

# Share Peterborough

## “Generating social, economic and environmental impact across Peterborough businesses”

## Introduction

Peterborough is a city with big ambitions. Awarded £3m by Innovate UK in 2012, the Peterborough DNA programme kick started smart initiatives in the city and it was catapulted on to the world stage with the 2015 World Smart City Award.

In November 2015, Peterborough declared its vision to become the UK's first Circular City by 2050, creating economic viability, strong social ties and environmental sustainability.

## Opportunities and Drivers

The Fengate industrial estate hosts an eclectic mix of manufacturing, retail, and services businesses, ranging in size from micro start-ups to large corporates. The most commonly identified theme was a lack of resources, including access to skills, knowledge, facilities and materials.

Fengate's functional layout, diverse set of tenants, lack of common facilities such as coffee shops and somewhat tired and industrial atmosphere has created a very fragmented community. The occupants felt little sense of ownership for the area, and were unlikely to know their neighbours. Despite this, many companies articulated a strong desire to be good corporate citizens and to give back to the community.

## Opportunity

- Businesses held back by a lack of access to skills, knowledge, facilities and materials
- Fragmented local business community, resulting in missed opportunities to share
- Large corporates keen to act as good local citizens

## Approach

- B2B sharing economy platform to facilitate sharing of people, places and products
- Map-based business directory and promotional features to build a cohesive business community
- Ensure opportunities to collaborate and share locally are no longer missed

## Expected Impact

- Economic benefits from improved access to people, places and skills
- Environmental benefits from efficient use of resources
- Social benefits from increased B2B networking and interaction and developing a cohesive business community



In surveying Fengate companies, the number of missed opportunities for businesses to solve their problems by co-operating with their neighbours and trading locally became apparent. Many of the resources that Fengate businesses were crying out for were already on their doorstep. Clearly, an opportunity existed to find a way to help businesses make these connections.

## Approach

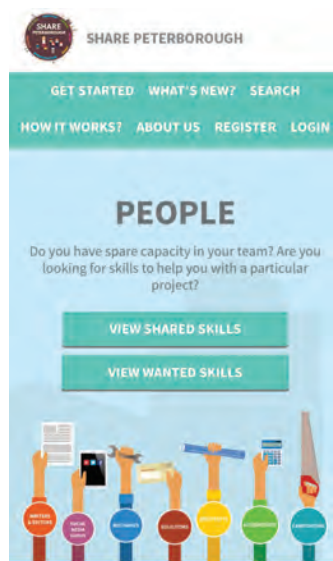
The solution took inspiration from the sharing economy, where peer-to-peer online platforms such as AirBnB, BorrowMyDoggy and JustPark have unlocked the value of assets in the consumer market. Peterborough's aim was to develop such a platform to act as an enabler for community building and networking and as a facilitator for the sharing of resources in the local business-to-business (B2B) market.

Before launching into the development of an IT platform, Peterborough piloted the concept through a series of “Swap-It” events and Twitter campaigns. Companies were asked what they need, what they discard and what they can share under three categories: people, products and places. The response was positive with a wealth of opportunities for sharing identified: waste from one company a much needed resource by another, offices willing to share underutilised meeting rooms and large corporates willing to extend places to neighbours when they had overcapacity on training courses. Opportunity Peterborough has given away a transporter trolley with Allia, and Opportunity Peterborough has lent an iPad to Free Thinking Design.



*“Share Peterborough is a key initiative for the city in realising its vision to become the UK's first Circular City. By embracing the concept of the sharing economy, city businesses can use a very practical platform to help overcome some of the issues around lack of resources and social isolation.”*

Confident in the appetite for a sharing economy platform and having demonstrated the benefits to businesses, Peterborough identified a developer to build a B2B platform where organisations can share under-utilised or no longer needed assets or resources.



Steve Bowyer, Programme Director, Future Peterborough



But the platform is not simply transactional – it goes further in its ambition to build a cohesive community of businesses, with features such as a map-based directory to help build a picture of services available locally, a campaigns function where businesses can share promotions, offers and events, and a collaboration-building function to help businesses identify new partners. The site will even offer a facility to support businesses to identify shared needs and take advantage of collective procurement.

## Benefits and Impact

Share Peterborough launched at World Smart City Expo in November 2016. It hopes to benefit companies by helping them make sense and take advantage of the ecosystem in which they operate, by sharing, co-operating and trading locally. Critically, this should make companies more effective and efficient, and therefore more economically viable.

There will be environmental benefits, too, arising from the efficient use of resources. In time, the platform will put a value on each exchange and will be able to report the impacts and value back to the users. Social value will be derived from increased B2B networking and interaction and developing a cohesive business community in Peterborough.



Image Sources: Opportunity Peterborough

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