

Brecon's SMART Town Action Plan Reviewed by



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Review Summary

Firstly, the SMART Towns team want to thank Brecon for completing a SMART Action Plan for their town. We consider this to be the first step to making your town SMART. In this Action Plan, the team has provided feedback and provided guidance wherever possible (all the comments are in **red**).

In addition to the comments, here is a summary of our comments and support.

- Many opportunities for 'IoT-in-a-box' – type solutions:- parking, air quality, bin monitoring etc. as well as utilising of Cisco Meraki offering re public Wi-Fi and footfall analytics. Details of equipment have been provided.
- The iTowns – would be interesting to know how popular it is and whether it drives any footfall to areas in the town which didn't receive high footfall prior to the development of iTowns. Have the town considered asking accommodation providers to encourage visitors to visit the iTowns for Brecon.
- It was highlighted that Brecon is very interested in the curation of data overall for the town:-
 - How Busy is Brecon (based on [How Busy Is Toon?](#)) could act as a hub for the 'collection of big open data' which is referred to.
- To develop skills and engagement within the town, [Microsoft Soundscape/OSM](#) activities in terms of curation and trails could be a good activity here ([Click here for Soundscape webinar](#))
 - Perhaps to engage the youth of the town with updating OSM
 - Curating art trails around the town – especially Poetry Trail on 8 new benches
 - Working with Brecknock Access Group around accessibility requirements in the town
- **Skills development**
 - In addition to the free digital skills training offered via the Arts and Cultural Network bid, consider other schemes available from tech providers and linking to Y Gaer hub
 - [Digital Skills - Microsoft UK](#)
 - [Learn Digital Skills with Free Training - Google Digital Garage](#)
 - [IBM Skills - Free Events, Courses and Training Programs](#)
 - <https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/>
 - <https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/>
 - <https://businesswales.marketinginfohub.co.uk/topic-overview/branding>
- [Hello LampPost](#) could offer a good solution to youth engagement as well as assisting in gathering views on promenade regeneration.
- More sophisticated traffic management solutions could be looked at, depending on requirements – [Vivacity](#), [AppyWay](#)
- Regarding energy use and air quality – as well as potential 'IoT-in-a-box' experiments, they may want to consider more sophisticated solutions such as
 - [Metrikus](#)
 - [AirRated: The Global Indoor Air Quality Certification](#)
 - [Think Air – Vindico](#)

Thank you for engaging with the 'Year of SMART Towns' project. Please feel free to contact us directly with any question, and we will try our best to support you.

✉ smarttowns@mentermon.com

Contact Name	Fiona Williams, Town Clerk
Town / High Street	Brecon
County	Powys
Intended Start Date of Smart project	September 2021
Date of Plan	10 August 2021

1. Description of the Town

- Setting the scene
- Provide an overview on past, present and future

Brecon Town Council is a statutory body under the Local Government Act 1972. The Council aims to discharge its duties and powers in accordance with the Act in support of the residents and businesses of the town of Brecon. Our website www.brecontowncouncil.org.uk provides information on the activities of the Council as well as information relating to the local area.

Many projects are undertaken by Brecon Town Council and a sample of past and current projects and work streams are:

- Development of Visit Brecon, an information service for visitors and residents
- Support and development of Twinning Associations
- Running public services such as toilets, parks, street cleaning
- Grant funding support, a recent example being funding for Y Gaer (new museum, library and cultural hub) to open on Sundays
- Events, large medium and small scale
- Contribution to Brecon 20/20 Town Plan

Brecon Town Council is very aspirational and forward looking, and is presently working on a number of post covid measures to improve Brecon, such as:

- Improvement to websites/IT
- Street scene and possible grant funding for improvements: café culture; signage; artwork; Town Manager; Promenade regeneration
- Digital solutions

WORKSHOP 1

2. Economic Aspirations

- What kind of steps do you think your Town needs to make it stronger and more resilient
- Free Parking and traffic management
- Improve street scene and café culture
- Investment in digital solutions
- Continuation of collaborative working in regard to street cleanliness: Powys County Council, Brecon Town Council and Team Brecon
- Promotion of events and businesses
- Increased tenancies of shops

Specific Actions to take:

- Change retail/residential mix
- Improve offer to residents and visitors
- Splash page to link to iTowns Brecon, a 360° Interactive map of Brecon and an exciting new way to showcase Brecon. It is a digital marketing platform that allows 'whole-town' events and festivals as well as our fabulous independent businesses to reach out to new customers and promote themselves, together.

YOST Comment:

How might you achieve a retail and residential mix. Consider using [Hello Lamppost](#) to find out what Brecon shoppers want in any empty retail properties. Additionally, look at [Grand Bequest](#), technology that promotes the redevelopment of vacant buildings.

Here's an example of software to enhance the Wi-Fi scheme including the splash page if using the Cisco Meraki equipment – www.splashaccess.com

3. Convenience Aspirations

- Provide details of ideas for the Town in context of convenience
- Car parking statistics and data to understand and improve parking requirements
- Numbers of attendees at town events
- Smart signage/bins/infrastructure
- Future proof the town moving forward

Specific Actions to take:

- Install sensors and digital infrastructure.
- Requires work with building owners and National Park authority for wayleave agreements and planning consents

YOST Comment:

Select some initial sensors for specific footfall counting some areas combined with a system like the Cisco Meraki and get the footfall analytics working first. We can provide Data protection Impact assessment example from the ICO and other towns. Building agreement example also available for you to alter. These documents are all included in our Cisco Meraki guidebook, which will be sent to you.

Here are some examples of Internet of Things (IoT) sensors to that can assist you with some topics mentioned above.

- **Temperature and humidity example:**
 - <https://www.alliot.co.uk/products/sensors/environment-sensors/netvox-r712/>
- **Parking sensors:**
 - <https://www.alliot.co.uk/products/sensors/parking-management-sensors/bosch-lorawan-parking-sensor/>
- **Bin sensors:**
 - <https://www.brighterbins.com/request-a-sample>

4. Engaging and Relevance Aspirations

- What has been done or could be done to make the Town engaging / relevant

Examples of what has recently been done are:

- Corporate identity: Visit Brecon, parasols, café barriers, Heart of the Park
- Town map and town guide
- Clean up projects/street cleaning contract
- Improvement of street scene/hanging baskets
- Mix of events, including regular bandstand events (post Covid)
- Play equipment improvements

Further improvements could be made by:

- Development of a 'Smart Town' action plan and implementation of recommended measures, including free Wi-Fi
- Provision of data to enable the further understanding of the needs of the Town and respond to that need
- Redevelopment of Town events post Covid as rules allow

Specific Actions to take:

- Connection with under 35 age group
- Improvements to make Brecon 'sticky' i.e. to attract people to the Town for longer
- Actions being developed for future grant funding work streams in connection with projects such as signage; artwork; Town Manager; Promenade regeneration

YOST Comment:

Although the town have their own website and social media accounts, it is important to encourage other to mention Brecon via their own streams. Consider running hashtag# campaigns with the business, people and visitors of Brecon to access new markets and promote Brecon as a destination in its own right. To facilitate your marketing campaigns, the Year of SMART Towns project can share a marketing strategy template for the businesses and the town. Consider marketing the town's events online and ask the business community to share them through their business platforms to encourage returning visitors and entice new ones

Here are some useful resources on how to best use social media:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQrh2bh3sSIoSHBkOmZ6drQ>

Already you have mentioned some of the improvements you've made to the town. Why not trial [Hello Lamppost](#) to give residents and visitors the opportunity to voice their opinion of changes being made in the town. Furthermore, consider putting regular meetings in place with a SMART Brecon working group to discuss whether these actions are having a direct effect on footfall and dwell time.

Example of a grant currently available

[Transforming Towns | growinpowys](#)

5. Resilient and Adaptive Aspirations

- What has been done or could be done to make the Town resilient and adaptive
- Building 'Brecon Back Better' e.g. provision of town centre parasols
- Post covid strategies using information from various data sources
- Partnership working with other organisations such as Powys County Council, Brecon Buzz, Brecon Chamber of Trade, Brecknock Access Group
- Upgrade of public facilities e.g. toilets
- Improvements to biodiversity measures
- Digitising information already in existence e.g. walks information at Visit Brecon
- Home/hub working

Specific Actions to take:

- Digital installations and solutions
- Improved publicity for businesses/events e.g. iTowns
- Digital solutions at Visit Brecon

YOST Comment:

Possibly an app for the town and/or use of QR codes throughout the town lined to parts of visit Brecon.

Could you install [IoT feedback sensors](#) in public facilities to measure people's feedback. This data could then allow you to prioritise what facilities need attention.

6. An Authentic Experience

- What has been done or could be done to add authenticity to the Town

Recent examples are:

- Poetry trail incorporated on 8 new benches. The poetry is bilingual English and Welsh and was written by a local primary school to commemorate VE Day 2020.
- Town Talk – Captain Phillips plaque
- Cultural links with Nepal and KwaZulu Natal
- Historical and cultural events in the Town
- Brecon Story

Specific Actions to take:

Capture information more readily and in more shareable formats

YOST Comment:

More needs to be done to capitalise on this and promote Brecon as a destination to a wider audience. Using data to undertake targeted marketing campaigns. Use new channels to convey uniqueness of offer and experience in Brecon. Think of what actions are being done to improve the 6pm to 9pm economy – venues and events over the trading year?

Brecon has so much heritage and history that can be shared with residents and visitors. Consider Generating QR codes for specific pages of the town website that can shared in various ways. Here is a website that can generate bespoke QR codes: <https://www.qr-code-generator.com/>

For example, you could create coasters to be shared with pubs and restaurants that includes a QR code that directs people to the Events page.



7. Improving Dwell Time for the Town

- Ideas on what could make people stay longer more often in the Town

- Café culture
- Busking
- Events
- Free car parking
- Clean streets, including strategic bin placement
- Improved signage
- No empty shops
- Improved/digital information about what is available

Specific Actions to take:

Source data to support above

YOST Comment:

Work with the local authority to deliver your place plan / town plans – PCC should be able provide a great deal of information for occupancy and work with you on signage and street furniture.

Make a wish list, share, gather ideas from traders – what would justify them employing staff and staying open?

Consider running events in the town with traders aligning offers and window displays to the event?
Install public Wi-Fi system to gather location analytics to better understand the effect of your action or experiments.

Once footfall and dwell time data is being generated for the town, investigate what effects your current markets are having on these parameters. Insight to this data could encourage and justify having more events in the town. Possibly the data would suggest that an evening market or event could potentially increase the evening economy significantly.

Set seasonal/monthly targets for your evening (after 6pm) town activity.

8. Collecting Data – Measuring the Health

- What needs to be measured / recorded and analysed with your aspirations

- Digital footprint/footfall
- Link data developed with the Wellbeing Goals
- Data for various other sources, including Brecon 20:20
- Public toilet usage data
- Visit Brecon data
- Retain evidence base to compare in later years
- Assessment of data held, both qualitative and quantitative
- Collection of big open data
- Air pollution and quality
- Monitoring of energy usage
- Practical monitoring, such as full bins

Specific Actions to take:

- Creating and publishing data in a user friendly way
- Databases/reports about topics/goals
- Take advantage of publicly available data
- Use data collected to assist with decision making
- Monitor data and progress/review

YOST Comment:

In what order are you going to implement these measures, suggest starting with footfall and dwell , get to grips from these, get some baseline data and feed the findings back to the town's stakeholders. Then start to build other aspects in.

Have a timeline on the digital twin creation. Form the advisory board will be collecting and distributing the information (where applicable to the local businesses). Assuming you will be employing resource to gather, interpret , monitor and share the information generated with the stakeholders of Brecon town and South Powys.

9. Build your Team

- Who?
 - Resources?
 - Experience?
-
- Brecon Town Council working in collaboration with other stakeholders such as Chamber of Trade, Brecon Buzz, Brecknock Access Group
 - Seek assistance from local volunteers with digital skills

Specific Actions to Take:

Aim to be progressive and demonstrate ambition. Be committed to meeting visitor needs by involving and engaging with people.

YOST Comment:

Consider arranging a meeting with the Town Council and other mentioned stakeholders to discuss your SMART Action Plan. It is possible that a discussion like this could help develop the Action Plan further and may have some resources in Brecon that you were not aware of.

Actions from Workshop 1		
Action	Timescale	By Whom
Adopt a data-driven approach and smarter use of information. Outcomes-based performance management. I.T systems put in place to automate data capture and analysis. Investigate what existing data sources and datasets we and others have that can be shared and used to become more proactive.		
Collect and analyse data, statistics and useful information. Understanding and responding to citizen, businesses and visitors' needs. Supporting local economy, businesses and innovation. ICT (Information & Communication Technology) as an enabler to help facilitate progressive action. Data dashboard for stakeholders to measure performance.		
Modern technology and social media to be utilised and expanded upon more to promote Brecon to a wider audience.		
Partners will ensure an integrated co-ordinated approach to the delivery of the outcomes of the digital framework.		
The Smart Town digital group should be efficiently administrated with a regular meeting cycle, clear lines of communication and appropriate reporting mechanisms.		
Partners commit to shared priorities and outcomes in a co-ordinated and planned approach to implementing the digital framework.		
Performance monitoring information used to influence planning and resource decisions. Evidence of achieving wellbeing goals and optimising pace and infrastructure. Informing public service transformation and streamlining services. Increase quality of life and wellbeing by connecting theory with tangible practicable achievements.		

Early identification of adverse events and future service pressures. (e.g. Climate change; sustainability; community resilience; wellbeing; weather; air quality; river levels and flooding risks, etc).		
Start with problems that can be solved with data, with a specific focus and easily measurable outcome. Addressing what is required during the next ten years and beyond.		
Public value enhanced by providing increased citizen engagement.		

WORKSHOP 2

10.1. Digital Infrastructure - Fibre

- What is the fibre coverage and speed for the Town – document/mapped?
 - Future work planned/when?

Specific Actions to take:

YOST Comment:
Carry out a mapping exercise to see if there are issues in poor services across the town. Example:
<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/?area=W07000068>

10.2. Digital Infrastructure - Mobile

- What is the mobile coverage like?
 - Future coverage plans

3G and 4G coverage within the town and surrounding area.

Specific Actions to take:

YOST Comment:
Carry out a mapping on coverage for smart phone and data strength 4g, 4g+ , 5g and see of there are any glaring problems.
Example:
EE network <https://coverage.ee.co.uk/coverage>
O2 network <https://www.o2.co.uk/coveragechecker>

10.3. Digital Infrastructure - Wireless

- What is the wireless system planned or already installed?
 - Further work needed/when?

Looking to establish free Wi-Fi within the town. Have declared an interest to take part with the FOOTFALL scheme with Powys County Council / Welsh Government. The Mayor, Chair of Finance & Town Clerk have met with the Project lead recently and explained our interest – Advised that Powys will roll out to a single town so Wi-Fi equip and LoRaWAN will be rolled out – 9 wifi links required to give effective coverage.

Specific Actions to take:

- Request submitted to Powys to be the pilot town for the footfall counter & Wi-Fi project
- Chase up end of August / September
- Consideration for Precept requirements in 22/23 for any additional equipment / training requirements
- Establish a Smart Town Partnership Group

YOST Comment:

Consider arranging a meeting with the Town Council and other mentioned stakeholders to discuss the coverage area for Brecon. Focus on the town centre and consider expanding in the future to cover areas that might draw business out of the town centre.

10.4. Digital Infrastructure - LoRaWAN

- Is there LoRaWAN coverage for the town or planned
 - Further work needed / when?

LoRaWAN would be installed with the Wifi / footfall counter Project

Specific Actions to take:

- Await outcome of Powys County Council

- Precept consideration if we are not successful

YOST Comment:

Currently – there are 2 LoRaWAN gateways in Brecon Town area.



To monitor progress. Mapping : The Things Network

Phase the implementation, who manages the data, interprets, disseminates and with lot used for monitoring, how is it acted on e.g., you mention bin levels.

10.5. Digital Infrastructure – Other technology

- Are there other digital infrastructures being considered or already in place?

Improvements in progress to Brecon Town Council’s computer and IT systems and by way of investing in upgrading I.C.T systems, websites, payments, increasing use of social media, Office 365, cloud storage, encrypted devices.

Brecon Town Council has recent established a new website for the visit Brecon service and has provided a hosting of the iTowns facility – we have negotiated a £50.00 discount for each business sign up. Each business would secure a place on the iTowns home page <https://visitbrecon.org/> and have a professional made video and link to their website to assist with the promotion of the town. iTown’s gives a 360 degree view of the town and the site shows visitor key events being undertaken within the town.

Specific Actions to take:

Promote iTowns opportunities to business and ensure key events are added.

YOST Comment:

N/A

11 SMART Technologies

- What technologies are in place or will be adopting based on the dialog in Section 8 ?
- What use is being made / When is this being enabled?

The development of Smart technology will be undertaken incrementally with a focus upon:

1. Footfall counters
2. Dwell Time
3. Parking Sensors

This scheme would roll out over the next 12 – 18 months but will be accelerated if we are successful in being the pilot of the Powys scheme.

Specific Actions to take:

- Precept requirements
- Audit of Smart Technology equipment
- Development of our splash page which would link to the iTown's Brecon page – users can then sign up to have free Wi-Fi and to have the events newsletter and/or business special promotions page.
- Looking at developing a bid for Town Manager position to help lead on this project implementation.

YOST Comment:

Excellent to see that plans are already in place for a variety of SMART Technology. Try and encourage members of the SMART Technology Initiative group to monitor and disseminate the data to the business community. Business might need guidance and encouragement to use this data to facilitate their business plans. Step one is getting the technology installed, step two is to create data-driven decision culture within the town. Having a digital champion to work with the business would be a valuable asset to the SMART Technology Initiative group.

12. Barriers to manage

- What Barriers if any?
- How will they be managed?

Brecon Town Council hopes to build upon a solid foundation towards an enhanced digital environment by changing and adapting to improve working practices via digital innovation to create a leaner and more agile, time-saving, efficient and productive organisation. Town Councillors and staff use e-mail and electronic documentation for online meetings.

Brecon 2020 Town Plan Survey highlighted lack of youth engagement. Brecon Town Council has co-opted two Youth Representatives and will look at projects to involve younger people to improve engagement and communication.

Identifying and accessing useful data. Data collection and management processes. Data quality and standards could hamper integration of data. Adopt open standards and phase out non-compliant and incompatible legacy I.C.T systems. Information Governance and data sharing agreements (GDPR).

In delivering the framework, Brecon Town Council needs to engage with the stakeholders in the local community and work collectively to help grow digital participation.

Lack of time/resources/skills. Lack of data-centric culture/appetite for data-informed decisions and adopting new working practices.

Making the business case and accessing financial resources and technological assistance and relevant support.

1. Resources – Budget - Consideration of reserves in the short term and addition to precept for 2022/23.
2. Time frames - Limited team so will require input from Councillors and the establishment of a Smart Town Partnership Group.
3. Skills and knowledge gaps - Training provision will be required and we can tap into the free digital skills training offered via the Arts and Cultural Network bid.
4. Elections in May 2022 – will change the membership of council and bring in new skills and experience.

Specific Actions to take:

- Persuading people to share data and make it open. Developing capacity and appropriate useful skills in-house.
- Communication with the electorate when project is launched

YOST Comment:

Resources and skills is a barrier that many towns have addressed in their SMART Action Plans. We advise that you create a survey to what skills members of the SMART Town Action Team have and what training is needed?

13. Digital Skills

- What digital skills will be necessary based on plan so far, what are the gaps?
- How to plug the gap? Who will upskill?

Assess digital capabilities to find out more about individuals' own technological practice and investigate opportunities for development for increasing proficiency of digital skills and expertise. Work in a more agile way and approach. Assess information, data and media literacies.

Increasing use of video, infographics, social media.

Improve knowledge of legal, ethical and security issues when handling data and interpretation and analysis.

Cllr John Powell has obtained a degree in “Health Informatics” and possesses teaching and training qualifications with a background in I.C.T., and has also regularly attended and participated in Gov Camp Cymru and “Hackathon” events.

- Training in digital skills has been undertaken by some members around the creation of digital stories – audio & video – Additional around the use of Smart phone photography and use of social media.
- Tap into the free digital skills training via the arts / cultural skills project.

Specific Actions to take:

YOST Comment:

Examples of Skills Support:

Digital training links:

<https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/>

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/>

Marketing /Branding link:

<https://businesswales.marketinginfohub.co.uk/topic-overview/branding>

Green Spaces in Urban Centres examples:

<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/what-we-do/green-spaces/urban-trees/?lang=en>

Action Plan from Workshop 2

Action	Timescale	By Whom
Interrogate data from numerous sources to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of operations and services to help inform local intelligence.		
Target resources and funding at areas of greatest need and encourage collaboration between different departments and agencies, to predict and prevent problems from occurring and support economic development and address specific challenges.		
Harness data to help improve the local area by practically demonstrating tangible benefits. Be open to experimentation and innovation. Build trust with partners to enable data sharing and knowledge/skills.		

Show people and organisations demonstrable practical examples of increased value created by data and analytics.		
Working with collaborative partnerships and people who want to engage with data to help connect data to help inform useful insights for decision making.		
Dissemination, distribution and publication of data (insights and outcomes).		

WORKSHOP 3

14. SMART Objectives

- With the town’s aspirations and a measures and technology in place. What are your SMART objectives moving forward?
- E.g. Measure an event ?
- Increase dwell time on Saturdays to 1-hour average within the next 6 months?

- To increase overall footfall within the town and improve dwell time to more than ½ hour within the first 6 months and continue to increase over the next 12 months
- To consider what impact the offer of free car parking charges has upon visitor numbers when compared with charged car park days.
- Look at footfall numbers within the town and compare with those numbers utilising the toilets and the visit Brecon office
- Visitor sign up to the newsletter.

Specific Actions to take:

YOST Comment:
Set some specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely objectives as suggested in the workshop. Base them on what you highlighted as aspiration for the town centre in workshop 1 –

getting more people into the town centre, to stay longer in the town centre and make it easier for them to get there ?

You need to set some objectives around the technology you've already mentioned you intend to install. Ideally these objectives need to be SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, (sometimes agreed), realistic (or relevant) and time-bound, (or timely) so for example with footfall :

To achieve a 15% increase in footfall between June and September 2022 compared to the equivalent period in 2021.

Newsletter software example: <https://mailchimp.com/>

15. Analytics / Interpretation

- What tools are you going to employ gather the data
- Will you adopt a standard approach?
- Who will be doing the work to collect the data and analyse?
- How is it going to presented with trends and recommendations?

In the short term we will be guided by others on what data is gathered – We will consider what data can be gathered.

We will adopt Good Practice guidelines and we will share as appropriate with council members, partners and stakeholders.

Specific Actions to take:

YOST Comment:

Start with basic captures and build the picture and additional data sets as you review and develop the town plan and its requirements.

Delegate people within your SMART Town Action to take on some responsibilities. From your digital skills survey it is possible that you might have people skills, including analysing data, producing infographics and gathering insights from data sets.

16. Collaboration / Dissemination

- What collaboration opportunities can you identify?
- Who will receive the information from the analysis?
- How often will be sent
- What is your process for specific request from individual businesses or organisations?

- The Town Council can build upon partnership working with Powys County Council, Businesses, Chamber of Trade, Brecknock Access Group and Brecon Buzz.

Year of Smart Towns Diagnostic and Actions



- The Town Council has recently invested in a new encryption facility and would be the data controller of the data. Consideration around Good Practice guidance to ensure effective safety of the data.
- Data would be used for future grant bid applications to enable the town to be a Smart town going forward.

Specific Actions to take:

Consider appointing someone to be responsible for creating a newsletter to the business with a breakdown of relevant data. Additionally, consider performing a survey with business to see what additional data they would find useful.

Create an internal document whereby for all the SMART Town Team and stakeholders to encourage and share digital project ideas. Alternatively, consider creating an informal online discussion group on social media platforms.

Action Plan from Workshop 3		
Action	Timescale	By Whom