Flourishing Towns

Time for Towns
Based on our range of policy and practice work on towns to date, we’ve set out a new agenda for UK towns to support the development of vibrant, innovative and empowered town communities. Our Searching for Space report examines the main policies and initiatives designed to improve outcomes in places across the UK and Ireland. Through our Twinning Towns project we’ve examined international examples of towns that have successfully gone through a transformation process, and shared this learning with stakeholders in the UK.

Twin Towns
Our domestic town twinning initiative brings together towns across the UK and Ireland that share similar characteristics. Our domestic town twinning initiative brings together towns across the UK and Ireland. We've examined international examples of towns that have successfully gone through a transformation process, and shared this learning with stakeholders in the UK.

USP and UWP
With a consortium of partners, we’re continuing to develop www.usp.scot, a data platform that allows people to compare and contrast information on almost 500 Scottish towns. We’re also in the early stages of developing a new data platform to improve the understanding of and evidence base about Welsh towns, in partnership with Welsh Government.

Test Town Legacy
Through our Build Your Own Test Town guide and online portal we will be sharing our learning and supporting towns and organisations across the UK to deliver their own independent pop-up enterprise Test Town initiatives.

Affordable Credit
The question of how to make affordable credit available to people who cannot access mainstream credit is a complex and contested public policy issue. Led by our Affordable Credit Action Group, we’re supporting new solutions with a focus on identifying sustainable alternatives to the commercial high cost credit market.

Work and Wellbeing
We’ve published data that tracks trends in work and wellbeing, contributing to an evidence base for action across a raft of issues to deliver more fulfilling work for many more people.

Measuring Job Quality
In partnership with the RSA, we have convened a short-life working group to develop a framework for measuring job quality in the UK. The 2017 Taylor Review suggests an outcome that “all work should be fair and decent with realistic scope and contested public policy issue. Led by our Affordable Credit Action Group, we’re supporting new solutions with a focus on identifying sustainable alternatives to the commercial high cost credit market.”

Impact of Brexit
The Trust has published analysis of the impact of Brexit on Digital and Fulfilling Work, each written by an independent expert, to serve as a starting point to a wide range of public policy issues that can inform the Trust and others on possible next steps and priorities for our thematic areas after Brexit. We will publish analysis with a specific focus on towns later in 2018.

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Our Current Projects

2018

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Enabling Wellbeing

The Power and Place of Kindness
Kindness is at the very heart of our wellbeing. This is not just about the importance of places and opportunities to connect, and the intrinsic values underpinning our interactions and relationships. We are currently running three linked projects:

- The Place of Kindness involves a partnership with North Ayrshire Council to undertake a further set of demonstration activities focused on kindness, to support the local authority’s work to tackle poverty.
- The Power of Kindness takes these conversations to a strategic level, through a series of roundtables led by Carnegie Fellow Julie Unwin to understand what needs to change in public policy to promote kindness across the UK.
- The Kindness Innovation Network is an action learning programme that brings together a network of people with an interest in exploring how to share evidence, learning, test new ideas, and collaborate around kindness.

The Enabling State
Our Enabling State programme began in 2013 with the aim of describing the paradigm shift that is transforming the UK welfare state to an enabling state. This shift is characterised by a recognition that traditional ‘top down’ approaches can no longer solve the complex social problems that we face as a society. The state needs to play a more facilitative and enabling role which empowers individuals and communities to have more control over their personal wellbeing and our collective wellbeing as a society. We continue to carry out research into the enabling state, through surveys and policy analysis, to promote evidence-informed policy making.

Understanding Wellbeing
We’re leading advocates for wellbeing frameworks that allow governments at all levels to meaningfully measure social progress for citizens. We’ve worked internationally with the OECD, and gathered evidence on wellbeing frameworks from across the globe. In the UK, we’ve supported the Scottish Government on the ongoing development of the National Performance Framework, and set out steps for developing a wellbeing framework in Northern Ireland. Our three-year project in Northern Ireland offers significant financial and in-kind partnerships to implement a wellbeing framework in Northern Ireland.

Evidence in Policy
We’ll continue to explore how we can better share evidence about what works in social policy and practice across sectors and across borders. We’ve been exploring how to take forward the steps set out in our Scottish Approach to Evidence discussion paper, published in partnership with the Alliance for Useful Evidence, and have re-run our Evidence Exchange survey to update our understanding of how policymakers and practitioners across the UK access and use evidence, including co-produced evidence.

Better Way
We’re working with Civil Exchange and the Esmée Fairbourn Foundation to support a cross-sectoral network of social activists. The network is dedicated to improving services and building stronger communities and will enable people to share ideas and build a growing movement for change.

Citizen’s Rising
We’re pleased to continue to support The Wheel to work with cross sectoral partners to realise a new vision for citizen engagement and greater participative democracy in the Republic of Ireland.

Governing England
We’re working with the British Academy on ‘Governing England’, a multi-disciplinary project to address some of the key issues relating to emerging debates about English devolution and governance in the context of a changing Union.

Digital Futures

#NotWithoutMe
We’re working to test and promote effective approaches to digital inclusion for vulnerable young people, exploring innovative engagement techniques and supporting professionals to develop their practice.

Carnegie Library Lab
We’re promoting innovation and leadership in public libraries through a development programme that offers unique opportunity for public library staff to deliver an innovation project, take part in mentoring and networking activities and engage in a bespoke online learning programme.

Data Privacy
We’re working with partners including CILIP and Newcastle Libraries to understand and develop how public libraries can help individuals make informed decisions about their online privacy. We’re also developing new research on what citizens think about online privacy and how they manage this in practice.

Digital Exclusion
Building on our legacy of digital inclusion research we’re carrying out research projects that explore how citizens navigate information and manage their privacy and security online; and exploring the real-life practical benefits for citizens of key public services being transformed by digital technology.

Engaging Libraries
Working in partnership with the Wellcome Trust, we’re supporting four innovative public library projects across the UK to pilot creative and imaginative public engagement projects on health and wellbeing.

Balancing Privacy and Public Benefit
In partnership with Involve and Understanding Patient Data, we are exploring how government, civil society and advocacy groups make sense of, and balance, the potential risk and reward of data sharing across public services.

Future of Libraries
We’re working to communicate the contribution that public libraries make to wellbeing and key policy goals through our research and advocacy publications, Shining a Light and Speaking Volumes.

Digital Public Services
The British Library, supported by Arts Council England and the Carnegie UK Trust, is leading on the development of a single digital presence for public libraries. A single digital presence could provide public libraries with the opportunity to revisit their core mission and make tailored offerings to meet the needs of individual users opening up new opportunities for services and users alike.

Hackathons
Our Libraries Hackathon project will continue to work with the library sector and wider public services to demonstrate the potential for innovation and to share learnings and practical guidance for hosting and running immersive and alternative service design events.

Current Work
In 2018, the Trust remains committed to improving wellbeing for people in the UK and Ireland with particular regard to people who are disadvantaged. We’re in the third year of our 2016–2020 strategic plan, running policy and practice projects in the four areas you find in this leaflet. As a modern operating trust, we have a role both to influence ideas and policy and to be active in testing and delivering real-life solutions – all with the aim of improving people’s wellbeing. This leaflet provides an overview of our current projects – more information can be found on our website.