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Ideas
For A New Town
An Absurdist Manifesto

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This is a manifesto for a New Town which will never exist.

The New Town in question is modelled on the existing town of Livingston, West Lothian.

Livingston is a result of the UK government's poorly executed New Towns Act. The New Towns Act did not improve lives - it was almost social genocide, clearing the poorest residents from cities into poorly built, isolated towns with no art, nor culture, to speak of.

The New Towns are now known for their deprivation, their poverty, crime rates and unemployment. They're also desperately boring - there's still nothing to do here except consume, go shopping in indoor shopping centres full of chain stores or maybe see a movie. There's no live music venues, no galleries, nearly no independently owned places to visit.

Some of the proposals in this Manifesto would be easily implemented, others are impossible. It is a rallying cry against beigeness, homogenisation, cookie cutter new build houses and chain coffee stores. It's a request to think of what a town is and what it could be.

1.

*I propose that we paint all of the
high rise social housing flats with
brightly coloured, smog absorbing
paint.*

2.

I propose that we line the ruins of the ancient house with candles and flowers in the style of a memorial, and see if anyone adds to it.

3.

I propose that the New Town will have bee hives along the top of the Civic buildings and will use the honey collected to donate to local food banks. We will teach primary school children to be beekeepers.

4.

*I propose that the New Town
installs large, 18 feet high
sculptures of children's rock pool
nets along the River at regular
intervals for no apparent reason,
tell everyone it represents catching
dreams.*

5.

I propose that we install plaques on all of the burnt out remnants of public litter bins that proclaim "Here Lies A Bin".

6.

I propose that we remove all of the 1970's "public art" and replace it with selfie opportunities in the style of the Selfie Museum pop-up. We can publish Selfie Route maps so people can find each selfie location.

7.

I propose that the New Town will remove all of the archaic “public art” in the middle of roundabouts and replace it with giant light up signs in the style of Nathan Colley, displaying messages such as “Please Use Your Fucking Indicators”, and “It Has Been X Days Since The Last Crash Here”.

8.

I propose that the inside of the underpasses are painted with mirror paint so that people don't need to keep looking behind them when they walk through them at night.

9.

I propose that we undertake a performance in the park, which involves us rolling down the hill as many times as we can before someone stops us. Ask people passing by to join in, and claim the performance is an attempt at bringing joy to the area.

10.

I propose that we paint all of the fences on a given street rainbow colours and campaign to have the street renamed Rainbow Road.

11.

I propose that we attach memorial plaques stating the lifespan and a Rest In Peace message to all the stumps left behind from cutting down trees.

12.

I propose that we arrange for all the elderly residents of the New Town to be invited to record their memories orally in a “memory bank” for the ages.

13.

I propose that we collect all the shoes left by the side of the Interchange roads, and drill a hole in them, fill them with soil and plant hardy seeds in them. We will then return the plant pot shoes to the location they were found on the kerb.

14.

I propose that we go around town late at night and spray paint obscenities around all the potholes so that the authorities are actually forced to fix them.

15.

I propose that exactly 40 days and 40 nights after executing Proposal #14, we spray paint obscenities around all of the broken drains, so we force the authorities to fix them too.

16.

I propose that a group of us walk around the woods and whenever we find a tree which has had a low level branch removed to prevent children climbing, attach a plaque that says "Ouch!"

17.

I propose that we turn all the small, abandoned convenience stores dotted around the schemes into 24-hour miniature recreations of iconic nightclubs, such as Taboo, Blitz Club, Studio 54, Batcave, for one weekend.

18.

*I propose that we recreate a 1960's
New York Happening in the middle
of the indoor shopping centre at
precisely 12:30 on a Sunday
afternoon.*

19.

I propose that we paint the Council offices beige, in representation of the beige-ness of their decision making. Should they begin to make decisions which are less beige, they get one square foot of colour painted for each non-beige decision. A committee of 13 people will be formed to vote on the beigeness of each decision they make.

20.

I propose that we convert the empty-for-years office complexes in the industrial estates into rehabilitation centres for people with mental health problems and addiction, featuring 24 hour on call support.

21.

I propose that we should paint the main Interchange roads with rainbow colours, using the aforementioned smog absorbing paint.

22.

I propose that we should construct a to-scale replica of Saint Basil's Cathedral (large enough that an average sized three year old could walk inside), in the middle of the park, then apply for city status citing our new cathedral. Should they refuse, claim they are discriminating against toddlers.

23.

I propose that, upon receiving our city status, we should apply for City of Culture. Upon winning, we should upgrade all small bodies of water to hydro-powered hot springs.

24.

I propose that we renovate the local duck pond, make it cleaner and bigger, and build a large duck house in it. We will then employ someone to look after the ducks, and sell free range duck eggs through a food co-operative to encourage the ethical consumption of animal products.

25.

I propose that we collect all of the rubbish from the River, wearing hazmat suits to do so due to the industrial waste in the River. We will then lay them out in neat rows outside of the Council buildings very early in the morning so that no one can get to work without stepping in leaking car batteries, to see if this prompts them to start enforcing restrictions about illegal dumping in the waterways.

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