

Future Development

Over the summer of 2015 we plan to engage with people across the country who are starting to use USP. We hope to hold physical and online events to encourage discussion about how to maximise the potential of USP to impact on the design of towns strategies. If you are interested in these events or if you have ideas about how USP could be developed, please contact us using the details below.

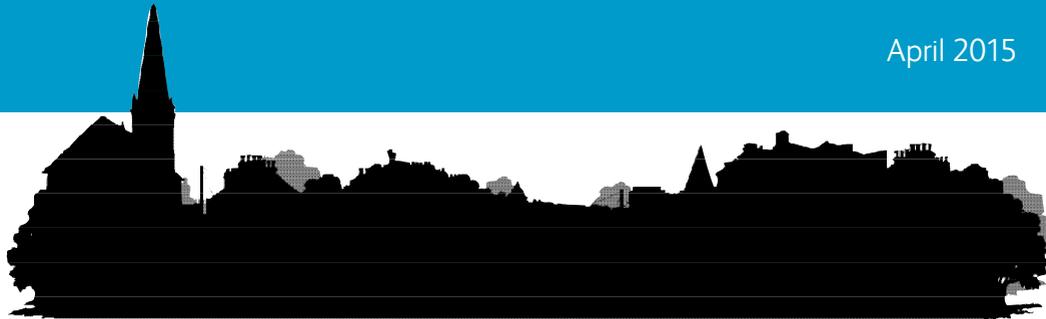
The Understanding Scottish Places platform was commissioned by the Scottish government and launched in April 2015. It was developed by a consortium led by Carnegie UK Trust and involving the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), Scotland's Towns Partnership and the University of Stirling.



For more information please contact Georgina Bowyer, Projects Officer, Carnegie UK Trust using the details below.

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Understanding Scottish Places



An online platform for towns practitioners and communities



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Why is USP needed?

In 2013, the Scottish Town Centres Review report called on town leaders to improve their strategies to enhance community, enterprise and place. The Town Centre Action Plan endorsed this and recognised the need to support the collation of town centre data to aid the understanding of towns' health and performance.

Stakeholders across the towns debate agree that the strategic decisions necessary for improving towns outcomes call for better, shared, more user-friendly information. There are no longer effective one-size-fits-all approaches to towns policy, and an understanding of more targeted approaches demands that local and national agencies deploy an improved armoury of accessible and relevant data tools.

Whilst towns have their own unique function, they also have a relative interdependency, independence or dependency as regards to other towns and cities. Therefore, targeted planning and investment requires improved local data on how town economies really function in relation to other localities.

What does USP provide?

The USP platform offers a mechanism for understanding the similarity and dissimilarity of places,



What is the USP platform?

The USP platform is a website to help towns practitioners and communities better understand the function of the towns they live and work in. The platform primarily functions as a diagnostic tool, and beyond that offers the opportunity to compare and contrast data about places across the country.

It also provides the USP Audit to help you collect local data about your town. This is designed to complement the national data presented within USP.

Who is the toolkit for?

The toolkit is for people interested in towns or places. This includes practitioners in local authority economic and planning teams, town centre partnerships, development trusts, traders associations, business improvement districts, and a range of other agencies and partnership organisations.

We hope that the platform will encourage greater interaction amongst users across the country and inspire the sharing of success stories, particularly with those working in towns with similar characteristics in other areas.

permitting meaningful comparisons of policy interventions and aspirations for places and place-making. Deliberately designed to avoid a simplistic ranking of places as better or worse, USP focuses on shared characteristics, focusing thinking on emerging local and place-based strategies.

Which places are included?

In Scotland there are 479 localities with a resident population of 1000 or more. These 479 towns form the geographical base of the Understanding Scottish Places project. Only data sets which are available for all 479 localities are used in USP. This reflects the fact that USP is about towns, and not about local authorities or other geographies, and that consistency and comparability across Scotland are key principles of the project.

The content of the USP platform



The USP platform organises towns into a new **typology** based on socio-demographic characteristics. It also considers how different places **inter-relate** and how they depend on each other for different services and functions. On your town page, you can find out which are the most similar towns to your own based on these two factors combined. You can also compare and contrast your town with any other town in Scotland on a wide range of indicators. Finally, the platform offers the **USP Audit** which helps users with the collection of local data. It is designed to complement the national data presented in USP, enabling you to build up a fuller picture of your town.