

2017 Consultation Response Sheet

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Document title / ref	Consultation: (CPP / EconDevTCentres/ SHB ref)
Key	Black - Q1 – priority; Orange - Q2 – do different; Red - Q3 – stop doing; Q4 – start doing; Q5&6 – community; Staff
Heads of Service / Partner / Rep	Rhona Gunn Corporate Director: EDP&I
Categories	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We like & will investigate it 2. We are & this is an update 3. We can't take this forward & this is the reason why 4. We like & will explore more with the public 5. We acknowledge & can explain 6. We have reflected on our priorities & your comments will inform our future direction

Feedback/Comments Received:	
Partnerships: Economic Development: Town Centres	
Refer to:	
CPP 230-18863 / Page 13-14 / Bullets 155-176	
155.	Accept that the 'high street' as a retail outlet is an outdated concept. Empty shops (some empty for many years) are unsightly and degenerating. Could they revert to dwellings? We hear that new housing is desperately needed.
156.	banks closing
157.	better shopping facilities for clothes - still need to travel to Inverness or Aberdeen for choice
158.	Buy up vacant shops and residential properties in our town centres to make them more attractive , create jobs and improve appearance for visitors and residents alike and increase local spending and reduce shopping expenditure leakage outwith area.
159.	Economic development – town centre - high street and allow one way traffic from west to east. People need to see it's not dead. The centre of Elgin can be saved.
160.	Encourage the development of small businesses and local town centres rather than large variety development such as the new Tesco on common good land in Forres
161.	encourage use of high street buildings
162.	Get investment going in Elgin city centre - all of those empty upper floors should be developed into student housing and flats. It would encourage young people to stay in the area as there would be somewhere nice for them to live, and shops/bars/restaurants would open to cater to the captive audience. Encourage the developers to get onto this.
163.	health of Forres High Street
164.	improve the high street at one time it was a very busy hub now almost dead apart from charity, coffee shops and banks
165.	improvement of the centre of Dufftown
166.	local shops
167.	pay full attention to the needs of the centre of Elgin in terms of improvement
168.	revive high streets with cheap rents for small businesses
169.	support towns other than Elgin

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- 170. Tackle decline of Elgin centre through reduction of rents, compulsory purchase and better planning consents
- 171. The wellbeing of my town.
- 172. Town centre market place.
- 173. Town centre shops
- 174. town development
- 175. Town High Streets
- 176. Town twinning
- 177.

Partner Response:

- 21 of the 177 comments received relate to town centres

On the issue of the importance of town centres, the response is category 6: We agree that town centres should be the focus of communities and their role as centres of retail has changed. Some buildings may lend themselves to conversion to homes, live work spaces, student accommodation, galleries and other public gathering spaces for cultural and educational activities. Conversion works can be expensive, more expensive than new build and regulations such as providing fire protected means of escape from upper floors are problematic. Incentives would be required to work with landlords, often absentees or institutional investors with differing objectives. A carrot and stick approach is required, stick alone doesn't work.

Initiatives such as the Keith Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and the current [Elgin Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme](#) has enabled investment in the maintenance of public and private buildings to maintain them as attractive, functioning places to use.

[The Local Development Plan](#) which provides the policy framework for development that requires planning permission and works that require listed building consent is due for review by 2020. This is a matter that can be taken forward as part of the plan review process. It is national planning policy to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres which requires a sequential test be satisfied before any large scale out of town retail centres are permitted.

We recognise that some in the community have concerns on the issue of bank closures and other changes to retailing and service delivery, the response is category 5: The public sector has little control over commercial decisions and no control over rents on property it does not own. Rates are set by the Scottish Government and collected by the Council on its behalf. Any cut in rates proposed by the Council must be paid for from the Council's budget.

On the issue of making town centres attractive places to shop, the response is category 2: Partners have worked with town centre retailers to improve the attractiveness of premises such as shop front displays and customer service. Moray Speyside Tourism Most recently Moray Speyside Tourism has helped to secure 'WorldHost Destination' status for Forres and Fochabers.

On the issue of supporting local business, the response is category 2: Small businesses are supported to establish, innovate and grow by the [Business Gateway](#) Service and through support from the [Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Federation of Small Business](#) and [TSiMoray](#) (for social enterprises).

On the issue of regenerating town centres, the response is category 2: Community groups and private individuals are acquiring buildings for renovation and reuse and these are

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facilitated where possible.

On the suggestion to allow one way traffic on Elgin High Street, the response is category 3: The Council held a consultation on a [Transportation Strategy for Elgin](#) earlier this year

On the issue of supporting town centres, the response is category 2: Moray Towns are currently supported with resources to [Elgin Business Improvement District](#) and the [Moray Town Partnership](#)

On the suggestion to stop town twinning, the response is the Council has not provided funding support for Town twinning for almost 5 years. However, it is considered that cultural exchanges can be valuable, establishing and maintaining new community and business relationships that provide learning and opportunities for partnership, understanding and stability. If communities want to develop and maintain such relationships they may be able to do so with funds raised by other means. The Council has facilitated an annual [funding workshop](#) to help organisations and community groups get access to funds and to teach them how to pitch for funds.

More information about [Economic Development](#)

The local government's role in Economic Development is guided by the Scottish Government's priorities and strategies. In partnership with organisations across all sectors, the Council is working on a [strategic plan](#) and operational level to maximise economic benefits through its strategies, decision making, investment and services. [Economic Development Annual Review 2015-16](#)

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