



The People
& Places
Partnership;
*bringing facts
& faces to
town centres*

**& PEOPLE
PLACES**

www.people-places.net

Creators of national town centres toolkit

The People & Places Partnership are creators of the [national revitalising town centres toolkit](#) for the Local Government Association. The toolkit provides comprehensive guidance for local place leaders & has recently been updated to include good practice in COVID-19 recovery planning.



Creators of *Revitalising Town Centres*

an online toolkit for
council leadership

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MORE INFO
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HERE



Understanding a town centre is about people & place.
About the customers & the businesses based there.
About the built fabric & sense of community created.



The People & Places Partnership provides comprehensive support on all aspects of place leadership using the methods set-out in the [national revitalising town centres toolkit](#) that we created for the Local Government Association.

Our [specialities](#) begin with providing an evidence-based understanding of town trends. This underpins the creation of talented town teams able to deliver recovery & revitalisation backed by specialist advice on promoting travel to town & boosting foot-flow.

Bringing facts & faces to town

People & places' approach to revitalising town centres is simple. It is based on understanding evidence & engaging with stakeholders to address identified issues.

To get the 'big picture' & understand the wider context of individual town centres, our involvement usually begins with the tried & tested process of bringing together existing local research, surveying stakeholders & collecting key performance indicators. This evidence-led approach has been adopted by the Local Government Association as national good practice.

Engaging stakeholders

Our philosophy is to engage with stakeholders from the beginning by asking businesses & town centre users what they think about a place. We see this as the start of a process which will involve them in agreeing on issues & working in partnership to develop & deliver sustainable solutions.

Communication is key

Our experience tells us that clear communication is the key to driving the successful delivery of a revitalised town centre. It is important to agree on & coordinate a collective future plan, with everyone 'rowing in the same direction'. This enables partners to then 'play to their passions' in a joined-up way.

Results-focused delivery

'What get measured gets done'. We believe this is a simple truism to adopt, as long as those measures cover the original issues identified. It is vital that responses for revitalising a town centre track the changing evidence & impacts. By staying focused on the evidence, the partners can monitor progress, adjust activity accordingly & clearly demonstrate their successes along the way.

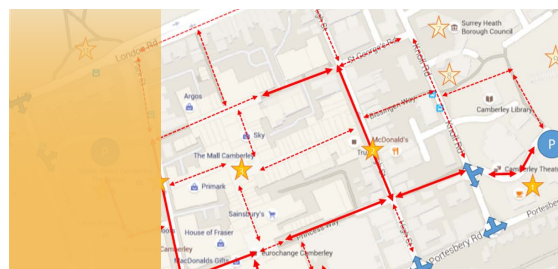
For Starters

- ✓ Evidence-led
- ✓ Engaging stakeholders
- ✓ Communicating & coordinating
- ✓ Results-focused



Understanding town trends

As a foundation for our work, 'understanding towns trends' involves painting a picture of a place & its priorities using nationally benchmarked indicators.



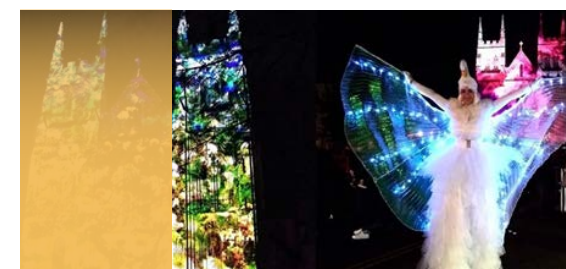
Promoting travel to town

Our national research & work in in a wider variety of towns, shows how to overcome perceived & physical barriers to travelling into town & around town.



Creating talented town teams

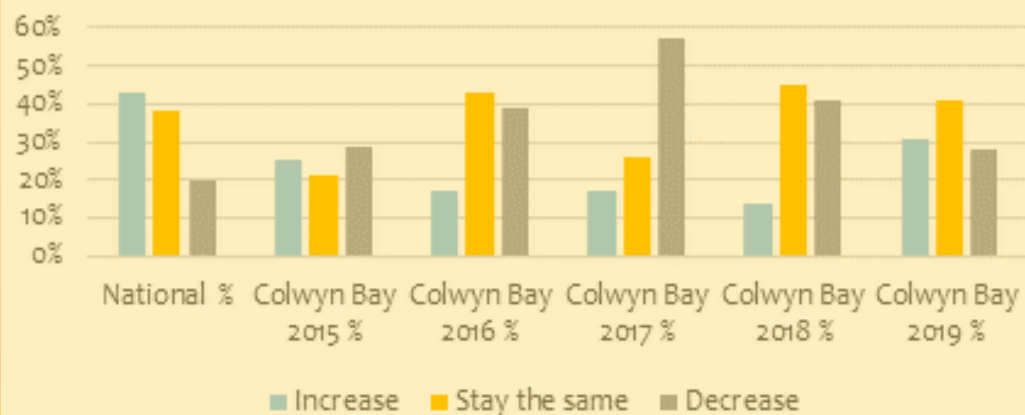
We believe in putting the necessary work in behind-the-scenes to nurture the local talent that always exists in a town & create positive partnerships.



Delivering recovery & revitalisation

We focus on the coordinated delivery of confidence-boosting 'quick wins' necessary for recovery combined with shaping plans for lasting revitalisation.

Changes in Projected Turnover



BUSINESS MIX

As part of our baseline surveys of town centres, we examine the business mix & potential for diversification through an in-depth look at use-class types relative to similar towns locally & nationally.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

By tracking business performance through historic & projected turnover, we can help gauge the impact of improvements on changing confidence over time & compared to national trends.

BUSINESS PRIORITIES

We visit every business in a town as part of our initial engagement. It's always revealing to learn about businesses' perceived likes, dislikes & future priorities at the start of an engagement process that will involve them in delivering solutions.



Creating talented town centre teams

Town centre ‘teams’ need to be carefully nurtured to unlock local talent & drive long-term change. At People & Places, we support this process proactively with the ‘[forward framework](#)’ technique used in the LGA’s national revitalising town centres toolkit.

Getting organised

A forward framework helps everyone ‘row in the same direction’ by defining the ‘how’ & the ‘what’ of future activity. Successful town centre revitalisation depends on nurturing talented teams through an understanding of

the foundation evidence; the appropriate organisational form; finances; & forward planning that defines the commitment, communication & coordination of community partners. This enables partners to ‘play to their strengths’ & sustain long-term impacts.

Coordinating delivery

Successful delivery of a town centre forward framework involves the coordination of a range of functions including ‘place-shaping’; planning & property; business support; community & culture; marketing & events.



3 steps to strong partnership working

Evidence-led

1 Delivering a forward framework for revitalisation must continue to be evidence-led by monitoring impacts, understanding business performance & consulting customers to show success.

Engaging partners

2 Town teams need to fulfill key enabling roles in engaging partners, agreeing priorities, coordinating activity, involving stakeholders & securing new resources to widen the impacts of changes.

Clear communications

3 Town teams should clearly communicate across diverse partners & projects to support delivery & share successes, influence & engage with stakeholders including residents, businesses & visitors.

Delivering recovery & revitalisation

The national revitalising town centres toolkit prepared for the LGA by the People & Places Partnership, includes updated guidance & case studies about planning for immediate recovery & long-term revitalisation. Importantly, its [town centre checklist](#) helps ensure a joined-up approach across inter-connected issues. We can assist local place leaders in using the toolkit's checklist in the planning & delivery of recovery & revitalisation.

Charting the big picture

The town centre checklist shows how charting prospects for planning, property, parking, travel & public realm enhancements are key in unlocking the long-term potential of places & ultimately boosting footfall. This complements detailed guidance that we provide on issues such as reviving [historic town centres](#).

Bringing towns to life

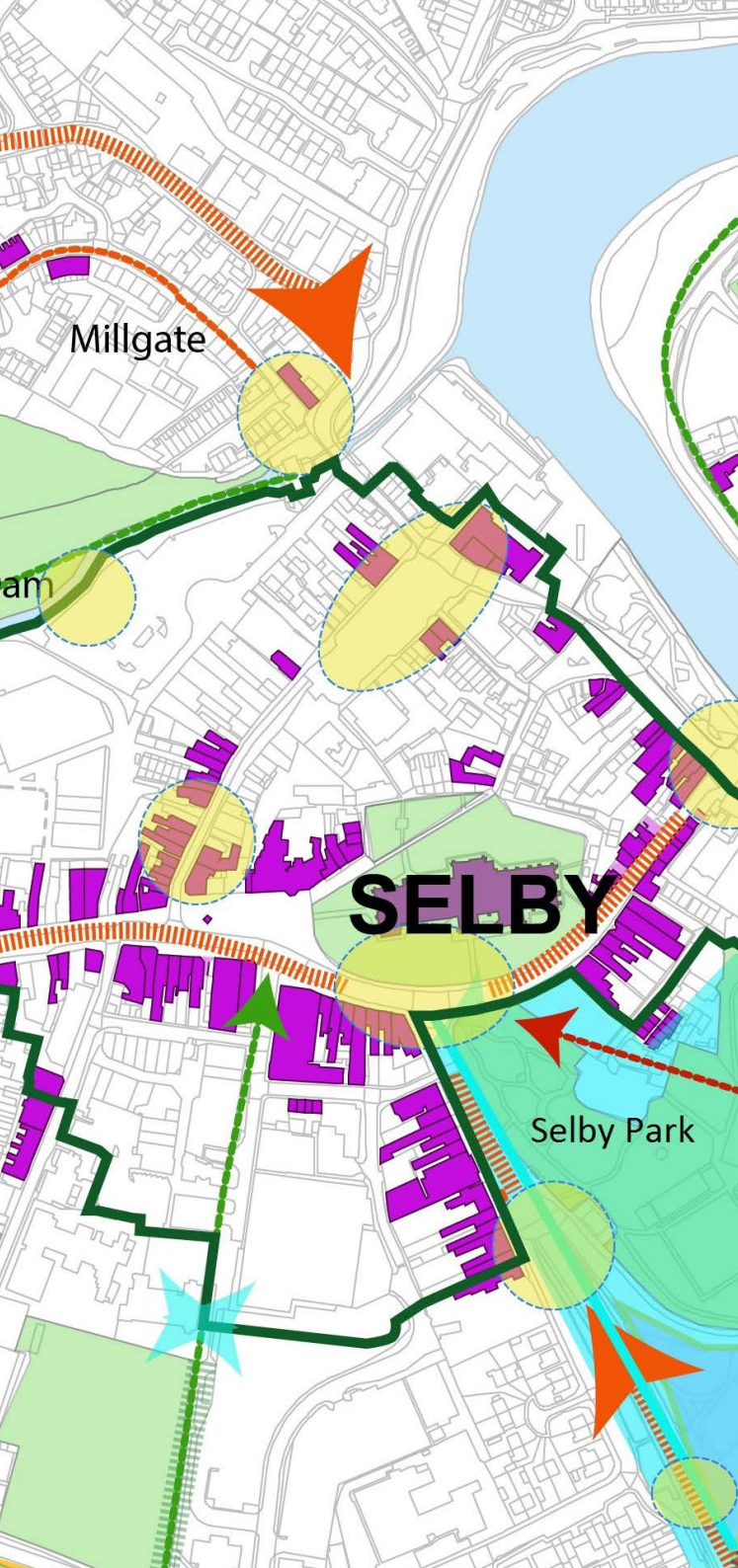
The checklist also highlights the role of softer skills able to help bring town centres to life by better serving customers' needs. Business diversification, place marketing & digital development are important parts of making the most of a place. This includes adapting for recovery using our insights into [national trends](#).

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TOWN CENTRE CHECKLIST

- ✓ **FOUNDATION;** evidence & objectives
- FUNCTION**
 - ✓ parking, travel & access
 - ✓ planning & property
 - ✓ streetscape & public realm
 - ✓ business support
 - ✓ place marketing & branding
 - ✓ digital technology & data
- ✓ **FORM;** governance & influence
- FOLK**
 - ✓ community engagement & coordination
 - ✓ roles & capacity
- ✓ **FUNDING;** finances & investment
- ✓ **FORWARD PLANNING;** strategy & plans



COVID-19 recovery

The short-term impacts & long-term behavioural changes caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 need to be understood & factored into future support for towns. Our '[beyond COVID-19](#)' approach begins by tracking national trends to benchmark & analyse local customer confidence & business performance.



Moving around town

COVID-19 is changing the way we travel into town centres, the frequency, how we move around & where we linger. We have used government guidance & our experiences shared with different places, to create a checklist for [managing streets & public spaces](#). This can be used to create locally-tailored responses.



Taking towns online

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated customer demand for new digital services that strengthen the link between online & on-street. As part of recovery planning, we can assess digital development in a way that meets immediate needs & builds long-term capacity for town-wide engagement.

Access & signage reviews

In undertaking access & signage reviews for places such as Camberley town centre, we seek to improve the journey from home to the business or venue of choice. In doing so, we aim to create increases in footfall, foot-flow, dwell-times & repeat visits that we can track with technology.

Recommendations might include town-wide digital development principles, branding of recognisable 'quarters' & providing parking to better match customers' needs.

We will follow this up with detailed assessments of access & arrival points by road & public transport; pedestrian routes; user orientation; & signage needs. A prioritised implementation schedule will deliver the town-wide principles & impacts.



Linking online with on-street

There is often a lot of online 'noise' expressing sentiments about town any centre. Our approach is to try and use this in a way that strengthens the link between online perceptions and on-street experiences.

Our perspective on [taking high streets online](#) is "don't limit your ambitions!" Towns need digital strategies that look beyond retail. Aspirations for dynamic town centres enabled in part by digital infrastructure, skills and engagement, are essential; it's part of what we look to understand in our baseline town centre stakeholder surveys.

Our understanding of '[smart travel](#)' points to the need for town centre revitalisation to factor-in how customers will travel to town in different ways in future and how this will help them overcome perceived & physical barriers.

A fresh look at travel

After many years of listening to business & customer concerns about town centre parking, People & Places have combined forces with Park Consult to take a fresh look at the issues. Our **People, Places & Parking Process** takes a customer-focused approach to analysing the quality, quantity, convenience & cost of parking provision, to make practical recommendations for improving town centre provision.



Encouraging active travel

At People & Places, we can help local leaders examine options for encouraging active travel as part of wider town centre revitalisation. Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic & government policy, add impetus to our approach of assessing how

people travel to town & examining alternatives. Input into local planning policy, including Neighbourhood Plans, presents opportunities for reducing car dependency & town centre parking demand, especially linked to new housing development.

Sharing what works between places

Creating a 'can-do' attitude with measurable change

Delivering successful town centre change involves vision, a joined-up approach & coordinated delivery amongst local partners. Click on the LGA case studies below to see how we have achieved this across our specialities by working with councils, communities & businesses to create a 'can-do' attitude & deliver measurable outcomes.

Click to
learn more

Understanding town trends

Southwold: Survey work developing an [evidence base in Southwold](#) showed the importance of properly understanding town centre issues. Find out how our evidence base helped determine future priorities & support funding bids.



Creating talented town teams

Pembrokeshire: Find out how People & Places' town centre checklist was used in reviewing the performance of town teams across six [Pembrokeshire](#) communities. 'Forward frameworks' were advocated for the individual town team.



Promoting travel to town

Sleaford: A customer-focused [review of parking in Sleaford](#) resulted in a joined-up approach as part of wider town centre access. Find how this provided measurable benefits for customers & businesses plus extra income to re-invest in the service.



Delivering recovery & revitalisation

Selby: Learn how we helped [Selby](#) stakeholders chart a route to recovery & revitalisation in a safe & welcoming way. This involved rapid learning, testing of new ideas, developing local capacity & improving long-term partnership working.



Let's talk of our towns

“ More than ever for me, looking [beyond COVID-19](#) involves putting people at the centre of everything that affects the places where they live and work: to nurture local talents & leadership; to reach out, understand & involve the wider community; to embrace collective working between businesses & different factions within towns; to capture & share inspirational ideas.

Much more can be achieved by learning from people's experiences & expertise between places. That's what motivates me to share ideas through our 'Talk of the Town' web pages & social media.”

Chris Wade, Director, People & Places Partnership



Share & learn online

We love sharing what works between people & places. Through our online '[Talk of the Town](#)' network that provides a space where ideas are shared & inspiration found. Sometimes, we simply love a coffee & a chat.

High Streets expertise

People & Places Director, Chris Wade is a High Streets Task Force Expert. He has been appointed by the [High Streets Task Force](#) to help communities & local government transform their high streets 'in need'.



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