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# a vision for haddington town centre

*fulfilling our potential*





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Prepared and facilitated by Urban Animation with the people of Haddington  
Commissioned by Haddington Town Centre Vision Committee  
Funded by East Lothian Council, Haddington Community Council  
and the people of Haddington



## acknowledgements

This vision has been prepared with the help and enthusiasm of a huge number of people and organisations in and around Haddington. It is rooted in their aspirations and enthusiasm for the place that they love.

We would like to thank them all for their support:

Bridge Centre  
East Lothian Community Planning Partnership  
East Lothian Council  
Haddington Business Association\*  
Haddington Community Council\*  
Haddington Day Centre  
Haddington Farmers' Market  
Haddington and District Amenity Society\*  
Haddington's History Society\*  
Knox Academy\*  
Kings Meadow Primary School  
Lamp of Lothian Trust  
Lothian and Borders Police  
NFU Scotland | Lothian and Borders  
Poldrate Quilters  
Social Enterprise East Lothian  
Tynebank Resource Centre  
and residents and businesses too numerous to mention

(\* indicates members of Haddington Town Centre Vision Committee)

We hope that each of them recognise this as their shared vision for Haddington town centre.

Urban Animation, July 2012

### The Vision team comprised:

Urban Animation  
Nick Wright Planning  
Willie Miller Urban Design  
Dhu Rural





## Haddington speaks

To prepare the Vision, we began by asking hundreds of people of all ages from Haddington and the surrounding area what they like about the town and its centre. They told us :

*"Haddington is a beautiful place and we like living here.  
We like the local shops, the sense of community.  
We like the facilities, activities and festivals.  
It's easy to get to Edinburgh.  
The countryside and coast are lovely."*

We also asked people what they dislike and what might be improved. They didn't agree on everything!

*"There's not enough to do.  
The town centre buildings need to be looked after.  
We should reuse the empty buildings.  
We want more to do at night - and more for young people.  
We need more visitors, more activities, more cafes and restaurants."*

*"Traffic should be slower in the town centre.  
Pedestrians should have priority.  
There's too much car parking.  
(Or, there's not enough car parking.)  
We want two way traffic in the High Street.  
(Or we want one way traffic in the High Street.)"*

Everyone **DID** agree on one important point :

**"Something should be done."**

The Haddington Town Centre Vision explains what that **SOMETHING** should be. It includes a wealth of ideas which people gave us in school projects, focus groups, online surveys, business surveys and public workshops.

More information on what those people said is contained in an accompanying report (see the end of this document).





## What Is The Vision Project?

The Haddington Town Centre Vision project is a good example of people working together for the good of their town. It is the result of cooperation between four local community groups - Haddington Community Council, Haddington and District Amenity Society, Haddington Business Association and Haddington's History Society.

In 2011, these groups came together through a shared interest in the long term health of the town centre; Knox Academy subsequently joined the Vision team too. They agreed to promote the Vision project, and the Community Council provided the first part of the funding. The remaining financial support came from East Lothian Council and the people of the Haddington area.

At that time, there was uncertainty over proposals for new supermarkets which were expected to have an impact on the town centre. (Planning permission has since been granted for a Sainsbury's store on the western edge of Haddington.) Meanwhile, some town centre businesses were facing tough times, due to economic conditions and the impact of online and out of town shopping.

There were also concerns that Haddington's historic buildings, streets and spaces were in need of attention. Finally, the proposal for a one way traffic system at High Street was proving controversial.

East Lothian Council had already begun to address some of these concerns through its Town Centre Strategy Advisory Group. However, issues like the one way system proved divisive. The Vision project offers an opportunity for everyone to consider what has already been achieved in the town centre - such as the completion of the John Gray Centre - and find better ways of working together to achieve more success.

The Vision focuses on long term, 'big picture' thinking. Its basic purpose is to create the conditions for a busy and thriving town centre economy. To achieve that, the Vision sets out principles to guide change in the town centre over the decade or more. It does not prescribe details of individual projects. There will still be a need for a strategy and an action plan, and more detailed work on issues as varied as traffic, marketing and a development trust to take the Vision forward. These more detailed pieces of work should embrace the principles set out in this document.

Most people accept that the Council cannot be expected to solve every issue in Haddington town centre. Apart from anything else, it simply will not have the funds to do so. This means that local groups, businesses, individuals and the Council will need to work together with a sense of collective responsibility and common purpose if Haddington town centre is to achieve its full potential.

For that to happen, the Vision needs to reflect the views of local people. Equally, it needs to be realistic and deliverable. Finally, it needs to be ambitious.





## The Vision : Themes



Haddington is potentially one of Scotland's best small towns, for both residents and visitors. The best way to fulfil this potential is to build on the strengths of the place. This Vision for the town centre therefore seeks to make much more of:

- its role as East Lothian's hub for residents and visitors
- its unique story as one of Scotland's oldest towns
- its abundance of attractive buildings, streets and spaces, including the River Tyne
- its enterprising and creative people, not least the younger generation
- its well established community spirit.

**East Lothian's hub** – Haddington remains the seat of local government and public administration in East Lothian. Its role as county town has diminished in recent decades, but we believe the town can reposition itself as a natural hub – not only for local residents and businesses, but also as a focus for tourists.

People visiting Haddington for Council services, leisure facilities, shops, businesses and cafes or other attractions and facilities are potential customers for town centre businesses. This should work in the other direction too: Haddington's central position in the county places it at the hub of a network of visitor attractions and businesses all over East Lothian.

For Haddington to perform effectively as that hub, a number of things need to happen. Public transport connections to surrounding villages and tourist attractions need to improve. There also needs to be more for the visitor in Haddington itself, whether they come from down the road or another part of the world – from festivals and farmers' markets

to quality shopping and making more of the town's wonderful history, townscape and riverside. Many of these attractions exist already, and simply need to be presented well – or their story to be told.

**Telling the story** – Haddington's history and townscape should be animated as an integral part of modern town centre life. The town's story needs to be told, both for residents and visitors. How many people realise Haddington was one of Scotland's first Royal Burghs and its fourth largest town in mediaeval times? Or that it was at the centre of the eighteenth century Agricultural Revolution in Scotland? Local people may know that nearby Athelstaneford is the home of Scotland's flag, the Saltire, but how many know that the death mask of Mary Queen of Scots can be found at Lennoxlove House?

Haddington oozes history, but makes little of it. Telling the story would enrich the local community, invigorate the town centre and help to attract visitors to the town - and East Lothian as a whole. When they arrive, why not give them access to the spire in the Town House - Haddington's tallest and most prominent building – or St Mary's Church, where they could look out over the town's stunning heritage and beautiful rural setting beyond.

**A special place** – The centre of Haddington is one of the most appealing of any town in Scotland. It has the potential to be even more special, but risks losing its appeal without investment.

Fifty years ago, Haddington was famous for smartening up shabby buildings and rundown closes. Today, more work is needed to ensure that the town centre's special character is enhanced rather than eroded. A few landmark buildings need a new occupier, a lick of paint or – in a couple of cases – more significant investment.



This should be about more than buildings: it should also be about public spaces and the way people use them. In the High Street, Haddington has potentially the best town square in Scotland, as well as other stunning streets, closes, gardens, parks and the riverside. A full review of the role and potential of pedestrian and vehicular routes and spaces is needed. Making the most of these special places will ensure that residents and visitors will want to spend more time in them – and that they will be proud of the unique qualities of the town centre, and encourage others to come. This cannot all be achieved overnight, but it is a long term ambition that Haddington should work towards.

**A creative and enterprising future** - Haddington's history is full of creativity and enterprise. Through successive centuries since David I's grant of trading rights in the twelfth century, the town's growth and success have depended upon the initiative of its citizens.

Tomorrow's town centre needs to nurture that spirit and energy by providing opportunities and space for small businesses, community initiatives and social enterprises to establish and grow. We believe there are two particular opportunities which would set Haddington apart

from the crowd: a package of measures to nurture youth enterprise, and a community development trust to implement this Vision and enable enterprise and creativity to flourish.

**Collective responsibility** - To make this Vision a reality, everyone who cares about the future of the town centre needs to play their part. That includes businesses, community groups, public organisations and residents. No single person or organisation is responsible: each depends on the others. We repeat this point a number of times in this Vision document because it is critically important.

Haddington already has good examples of its people and organisations working together, such as the groups who have come together to prepare this Vision. This document includes other suggestions. For instance, community groups, businesses and the Council should work proactively together, always looking for collaborative solutions to resolve tensions; supermarkets and local producers/retailers should actively support each other to promote their goods; and residents and businesses should make a positive and sustainable choice to support town centre shops and facilities whenever possible.

Every action aimed at enhancing Haddington town centre should embody these five themes and support the over-riding ambition of the Vision:

*to animate Haddington Town Centre, generate more activity and increase footfall*

## Key Actions

When we asked people what they thought should be the Vision for Haddington's town centre, there was no shortage of suggestions. We received literally hundreds of ideas. They can be seen in the accompanying report on public engagement.

A Vision like this needs to set clear priorities. From those hundreds of ideas, together with experience from elsewhere, a package of eight Key Actions is identified over the following pages.

None of those Key Actions alone is likely to be a quick fix for the town centre. They must be implemented as a package, and that package must be understood before any investment takes place.

Taken together, the eight Key Actions offer transformational benefits for the long term future of Haddington. The eight Key Actions are:

1. The best town square in Scotland?
2. Getting about: an Access Strategy for Haddington town centre
3. Bringing our assets to life
4. Re-using empty buildings
5. Telling the world: marketing Haddington town centre
6. Community Development Trust
7. Get local
8. Enterprising youth



## Key Action 1

### The best town square in Scotland?

In the 1720s, Daniel Defoe wrote in his *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* that “Haddington is still a good town, has some handsome streets, and well built”. Those words remain true today. However, the High Street in particular is not fulfilling its potential. It is dominated by road surfaces and car parking. Traffic moves too quickly. The Mercat Cross is little more than a traffic island. Footpaths are too narrow and public space is generally of poor quality.

Haddington’s High Street should be one of the best town squares in Scotland: a vibrant and attractive focus for town centre trade and activity. It is not difficult to imagine a bustling space where cafes and shops spread out onto widened pavements, with attractive places for people to meet, linger and enjoy themselves. Getting about on foot should be much easier; car access and parking, whilst important, should be less dominant.

Keeping the status quo is not an option for the High Street. The quality of the space, and its sense of place, must be given higher priority. The area given over to vehicle movement should be reduced to the minimum necessary, and should encourage pedestrians to enjoy the space comfortably and safely – on a par with the very best shared space schemes being implemented in the UK and continental Europe. Bus stops should be well located for businesses and facilities, and cycling should be easy, safe and attractive. Meanwhile, there is a widespread desire to keep roughly the same number of parking spaces as at the moment.

Creating Scotland’s best town square is not just about accommodating the needs of pedestrians and traffic. It is about creating a space which is vibrant, animated and attractive. There should be a programme of festivals and events using the space, building on what already takes place. Shops and other buildings which attract the public should be encouraged to make active use of the adjacent pavement, provided that it does not unduly obstruct pedestrian movement. Unattractive

buildings need to be smartened up and empty ones occupied. History and heritage needs to be interpreted. There needs to be more to do in the evenings and at weekends, including places for residents and visitors to eat and enjoy themselves. These opportunities are discussed in other sections of this Vision.

To be clear: the real purpose of creating the best town square is not about traffic flow, heritage or good design. These are means to an end – which is to support local life and business, by creating a space which is attractive to residents, businesses, investors and visitors. That objective should define the design of the square, from the balance of carriageway, parking and pavement to the direction of traffic flow. Getting these details right is important, and can only be done by looking at all of them together. At the time of writing, traffic flow was particularly contentious.

But it would be inappropriate for this Vision to dictate whether that should be one-way or two-way. That decision must be considered as part of a detailed Access Strategy for the town centre (see next Action).

Achieving the ambition of Scotland’s best town square will be no easy task. It will require commitment from numerous agencies, groups, businesses and individuals over a long period of time. It would be ideal if a comprehensive plan could be implemented in a single phase, but availability of finance means that is unlikely. That means that a staged programme of improvements, initiatives and works over a period of years is the most likely way forward. The whole process, including ongoing community engagement, should be led by a new community development trust (see other Actions).



Haddington High Street - existing

Haddington High Street - proposed



## Key Action 2

### Getting about: an Access Strategy for Haddington town centre

Haddington town centre, like the centre of any settlement, is naturally a focus for movement and activity. The purpose of this Vision is to animate the town centre even more than it is already, generate more activity and increase footfall. That means more people have to get into and around the town centre in safety and comfort.

In the 1960s, those responsible for our town centres generally prioritised the movement of vehicles. Buildings were demolished to create wider roads and bigger car parks, and pedestrians tended to be separated from vehicles with underpasses and bridges. We now know that these ideas can too easily destroy the character and atmosphere which makes our historic towns attractive – their ‘sense of place’.

In today’s Haddington, traffic tends to dominate the town centre at the expense of pedestrians, to the detriment of the town centre’s sense of place. The Council’s proposal for a one-way system was in part conceived to address this issue. However, there are a range of matters which need to be considered before the one-way system can be finalised or other changes introduced. The inter-relationships between access, parking, pedestrian comfort and safety, public transport, cycling, public space, surfacing and circulation, all need to be comprehensively reviewed. Equally importantly, they must be assessed in the context of the Vision’s ambition to create a more attractive, vibrant and commercially successful town centre for residents and visitors.

We believe the best way to achieve a balance between people, vehicles, environmental quality and town centre vitality is to prepare a dedicated Access Strategy for the town centre. This should:

- promote pedestrian priority throughout the town centre (but not pedestrianisation)
- prioritise pedestrian use along key routes from the town centre to community facilities (such as schools and leisure facilities) and tourist attractions (such as gardens, the riverside and historic buildings which are open to the public)
- establish the best routing for traffic flow around the town centre
- consider street design and layout, and its implications on driver behaviour
- consider the sequence of signage from main roads outside the town, into the built up area and then the town centre in order to encourage visitors and guide them to parking places
- review parking provision, accessibility and use in order to ensure



- parking provision encourages people to visit the town centre
- review management and enforcement of parking and traffic regulations
- be prepared collaboratively and inclusively, so that as many residents, business and groups as possible can help shape the Strategy

There are a number of other known issues and opportunities which might be addressed by the Access Strategy. These include the availability of short stay and visitor parking and opening up Council car parks to public use.

The Access Strategy should prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first, then public transport, deliveries and finally those coming by car (in line with Scottish Government policy Designing Streets). For example, the aim should not be to speed traffic through the town centre as quickly as possible, but to create a pleasant environment which supports business, healthy lifestyles and access by all users.

The Access Strategy should be prepared jointly by the Council and the proposed Community Development Trust (see dedicated Key Action). The brief should be based on this Vision, particularly the content of this Key Action and that referring to the High Street. The Council and the Community Development Trust may wish to lead on different aspects of the work suited to their strengths – for example, the Trust on collaborative preparation of the Strategy and the Council on engineering aspects.

## Key Action 3

### Bringing our assets to life

Haddington is full of charm and character: the river and its bridges, the riverside path, Neilston Park, St Marys Church, Church Street, St Mary's Pleasance, the closes and lanes – quite apart from the many friendly shops, cafés and galleries. Some of these, like the Town House, are obvious to the visitor. But many are not.

Part of Haddington's charm lies in the informal arrangement of streets and lanes and the surprising views or buildings hidden around corners. As a result, it is not always obvious where the most interesting, attractive or pleasant spaces, routes and buildings are to be found.

It should be easy for visitors to come to Haddington and find the good things that the town has to offer. The town's assets should be connected by more obvious, better signposted and better publicised walking routes. Take the riverside, for example. It is one of Haddington's greatest assets, offering space, peace, nature and historical interest just a short distance from the town centre. Yet, how many first-time visitors know the river exists, or would find it, other than by accident?

Routes to the river from the town centre should be upgraded with visual cues to entice the pedestrian towards the river. More should be made of the riverside area – more places to sit, more places to play, enhancing natural habitats along the banks, and more continuous smooth surfacing of the riverside walkway so that it is accessible to all users. The Nungate Bridge and the Poldrate pedestrian crossing are particularly important locations for improvement. It may even be possible to provide better access onto the water itself, so more people can enjoy the river itself for fishing, canoeing and other uses.

Connecting the river and historical assets more effectively to the town centre would provide opportunities for visitors and residents to enjoy

their trip to Haddington to the full. It would also help to tell the town's story.

It may be possible to bring other assets such as the historic bowling green at the Sands back into active use. At the moment, it is a largely unused patch of grass. What better way to bring this historic feature back to life than to restore it to its original use? Other activities such as boules or croquet could also be accommodated.

Similarly, other historic buildings could be brought to life with more active use. Examples of how this might work can be found in Edinburgh during August, when the Fringe and festivals find innovative ways of using remarkable but otherwise hidden buildings and spaces for arts events. In particular, the Corn Exchange has the potential to act as a more important venue and focus for the town.

**space behind Tesco supermarket - proposed (right) and existing (below)**



There are other buildings and spaces in and around the town centre which are, at the moment, lost opportunities – but with a little imagination could be transformed. For example, the hard landscaped area behind Tesco, on the main pedestrian route to Market Street, is a bleak space which could act as site for stalls, temporary events or performances in conjunction with existing or new events and festivals.

Everyone with an interest in Haddington's spaces and buildings – community groups, individuals, businesses, the Council and individuals – can help to bring these assets to life. The Community Development Trust might act as a focus for ideas and activity, although that activity will need to be taken forward by others. Any idea or activity which meets the ambitions set out in this Vision should be supported as part of a coordinated approach.





## Key Action 4

### Re-using empty buildings

A number of important buildings in the town are either already vacant, or are likely to become so in the near future: the George Hotel, Pheasant Inn and adjacent buildings, the Ideal Garage, the Infant School, the former Library, 31 Court Street, the former Co-op / Council offices on Lodge Street, the Day Centre on Church Street, and Tynepark House. Some of these properties are owned by the Council and reflect their decision to reduce their floorspace in the town centre.

That list of properties, or assets, represents a substantial supply of floorspace. A **proactive Empty Buildings Strategy** is needed to match demand to that supply and create opportunities for hotels, restaurants, a community hub, offices, shops, housing, social enterprise and incubator/workspaces for new businesses. The Empty Buildings Strategy would need to include a study of likely demand from businesses (including social enterprises), investors and community uses. In parallel with this, the study should also assess the outline feasibility of re-using available buildings – identifying constraints and opportunities for each building, including likely potential uses, financial viability and likely availability. This will provide the basis of a strategy for re-using each building in a way which supports this Vision.

The Empty Buildings Strategy should be supported by an enabling planning policy and a proactive economic development strategy, each of which are currently being reviewed by the Council.

There is growing pressure for non-retail uses such as cafes within the town centre. Where these uses have the potential to help attract people to the town centre, fill empty units and support the wider ambitions of the Vision, they should be supported in principle. Uses like this reflect changing patterns of activity in town centres and can support the core retail offering in a way that empty streets and vacant shop units cannot.

The George Hotel building is of particular concern to the local community. It sits at an important corner of the High Street – potentially Scotland's best town square. The George should be prioritised for conversion and re-use, be it for residential, hotel, retail, commercial, leisure or multi-use purposes. The Council, as planning authority, should encourage the building owner and their agent to think more creatively about uses for the building and how these might contribute to the success of the town centre. This may involve a realistic assessment of current planning policy relating to the building.

The recently vacated Council properties along Lodge Street, on the other hand, may be ideally located for community/ enterprise use. Haddington needs more bed spaces for visitors but the George Hotel may not be the best option for providing these. Other buildings, such as 31 Court Street, may be better suited for this use.

The Council has an important role in encouraging re-use of empty buildings. It is already reviewing its



building portfolio in Haddington and plans to develop a strategy for reuse of its own buildings which are being vacated, some of which are likely to be sold on the open market. The Council's plans should form part of the Empty Buildings Strategy for the town centre as a whole.

The Council is also exploring transfer of property to not-for-profit groups to accommodate community enterprise or services. In finalising this asset transfer arrangement and its plans for its own vacated buildings, the Council should work closely with the proposed Community Development Trust, local groups and potential investors to ensure that they support the Vision.

space in front of 31 Court Street - existing (below left) and proposed (below)



## Key Action 5

### Telling the world: marketing Haddington town centre

We need to get more people to come to the town centre and spend more time there, using shops and businesses, cafes and restaurants, services and facilities.

However wonderful the town centre might be, the world will only come if they know about it. This is not just about visitors from Edinburgh, Glasgow or further afield; it is also about people who already live in Haddington and East Lothian, particularly those local residents who currently choose to work, shop or socialise elsewhere. Equally, new residents – such as those moving to the proposed 750 new houses at Letham Mains – must be encouraged not to get into the habit of driving to Edinburgh rather than popping into the town centre.

First and foremost, Haddington town centre must provide the services and sell the goods expected of a 'local centre', meeting the daily needs of people who live and work in the town and surrounding area. Next, it should exploit its role as a 'county town' by providing services for people in East Lothian as a whole. Ideally, these markets should sustain its basic functions, services, shops and businesses.

Over and above this, Haddington should offer much more to Edinburgh and its city region, attracting day trippers, events, festivals, business meetings and small conferences. It needs to complement what East Lothian's coastal towns offer visitors, and work with them to create net benefit for the whole of East Lothian. Attracting visitors from further afield, or abroad, would also be beneficial with this type of visitor potentially staying for longer and spending more money in the area.



A dedicated Marketing and Communications Strategy is required. This needs to:

- define Haddington's brand and identity
- establish how to build pride within the town
- define who the visitor markets are, and how to serve them more effectively
- define appropriate mix of web, social media, broadcast/print media, advertising and physical notices/signage
- establish an appropriate web/social media presence
- work with partner organisations, such as Visit East Lothian and local media
- link with other East Lothian visitor destinations, such as North Berwick and Dunbar

- link with local visitor attractions such as East Fortune, Lennoxlove, Winton House etc.
- investigate the potential to act as a hub for tourism in East Lothian
- establish how to communicate 'what's on' in the town to the local population
- develop year-round programme of events
- create interpretation/signage strategy for visitors

These bullet points set out the basic brief for that Marketing and Communications Strategy. It is essential that strategy includes, amongst other things, a greatly enhanced web presence for the town. Although Haddington has a number of good local websites provided by different groups, there is no substitute for a 'front door' website bringing together all the key information and weblinks the town needs to promote itself. This site should also provide a comprehensive listing of events and festivals in the town; there is plenty going on in Haddington already but information is difficult to find.

The Marketing and Communications Strategy should be fully integrated with other Key Actions such as the Access Strategy, Scotland's Best Town Square and the Empty Buildings Strategy. It should focus on residents and visitors. It should promote the town centre experience as a whole. And it should be a partnership initiative involving the proposed Community Development Trust, East Lothian Council, Visit East Lothian, Haddington Business Association, other community groups, and key local visitor attractions and festivals.



## Key Action 6

### Community Development Trust

The big question behind this collaborative Vision is: who will lead it? We believe that the solution must be collaborative, and that responsibility and control must be equally shared between those involved.

The most effective way of achieving this is to set up a Community Development Trust. Local people, groups and the Council need to work together to determine the shape and form of that Trust; some initial discussion has already taken place.

The board of the Trust should be drawn from those who have an interest in the town's future. This includes the Council, local groups such as the members of the Haddington Town Centre Vision Committee who initiated this Vision and other appropriate organisations or individuals. An independent chair could champion the Vision for the local community and provide apolitical and inclusive leadership. A small dedicated staff resource will be essential, led by an enterprising and collaborative "community development manager".

Local businesses need to be involved in the management and operation of the Trust. As the owner and operator of a large town centre business, it would be appropriate for Tesco to be represented on the Trust's board. Equally, it is known that Sainsbury's (who have planning consent to build a new supermarket in the town) have expressed support for the principle of contributing funds towards the formation and activities of a Community Development Trust. Discussions between Sainsbury's, the Council and Haddington Business Association are at an advanced stage.

Sainsbury's may also wish to be represented on the Trust's board as part of an agreed package of support.

The Trust's focus will be to implement this Vision for Haddington town centre – nothing else. We suggest that the Trust's board, staff and partners may wish to structure their activities around four teams which cover everything in this Vision: Youth Caucus, Destination Group, Haddington Works (investment & enterprise team) and Community Team. There is more information on these in the background report on economy.

To implement this Vision, the Trust will need resources. Those resources will come mainly through working in partnership with others: the organisations represented on the Trust's board. But the Trust will also need resources of its own. Long term grant funding is not an option. The only sustainable way is for the Trust to own or have long term access to assets which it can use to generate income (in ways which contribute to this Vision).

For example, a building – such as the Council's vacant offices on Lodge Street – would provide space to lease out for social and private enterprise workspaces, evening entertainment and youth enterprise (see other Key Actions), as well as providing a home for the Trust itself.

To supplement the income generated from this property, the Trust could be employed as a social enterprise to deliver services such as landscape

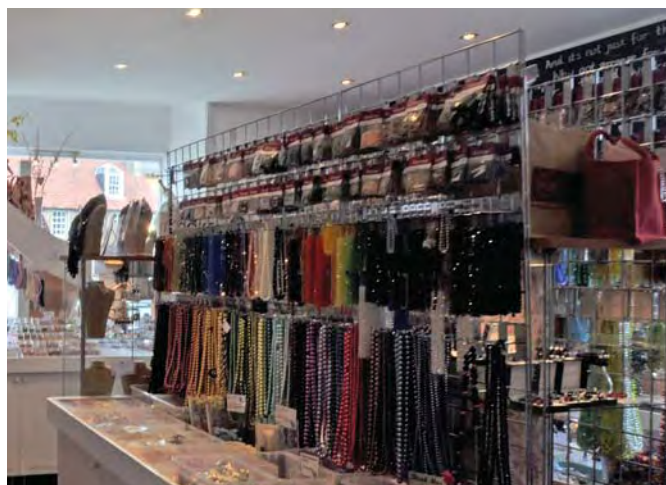
maintenance, car pooling, district heating, bike pool, energy advice and recycling facilities in the town's proposed future expansion at Letham Mains. This role could be extended to other parts of the town.

The Trust could also take on other activities which would both contribute to this Vision and generate income. For example, creating a new caravan/camp site in the town would help to draw visitors; there are potential sites on the eastern edge of the town which could be transferred to the Trust on a permanent or long term basis.

The Community Development Trust should also take the lead in updating the Town Centre Strategy so that it reflects the content of this Vision, with support from the Council and other partners; the Town Centre Strategy should set out how this Vision will be implemented.







## Key Action 7

### Get local

East Lothian is one of Scotland's most fertile, productive and creative counties – from arts and crafts to food and drink. The benefits of buying local are well known: supporting the local economy and culture, a lower carbon footprint and good for health and wellbeing. The range of choice is continuously increasing; in food and drink, for example, East Lothian produces cheeses, vegetables, fish, meat, poultry, whisky and beer. Demand is also on the up. The potential is huge.

The priorities should be getting more local products onto supermarket and shop shelves, building up local supplier networks, increasing the presence of the farmers' market, and getting prominent showcase and sales points in the town centre for local crafters and artists. These initiatives need to be co-ordinated with other aspects of this Vision, such as a planned approach to marketing, a community enterprise hub and more events.

Haddington's supermarkets and shops should work more collaboratively with local suppliers to source a greater range of East Lothian food, drink and crafts, and promote those products much more prominently within their stores. There may also be a niche for new businesses or community initiatives learning from the Dunbar community bakery model.

Local enterprise would also benefit from enhanced broadband and mobile phone reception. Ease of connectivity and communication between Haddington and its rural community is essential in supporting and developing supplier relationships. The Council and other local groups are already pursuing this.



## Key Action 8

### Enterprising youth

Haddington's young people are its future. It sounds like a cliché; but if the town doesn't hold onto its young people, or attract them back after they've gone away to study and travel the world, then it's losing its lifeblood.

Building on the excellent work of the town's schools and youth organisations, the town needs to do more to help young people feel part of their community. Young people themselves have given a clear direction of what they would like to see happen, as explained in the supporting report on public consultation. More things to do during

evenings and weekends were a common theme. This could be positively addressed by helping young people to build the proposed new skateboard park, supporting a youth film club, promoting venues like the Corn Exchange for gigs, and involving young people in mapping out our future, such as through this Vision.

Moving up a gear, we would like to see a Youth Caucus set up as part of the Community Development Trust. Those young people's role would be to get Haddington on the rock, comedy, film and travelling arts circuits, initiate band competitions, encourage young people to set up their

own enterprises - even establishing a national 'young Scot' award to put Haddington on the map for all things young. Knox Academy is well placed to lead on these initiatives with input from other partners. There is more detailed information in the background report on economy.

Whatever the structure of the proposed Community Development Trust, opportunities to enable young people to participate, work or volunteer in its management and operations should be maximised.





## Bringing The Vision To Life

The Vision is all about the big things Haddington should do to make the town centre as good a place to live, work and visit as it possibly can be. Many of these things present challenges: who will take responsibility for making them happen? Where will the money come from? How long will it all take?

Forming a Community Development Trust will be an important step forward. The Trust and this Vision should be seen as the focus for a new co-ordinated approach to planning and delivering public and community services in central Haddington, irrespective of whether those services are provided by the public, private or community sectors.

This co-ordinated approach should include community planning, arts and culture, community facilities, economic development, social enterprise support, planning and the built environment, health and wellbeing, and traffic management. The Vision should guide long term strategy and policy in each of these areas. The Development Trust should be regarded as a central clearing house for organising and promoting how each area is delivered and coordinated in the town centre. A Trust-led review of the Town Centre Strategy should act as the vehicle for a detailed programme for working up and then implementing the initiatives described in this Vision.

East Lothian Council will have a crucial role to play. It is unrealistic to expect the Council to do everything, given shrinking public sector resources and its county-wide remit. But the Council can and should play an important enabling role to deliver many aspects of the Vision. The Council needs to find new ways of working with local groups, businesses, individuals and the proposed Development Trust to set free their enthusiasm, skills and creativity. Everybody needs to work together with a sense of collective responsibility and common purpose.

The community groups which brought this project together need to decide what their roles should be in delivering the Vision. Each has knowledgeable, experienced, committed and motivated members who have much to offer. But each group also needs more support from the people they represent. Even with a Community Development Trust in place, other community groups will need to continue working positively and promote their own projects, events and campaigns.

This Vision is a new beginning for all who are engaged in the future wellbeing of the town. There have been divisive episodes in decisions affecting the town in recent years. Most of these have now reached some sort of conclusion. Moving forward, all parties will need to reconcile their differences and find new ways of working towards shared ambitions. There will always be disagreements over detail, but the big picture - the Vision - should remain as the clear driving force behind all important decisions.

Shared ambitions can best be nurtured through honest and open dialogue. The Vision is a product of a new era, in which meaningful community engagement and collective responsibility lie at the heart of change. The Council and others are increasingly embracing this approach and, as a result, it will be easier to avoid tension escalating into conflict. The Trust will be the perfect vehicle for dialogue, and should quickly develop a philosophy and plan for ongoing engagement as one its first tasks. This should include frequent updates to the local community on progress in implementing the Vision (for example, through community groups, press releases, the web and/or a newsletter), and a town conference every 2-5 years to celebrate and review progress, and renew momentum. A full review of the Vision is likely to be appropriate in 10 years' time.

This collaborative approach will continue to build confidence and ensure that initiatives are supported by local people. Equally, it is important that people play their own role in this process, taking the opportunity to contribute their views, time and effort positively and responsibly.

As much as anything, the success of the Vision will depend upon the people of Haddington. There is an enormous amount of enthusiasm in this community. People like their town. They want it to be better. They now need to recognise that they each have both a contribution to make and a responsibility, whether it is buying more from local shops, eating local food, attending festivals and events, supporting community groups - or just telling the world about Haddington and its bright future.





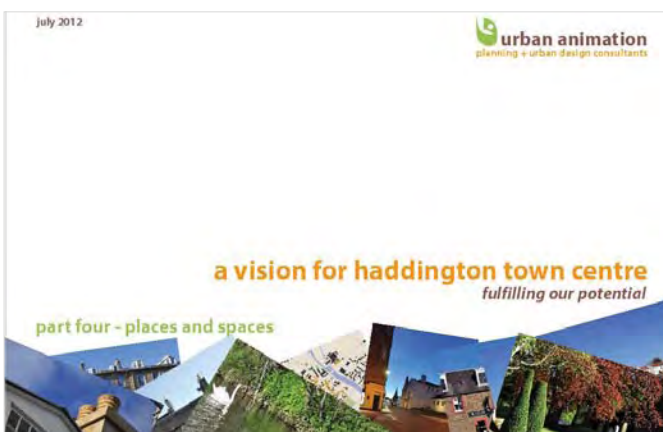


## What Needs To Happen Next?

This action plan sets out the sequence of priorities required to turn this Vision into reality.

	Lead partners*	Further information
<b>Immediate priority</b>		
Create <b>Community Development Trust</b>	Haddington Town Centre Vision Committee East Lothian Council	Key Action 6 NB: must include long term revenue-generating assets
<b>Next priority</b>		
Ongoing <b>community engagement</b>	Community Development Trust	See 'Bringing the Vision to Life' section
Prepare <b>Access Strategy</b>	Community Development Trust East Lothian Council	Key Action 2
Prepare <b>Empty Buildings Strategy</b>	Community Development Trust East Lothian Council	Key Action 4
Prepare <b>Marketing and Communications Strategy</b>	Community Development Trust East Lothian Council Visit East Lothian	Key Action 5
Revise <b>Town Centre Strategy</b>	Community Development Trust East Lothian Council	Should include specific action programmes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the 3 Strategies (Key Actions 2, 4 &amp; 5)</li> <li>• Scotland's Best Town Square (Key Action 1)</li> <li>• Improvements to riverside and public spaces (Key Action 3)</li> <li>• Pedestrian connections (Key Actions 1-3)</li> <li>• Signage and interpretation (Key Action 5)</li> <li>• Programme of events (Key Action 5)</li> <li>• 'Buy local' initiatives (Key Action 7)</li> <li>• Youth engagement (Key Action 8)</li> </ul>
<b>Subsequent priority</b>		
<b>Implement new Town Centre Strategy</b>	Community Development Trust with relevant partners	All aboard!

\* NB: These lead partners will require support and input from residents and community groups such as Vision Committee participants and businesses; everyone has a role to play.



## Further Information

A series of background reports is available which provide more detail of how this Vision was prepared in early 2012. These cover economy, consultation and townscape.

To obtain electronic copies of these documents, or to find out how you can help turn the vision into reality, please contact the Haddington Town Centre Vision Committee through any of its member organisations:

Haddington Business Association  
[www.shophaddington.co.uk](http://www.shophaddington.co.uk)

Haddington Community Council  
[www.haddingtoncc.org.uk](http://www.haddingtoncc.org.uk)

Haddington and District Amenity Society  
[www.hadas-el.org.uk](http://www.hadas-el.org.uk)

Haddington's History Society  
[www.elh.info/site/pages/local-heritage-groups/haddington-s-history-society.php](http://www.elh.info/site/pages/local-heritage-groups/haddington-s-history-society.php)



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