

# Peebles Town Action Plan

## embracing and strengthening town sustainability

Peebles is a great town to live in – so much going on: for kids, parents, retirees. And it's a great place to visit – popular with people on a day out and for longer visits: surrounded by hills and forests, with river-side walks and parks, shops, cafés, museums and art galleries, gentle walks and more energetic rambling, mountain biking, rugby, music and theatre.

But it has become unbalanced as a settlement – rapid expansion in housing, and thus population, has not been matched by the necessary balancing investments in physical and community infrastructures; nearly two thirds of the town's workforce commutes to work outside Peebles, but little has been done to attract or create more and better jobs within Peebles; and despite a full calendar of events across the year, there has been little change in the scale or depth of the town centre visitor / tourism offer – whether it's accommodation, parking, or attractions beyond the High Street.

On top of that, a pervading image of affluence and high standards of living masks a low wage local economy, significant pockets of deprivation, limited local provision of affordable housing and care facilities for the aged and infirm, an unacceptably high number of NEETs (youngsters not in employment, education or training), and a busy Foodbank.

The **Town Action Plan** highlights a small number of key actions that have been prioritised by the community as needing resolution within the next 3 to 5 years and, crucially, where the community can influence outcomes. As these are addressed, there are other identified actions to take their place.

Accompanying this, in terms of directing the future development of the settlement, the **Peebles Whole Town Master Plan** (in preparation) captures the longer term (5 to 20 years) aspirations of the community and details the direction, nature and expected quality of future development.



# Peebles Town Action Plan – embracing and strengthening town sustainability

green – substantial progress; orange – some progress made

1. plans & strategies	2. achieving smarter solutions	3. achieving policy shifts	4. building capacity	5. direct actions / interventions
 1a. prepare this Town Action Plan	2a. review how to make more of the Hay Lodge Health Centre & medical practices	3a. allow services and infrastructure to catch up with recent housing expansion	 4a. establish the Peebles Community Trust	 5a. ensure that the March Street Mill site remains an economic asset
 1b. complete 1 <sup>st</sup> stage draft of the Peebles Whole Town Master Plan	 2b. plan out how to improve our in-town network of paths	 3b. slow-down new house building	 4b. establish a Peebles “Town Team”	5b. actively encourage businesses to locate to Peebles
 1c. prepare plan for replacement or substantial remodelling of Peebles High School	 2c. balance on- and off-street parking, cycle parking, and public transport provision	 <p>PEEBLES COMMUNITY TRUST HELPING THE COMMUNITY HELP THE COMMUNITY</p>	 4c. establish a Peebles Traders Association	 5c. protect and enhance the landscape setting of the town
 1d. develop a comprehensive Upper Tweed Valley Tourism Strategy	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>to be implemented over the period 2016 to 2020</b></p>		 4e. establish a community run coworking space	 4d. establish a Peebles Network of Businesses

Progress on  
2016-2020  
Town Action  
Plan

1a. Town Action Plan	substantial value and progress gained from this; now in process of revising Town Action Plan
1b. Whole Town Master Plan	done; limited traction w local gov; now being recast in changed vocabulary of environment, inclusive growth, empowerment
1c. upgrade High School	upgrade scheduled for 5yrs hence, but likely to be brought forward because of significant fire Nov 2019
1d. Tourism Strategy	Tourism Strategy developed and Tourism Business Improvement District in place – both through efforts of private sector
2a. upgrade health facilities	despite Tweeddale Health & Social Care Locality Plan, no substantive progress in integration or upgrading of local capacity
2b. improve paths network	comprehensive review of paths resulting from Covid-19 policy shift & ongoing Sustrans funded walker & cycle study
2c. parking & transport	being partially addressed in PCT headed Sustrans link paths project – extending Tweed Valley and Eddleston Water Paths
3a. rebalance infrastructure	no substantive progress; strong views of community rejected ; house-building proceeds despite infrastructure constraints
3b. slow house building	some progress to slow extent of housing development, but focus remains on high-end rather than needed social housing
4a. establish PCT	done – growing capacity – secured funding for paid staff – developing revenue base – supporting more community projects
4b. establish town team	major advance with establishment of paid staff positions combined with manned office in the newly acquired School Brae Hub
4c. Traders Association	limited progress, but v positive local response to Covid-19 emergency & PCT efforts to draw traders together encouraging
4d. Network of Businesses	SBC project to advance Energy Efficiency roadmap & recent Changeworks project nudging building trades together
4e. community co-working	SLF funded feasibility study positive about community-run co-working facility should community acquire March St Mill site
5a. economic contribution	PCT CRTB on the March Street Mill site to ensure redevelopment of the site makes lasting positive contribution to Peebles
5b. inward investment	little progress; there remains very limited unused economic land available in Peebles; planning regime very unsupportive
5c. enhance landscape value	major work on Tweed Valley tourism & Eddleston Water catchment have continuing positive focus & impact on environment
5d. safe routes to school	new focus on pedestrian, wheeler & cycle paths network within Peebles with the PCT link path study likely to provide