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Retail, the High Street Review and Re-vivification of Historic Cores

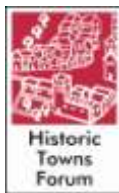
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The private/public development relationship:

being comfortable with ambiguity

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SCENE SETTING

- Public sector: local place making + strategic benefit for citizens
- Private sector: investment return from a place
- *Ask not what Our Town/High St can do for you rather ask what can you do for Our Town/High St ...?*
- More complex when LA is both landowner and planning authority
- Rigour of selecting partners but ...
- Maybe existing relationship or none
- Our offer including how do we get to the High St – bus walk cycle train car – and what else can we do when there



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WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

- Providing a sustainable destination – your historic centre/High St has survived and evolved often for 100 years plus
- Taking our places seriously and not unwittingly eroding its intrinsic attraction
- Discreet servicing but visible accessibility
- Meeting changing retail trends whilst widening the offer – ignore long term potential of mixed uses at your peril
- Past inappropriate 'short term' interventions and lack of long term investment in public realm
- Takes more than hanging baskets and restoring your traditional shopfronts to improve your offer
- Out of town/edge of town **and** your town centre
- Quality of the connections to your place ...



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AND WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

- Local distinctiveness – an authentic offer – variety of use and extended offer over time and age ranges
- Successful place virtuous circle – attracts us and because it does ...it attracts others – investors follow success to avoid risk
- Easy to get to – to understand what it offers – encourages us to move around – mix of spaces and facilities supporting the retail and leisure offer
- Identity – locally different – Waitrose or Costa in Our Place not Any Place
- Comfortable without having to be perfect – tidy and regularly maintained – local pride
- Local management – BIDS – residents – sense of partnership ...



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PLACEMAKING AND THE OFFER

- Our historic places are proven competitors – with an enduring and renewable offer
- Structure – easy to understand – have a richness that facilitates flexibility and mutual use
- Public spaces designed to foster exchanges – ‘market’ place – view, compare, sample ...
- Range of opportunities and routes – not the dumb ‘dumb bell’ of an out of town mall
- Can you do more than shop – meet, eat, drink, sit & dwell, conduct business, enjoy leisure activity, civic participation, belong...
- Internet life is not a substitute for street life
- A simple audit with the help of your local residents and business stakeholders will help identify how many of these activities you have in your place and their quality



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HOW DO WE GO ABOUT IT?

- Understand our place – character analysis and strategic local **spatial** framework
- Identify what is important - share this – stick to it
- Investors what something to have a stake in and there's plenty of competition for their £
- Streetlife v Mall life or mix of both?
- Set out some measures of success – yes brands but other 'feel good' targets
- Town centre management forum
- Who are your partners – critical friends – local players?
- High St or Town Centre 'brochure' – what is the offer – is it good enough – how can we improve it – who wants it – if not Waitrose or M & S why not the Co-op or Primark to start off with?



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VALUE OF URBAN DESIGN

Context
Structure
Movement
Mixed Uses
Public Realm
Servicing
Vision
'Road Map'
Dish of the Day



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NEXT STEPS: Action this Day or Ok First Thing Monday

- Whilst your place was not built in a day ...
- Equally hanging baskets alone is just a short term sticking plaster ...
- Don't say "someone ought to do something about it" because in reality it is down to you ...
- Being comfortable with ambiguity might help counter the worry that "you shouldn't be starting from here"
- Remember also "You were only suppose to blow the blooming doors off" and perhaps the MSCP as well
- Housekeeping - pick up litter and wash the windows ...



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A shared vision for people, places and prosperity

Celebrating local distinctiveness ...
 Defining your offer ...
 Setting shared ambitions ...
 Engaging your ambassadors ...
 Speed dating for like minded investors ...
 Perception really is reality ...
 And if you need some help reviving your High St or Town Centre ...
 ... reach for your handy ...
 +Plus UD Retail Toolkit ...!!



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