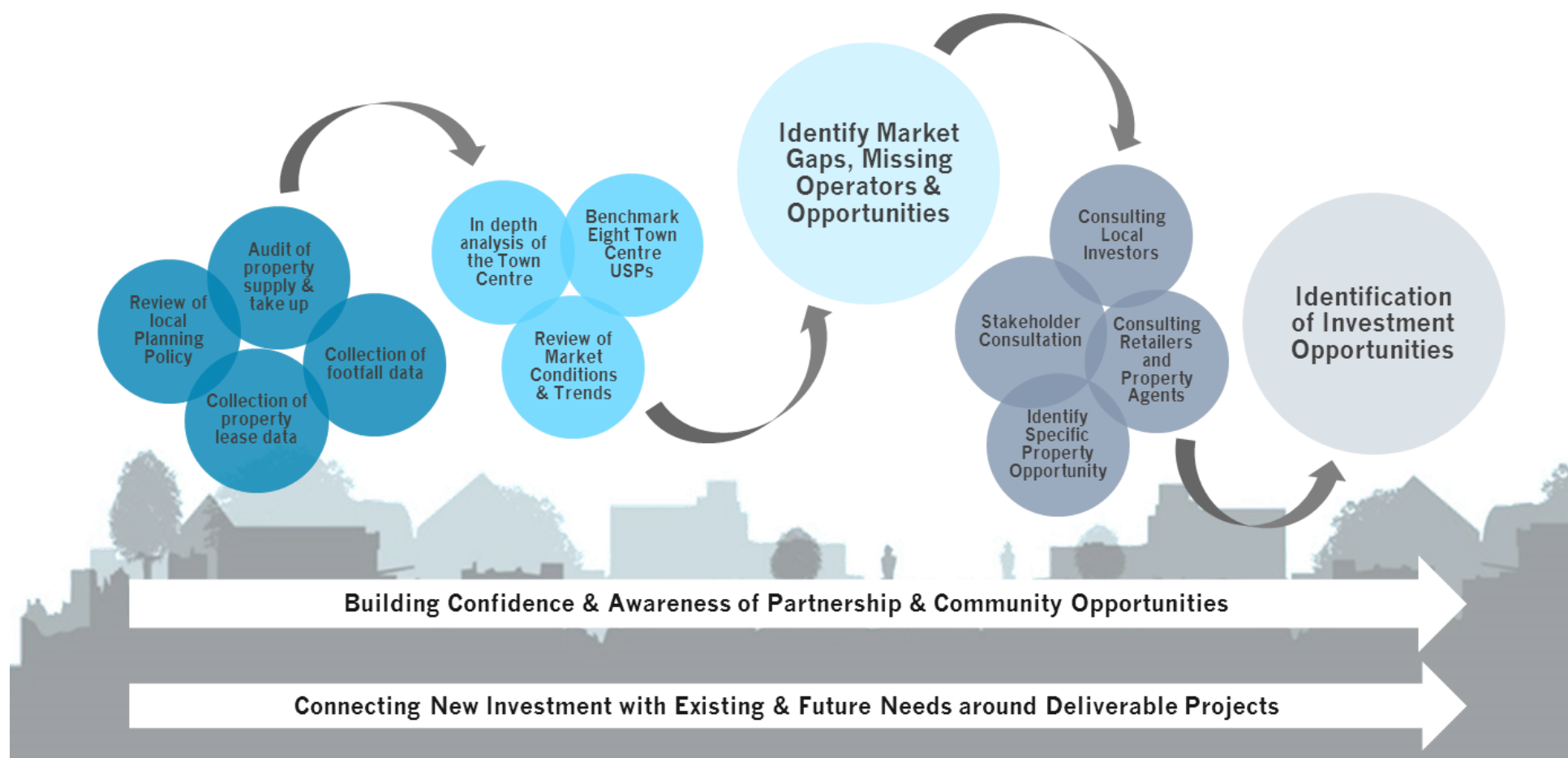
Landowners and investment partners, frequently the silent parties in town centre masterplanning action plans, need to be more directly engaged and procurement arrangements need to be reviewed to ensure where private investment interest and/or partnering opportunities exist, a compliant procurement process is available to advance projects. For major town centre re-structuring the public sector will need to unlock investment interest (housing/commercial/leisure/office) and create appropriate mechanisms for investment and change.

Town Centre Analysis

North Lanarkshire has done some excellent work on developing Town Centre Baselines and developing a detailed understanding of the economic and socio-economic context of its major centres. Town centre analysis with strong commercial understanding (Experian et al) that include each centres baseline, trends, industry perceptions and market barriers to investment. The Vision Plans need to build on this so as to provide a robust foundation for the actions and projects which will be identified to deliver the vision.

Developing Partnerships

Developing Town Centre Visions will require engagement and the development of new levels of engagement. Partnership activity will be encouraged with stronger links to public sector, private and third sector interests and organisations. Enabling all parties to bring forward project proposals and opportunity for re-investment is recognised as a key success factor. Multi-partnered projects, innovative funding, new delivery mechanisms and development collaboration are all areas to be advanced or explored.



Town Centre Planning: Gap Analysis

Dialogue with Key Property Owners and Investors

Data collection and analysis of each centre should identify key sites and key operators, and active marketing should be advanced and informed by commercial awareness of the market opportunity and investment potential. Regular dialogue with the investment and development sector will build confidence of the towns as a place to invest and grow. There is a need to engage with public utilities companies and suppliers to ensure that their investment programmes are reflected and aligned with the delivery plans which will stem from the Vision Plan.

Focus on Delivery & Place Quality

Securing more successful, appealing town centres needs to change how we look at town centres and develop a new vision of place that offers and supports a different mix of opportunities for retail, leisure, and homes and a different variety of quality and authentic experiences that take in living, working, and sharing, as well as leisure and learning. Towns need to be destinations of choice for a wider range of activity and need the infrastructure and place quality to support future investment choices.

Creating Successful Places

The Scottish Government's Place-Standard helps initiate meaningful engagement and encourages participants to think about places as evolving and changing and assist in a structured discussion around local assets and local needs. Community empowerment sits at the heart of the Scottish approach to making places work. Changing places with people is about sharing a sense of the issues and ambitions, needs and challenges of a place with all its stakeholders.

Making the Transition from Planned Places to Places that Plan

Public policy needs to enable places to make change and recognise that this is an activity for all and will require both a new dialogue and new thinking across all the varied interests within communities including residents, business leaders, entrepreneurs, retailers, employers, service providers, local interest groups, etc.

The transformation of North Lanarkshire's Town Centre towards Mixed-Use Centres needs to encourage a move from planned places based on centralised planning to places that plan as an active part of community action. Promoting a dialogue should connect both top-down (policy/strategic thinking) and bottom-up (local needs/responses) thinking that embraces all players and interests.

Planning for Better Places

Planning for mixed-use centres need to support a re-think of the needs of each centre that builds on their respective functionality and appeal through a combination of measures that looks to:

- build on the distinctive, character of place that promotes town centre living and long-term sustainable change
- strengthen the appeal of each centre for both residents and visitors by diversifying the reasons for visiting and encouraging multi-purpose visits
- encourage a focussed retail core that creates a strong retail experience within the centre appropriately supported by café/leisure activity
- promote walking and cycling within the centre for both residents and visitors through a balance of measures that connect places and offer safe routes between the main facilities, transport interchanges and points of arrival.
- support opportunity for development to knit together and repair what can be fragmented urban places as a result of demolitions and loss of building frontages.

Place Making Guidelines

The Vision Plans need to articulate practical place making guidance which reflects the ambition to move towards mixed use town centres

What Needs to be supported

- Making the most of existing character assets, such as historic buildings
- Creating well-defined streets and public spaces, accessible for all
- Promoting multi-use, flexible spaces suitable for a variety of uses
- Encouraging a rich mix of uses and activities reflecting the historic urban grain
- Facilitating vertical mix of uses, e.g. ground floor retail with offices or flats above.
- Creation of active frontages to all public realm space
- Delivering high quality walking connections to rail and bus stations
- Planning for parking to be discretely located and well signposted
- Maintaining the grain, proportion and urban massing by integration with existing
- Developing a high-quality green network of parks and greenspace
- Strengthening a legible urban structure with clear focal points/civic spaces/nodes
- Encouraging stakeholders and the community to be active civic partners
- A review of the regulatory framework to promote town centre living (e.g. reduction in car parking standards, mitigation of the acoustic environment)

What needs to be avoided

- Large sites and entire urban blocks devoted to a single land use - that incrementally erodes the fine grain town centre character.
- Developments requiring large scale surface car parking - these result in a fragmented townscape, poor urban form and place dominated by cars.

Placemaking Checklist / Toolkit - Demonstrating compliance with Best Practice

The Vision Plans need to ensure that they are :-

- **Making the most of existing character assets, such as historic buildings.**
Ensuring that heritage assets and buildings that are valued locally are well maintained, protected against insensitive development and, wherever appropriate, kept in use that they may be enjoyed by all.
- **Promoting well-defined, legible streets and public spaces, accessible for all**
Creating a network of walkable, human-scale streets that are lined by buildings, and remodelling places to be inclusive to people with disabilities. The 'urban structure' should have clear public focal points that are civic spaces, which may also contain key landmark buildings.
- **Encouraging more flexible spaces suitable for a variety of uses**
Ensuring that town centre public spaces can support events and seasonal programming that will attract more visitors and add to a sense of renewal. Keeping the town centre 'fresh' in its appeal will help to attract repeat visits.

- **Supporting rich mix of uses and activities reflecting the historic urban grain**
The wider variety of shops, services and experiential attractions clustered together in town centres, the more appealing they are to visit, work and live in.
- **Pro-actively seeking and enabling quality supporting infrastructure**
Coordinating with partners the delivery of supporting infrastructure (utilities /services/transport) but perhaps most importantly the accelerated roll-out of ultra-fast broadband and 5G is critical to meet the increasing digital connectivity requirements of residents, businesses and visitors.
- **Promoting a vertical mix of uses, e.g. ground floor retail-active uses with offices or flats above.**
Putting upper floors above ground-floor retail/office/service units into use increases the number of people within the town centre during the working day. This helps to sustain the town centre economically, as workers buy lunch, hold meetings in cafes and make use of other services during the work day.

Requirement for Quality in Design

While focussed on identifying key actions/projects/developments that will deliver mixed use town centres the Vision Plans should be supportive of and acknowledge the benefit of quality in design and will expect each Vision Plan to :-

- **Require quality in terms of place-making and design**
Design quality that is compliant with design guidelines (National /Regional/ Local) and requires compliance with Designing Places / Designing Streets / Town Centre Action Plans

- **Require high-quality walking and cycling connections to Town Centres**
A network of good quality walking and cycling routes, connecting to the town centres, and public transport hubs, will broaden people's travel options. Where the rail station is close to the town centre, (Airdrie, Coatbridge, Bellshill, Motherwell etc) the Town Centre Action Plan should prioritise public space enhancements to improve the pedestrian connection and 'arrival experience' and consider car-free residential development within five-minute walk from the station.
- **Require car parking to be discretely located and well signposted**
Car parking should not be prominent as it detracts from a quality town centre environment. It should be well distributed across the town centre and located in places where it cannot overly dominate public spaces or streets. Signage and parking controls should be clearly displayed to minimise confusion.
- **Require-a high-quality investment in parks and greenspace**
Parks and greenspace contribute to the attractiveness of a town centre while also offering health and wellbeing benefits. Greenery can also be used to screen gaps in the urban fabric and hide unsightly structures.

The Council require each Vision Plan to consider the above factors and demonstrate how they have been taken account of in the vision for each town to ensure they are reflective of the Council's ambitions and inform the ambition of our Community Planning partners, key stakeholders and the public all of whom have a role to play in ensuring the delivery of the shared vision.



Liveable Places: Principles and Outcomes

6.0 Summary & Recommendations

A Manifesto for Transformational Change of North Lanarkshire's Town Centres) The Council's focus is on transformational change towards mixed-use town centres.

Mixed economies and mixed places encourage interaction, and deliver opportunities for enterprise and business activity, innovation and creativity through the mix of activity, the random interactions thereby created, and the stronger role and civic functionality of the centre.

This document is intended as an overarching mission statement to articulate the Council's ambition for transformational change within its existing town centres towards more sustainable mixed use town centres. The strategy document will be used to inform and justify the Council's actions and investments within town centres and to promote complimentary actions by our public sector Community Partners and the private sector.

Promoting Urban Change

Places are continuously changing. Sometimes these changes happen rapidly such as the development of Cumbernauld as a New Town and sometimes more slowly as in changes to more traditional centres like Airdrie. Change is part of the essential pattern of town centres. Too often the call for action is reactive with regeneration measures tackling established problems of decline rather than pro-actively promoting positive opportunity, investment and growth.

Towns should be looking to reinvent themselves in many small ways that can support quality place-making and enable and support sustainable change. This needs to promote a vision for successful adaptation and growth around future needs and the needs and strengths of each individual centre and community.

Recommendations

The next step in the process towards delivering this overarching ambition is the production of a Vision Statement for each of the eight existing town centres within North Lanarkshire. The Town Centre Vision Plans will be tailored to the needs and opportunities of each town and will be produced in consultation with key stakeholders and finalised following extensive community engagement and consultation to ensure a community buy in and ownership of the vision.

The production of the Town Centre Vision Plans will build upon the Town Centre Action Plan work undertaken in 2015/16 and will require the following:-

- Review of existing centres (Town Audit/Health Check/Baseline Data)
- Review emerging UK/Scottish policy framework and precedent models
- Review housing programme and potential to support regeneration
- Review community partners investment programmes
- Review the utilities infrastructure and investment programme
- Undertake local centre assessment including review of previous town centre action plan health-check, framework and actions documentation
- Review accessibility / connectivity and mobility
- Review schools and local infrastructure capacity / constraints on development
- Develop a model scenario – defining place characteristics supporting housing growth
- Assess scale and range of opportunity and potential interventions
- Test and validate development option scenario's against exemplar towns / differing town typologies
- Undertake a town/place/housing team facilitated workshop to test Scenario Planning
- Adopt lessons learnt. Practical considerations and needs