



## **NORTHAMPTON** **BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Please find enclosed the agenda and supporting papers for **Scrutiny Panel 2 -Retail Experience**

Date: **Thursday, 14 February 2013**

Time: **6:00 pm**

Place: **The Jeffrey Room, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.**

If you need any advice or information regarding this agenda please phone Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, telephone 01604 837408 (direct dial), email [ttiff@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:ttiff@northampton.gov.uk) who will be able to assist with your enquiry. For further information regarding **Scrutiny Panel 2 -Retail Experience** please visit the website [www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny)

### **Members of the Panel**

Chair	Councillor Matthew Lynch
Deputy Chair	Councillor Suresh Patel
Panel Members	Councillor Tony Ansell Councillor Sally Beardsworth Councillor Elizabeth Gowen Councillor Dennis Meredith Councillor Danielle Stone
Co-opted Member	Sheridan New

### **Calendar of meetings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Room</b>
24 April 2013 6:00 pm	All meetings to be held in the Jeffrey Room at the Guildhall unless otherwise stated

# Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 2 -Retail Experience

## Agenda

Item No and Time	Title	Pages	Action required
1.	Apologies		Members to note any apologies.
2.	Minutes	4 - 9	Members to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012.
3.	Deputations/ Public Addresses		<p>The Chair to note public address requests.</p> <p>The public can speak on any agenda item for a maximum of three minutes per speaker per item. You are not required to register your intention to speak in advance but should arrive at the meeting a few minutes early, complete a Public Address Protocol and notify the Scrutiny Officer of your intention to speak.</p>
4.	Declarations of Interest (including Whipping)		Members to state any interests.
5.	Witness Evidence		The Scrutiny Panel to receive the responses to its core questions from key witnesses.
5 (a) 6:30 pm 20 mins	Director, Enterprise Management Services	10 - 13	John Farrell, Assets Director, EMS
5 (b) 6:50 pm 20 mins	NCC - Highways	14	David Farquhar Assistant Director of Highways NCC
5 (c) 7:10 pm 20 mins	Northampton Federation of Residents Associations	15	The Scrutiny Panel to consider the written response to its core questions from the Northampton Federation of Residents Associations.(Copy Attached)
5 (d) 7:30 pm 10 mins	Hackney Carriage Association, Northampton		The Scrutiny Panel to consider a written response to its core questions from the Chair, Hackney Carriage Association, Northampton
5 (e) 7:40 pm 10 mins	Director, ACTM	16 - 171	To receive a briefing note and additional information from ACTM

## Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 2 -Retail Experience

<b>5 (f)</b> <b>7:50 pm</b> <b>10 mins</b>	<b>Northants Police</b>	<b>172 - 173</b>	The Scrutiny Panel to consider the written response to its core questions from Northants Police.
<b>6.</b> <b>8:00 pm</b> <b>15 mins</b>	<b>Grosvenor Centre Northampton</b>	<b>174 - 178</b>	The Panel to report back on its visit to the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton.
<b>7.</b> <b>8:15 pm</b>	<b>Northampton Community Forums</b>	<b>179 - 187</b>	The Panel to consider a briefing note detailing comments from the Northampton Community Forums.

# Agenda Item 2

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY PANEL 2 -RETAIL EXPERIENCE

Wednesday, 5 December 2012

- COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillor Matt Lynch (Chair); Councillors Suresh Patel (Deputy Chair); Tony Ansell, Sally Beardsworth, Elizabeth Gowen, Dennis Meredith and Danielle Stone
- CO-OPTED MEMBER:-** Sheridan New
- WITNESSES:** Stephen Chown – Chair of Northampton BID Item 5 (A)
- OFFICERS:**
- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Marion Goodman  | Head of Customer and Cultural Services |
| Derrick Simpson | Town Centre Manager                    |
| Tracy Tiff      | Scrutiny Officer                       |
| Joanne Birkin   | Democratic Services Officer            |
- OBSERVING:** Councillor Beverley Mennell
- PUBLIC:** Mark Unwin

#### 1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

#### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October were approved and signed by the Chair.

#### 3. DEPUTATIONS/ PUBLIC ADDRESSES

At the start of the meeting, the Chair Councillor Matt Lynch, informed the Panel that it had been recently announced that the Council was making £50,000 available for a Town Centre facelift. The money was to be spent on a general upgrade of street furniture.

Councillor Beverley Mennell addressed that Panel on the importance of ensuring that transportation was properly considered as part of the Review. Good public transportation was vital to bringing life into the town centre. Bus services should run later and link up with the outlying areas and provide a low cost service.

Although bus services are normally a County Council function, one member of the Panel said that she had been in Manchester recently and there was a free bus service which was promoted and provided by the local Council. Members thought that provision of a “town bus” could be a recommendation from the Panel. It would be particular useful if the service could include Sundays and evening/night services.

Expanding bus services on a Sunday could also be linked to providing Sunday markets.

#### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)**

There were none.

#### **5. WITNESS EVIDENCE**

##### **(A) STEPHEN CHOWN CHAIR NORTHAMPTON BID**

The Panel received a presentation from Mr Stephen Chown, Chair of Northampton bid.

The main points of discussion were as follows:-

The BID Directors had considered the core questions and divided them into 5 main topics. These were:-

- Partnership Working
- Retail issues, marketing and promotion
- The Internet
- Building Projects
- 5 Year Plan / Vision

#### **Partnership Working**

Two Councillors, Councillors Hadland and Nunn, are BID Directors, which provides a two way process. The Northampton Forum involves many partners including the Borough Council, Highways and the Police. BID is also committed to Northampton Alive project.

There was concern over rigid adherence to planning policy, particularly in terms of use class designation and maybe change of use should be considered particularly in terms of potential short term uses.

Enterprise cleaning targets need to stay in the spotlight and cleaning standards need to be consistently applied. .

With regard to a potential town, the bus Stagecoach are already involved as partners in publicising events on the buses and they are keen to encourage more people into the town centre for their own commercial reasons.

#### **Retail Issues, Marketing and Promotion.**

There needs to be a focus of improvement and that should be on the Abington Street and Market Square Area.

Consideration could be given to providing Shop front Improvement Grants- this was done in Rugby on a match funding basis.

There was some work done on the Drapery on refurbishing street furniture, litter bins and sign posts. In the New Year BID would be doing some work on street clutter. Consideration should be given to putting distances on street signs.

Traffic messaging signs could also be used to give information on events and parking availability. Signs should also give as full information as possible i.e. road closed until, which helps people to plan future journeys etc.

One longer term aim could be the creation of specific "quarters" with arches over the road to announce them. There could also be signs to these quarters around the town. These would create a better sense of space.

Encouraging longer shopping hours; particularly in the 5-7pm slot between work and theatre, entertainment etc.

Parking costs are a perceived problem - and free first hour parking and free parking after 3pm are promotions that have been introduced to try to overcome this. Extending the 1 hour bays to 2 hours would allow shoppers time to shop/browse and enjoy the town, rather than "dash".

Provision of street stages - particularly in the Abington Street and Market Square locations.

Parking Permits for town centre businesses are available, but they are not particularly well promoted and could be extended.

There should be more flexibility towards shop front vinyl advertising which could generate advertising revenue.

Pop up shops should be encouraged. A "made in Northants shop would shortly be opening on St Giles Street"

Street Lighting could be improved in certain areas as there had been some concerns expressed.

The Police and PCSO'S do a good job, but additional PCSO's would be welcomed.

### **The Internet**

The Internet should be seen as an opportunity to sell goods to a wider client group. High Speed Internet should also be encouraged. The Free Wi-fi the Market Square is a good start but should be more widely promoted.

Love Northampton website should also be supported as a way of getting information about events and promotions to as wider group as possible.

### **Building Projects**

The BID embraces the projects unreservedly and it is positive to see the bus interchange work underway. Liaising with business is the key to delivering successful projects, as

much notice as possible is vital. It is also important to make sure that town centre users are aware of changes that might affect them such as parking restrictions or road closures.

## **5 Year Plan**

The BID has 3 remaining years to run. Their focus will be around the Abington Street Market Square area. They would like to see positive changes to the Market Square layout to make a central stage area and stands to allow events and performances to have a permanent space. Varied events programmes would increase footfall.

It is also wishes to encourage the expansion of the retail day to 7pm, by encouraging town centre workers to stay after work and use the shops and facilities.

BID itself has reorganised which has freed director time which will allow directors to go out to the local big companies and ask about their future programmes. These could then be co-ordinated with BID projects to maximise their effectiveness.

The BID has no official influence outside its boundary; however it is very involved in the promotion of best practice.

Mr Chown considered that the various projects would all increase footfall but felt that new quality retailers would only come to new units in the Grosvenor scheme, which emphasised the importance of continuing negotiations with Legal and General.

Members of the Panel felt that it was very important to encourage a much wider town centre experience, rather than just concentrate on the retail offer. It was important to promote a sense of place and having specific events helped to do this. There could also be a wider tie in to National and International events or “days”.

It was also felt that de cluttering of street furniture/signage was very important and gave a much better perception if the street scene was cleared.

Whilst generally very supportive of the Town Centre Managers Office it was felt that they could be a better reporting system of cleansing problems etc. More people could be involved in the reporting system if it was easier to send in photographs of problems. Members were informed that there was a system by which pictures could be taken on a mobile phone and sent through to Enterprise for action. The Panel were informed that this application was already in use, but could be more widely promoted.

There were suggestions as to how the “Face lift” money could be spent and whether the BID should determine how it was spent. Mr Chown confirmed that there would be a contribution from the BID and they would be involved in how the money would be spent.

The Panel thanked Mr Chown for his very informative presentation.

## **(B) PAUL BRUERE, CHAIR OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE ASSOCIATION**

Mr Bruere was not present at the meeting.

**AGREED:-** That the Scrutiny Officer contact Mr Bruere and invite him to attend the next meeting of the Panel or send a written response to the core questions.

**(C) DEBBIE FERGUSON COMMUNITY SAFETY MANAGER, NBC**

The Panel received a written answer to the core questions from Debbie Ferguson, Community Safety Manager.

The main points of discussion were as follows:-

There was concern that there were issues with the reporting of beggars and street drinkers which was felt to deter people from coming into the town centre and assurance was sought that they are reported to the Police. Generally it was felt that it would not be useful to simply move people on but engage with organisations and individuals to provide a proper level of assistance.

**AGREED:** The Chair of the Panel write to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Town Centre and ask them how they are tackling these issues.

**(D) NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN (TOWN CENTRE), NBC**

The Panel received a written answer to the core questions from the Northampton Borough Council Neighbourhood Wardens.

**AGREED:** - that the written response be noted.

**6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY (CFPS) - POLICY BRIEFING - HIGH STREET AND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION**

The Panel received background information from the Centre for Public Scrutiny –Policy Briefing on High Street and Town Centre Regeneration.

**AGREED:** - that the background Information be in added to the evidence informing the Review.

**7. SITE VISITS**

The Panel received feedback from the following site visits:-

**Peterborough**

Councillors reported back on the visit to Peterborough. They felt that it was a good example of a mixture of old and new. There was a new shopping centre and other streets with a mixture of older buildings. The bus station opened straight into the shopping centre which gave good weather protection. The city seemed very clean and tidy. The Information Centre was part of a shop which sold local products. The Councillors had met the centre manager and publicity manager who had been very helpful. There appeared to be a good mix of shops.



## **Market Harborough**

Councillor Tony Ansell reported on his visit to Market Harborough. The population is 20,000. There were no beggars and no empty shops. There appeared to be a mixture of niche shops.

Certain parking spaces were designated as free 30 minutes pop in parking spaces for people who just wanted a very short visit.

There is a market which operates 3 days a week and has 87 stalls. There were good recycling bins and notice boards and public toilets.

The photographs showed an attractive area, with no clutter or litter.

## **Milton Keynes**

Councillor Sally Beardsworth reported on Milton Keynes. She felt that it is very easy to get to, with good train and bus connections. There are a wide variety of eating establishments and plenty of facilities for those wishing to spend the day there. It is very big and it is not the sort of place that she felt encouraged short term visits. It reflects the fact that it was built as a shopping centre and as such she felt that there was a lack of atmosphere.

## **Southall Greater London**

Councillor Patel commented that he had recently visited Southall and it was clean, rubbish was continually cleared so there was no unsightly build up. Shops are open later and there was a good retail offer. He reported that the railings in the town centre had been painted black, which he felt added to the aesthetics of the town centre.

## **8. DESKTOP RESEARCH**

The Panel considered desktop research on Stoke and Walsall.

**AGREED:** The desktop research exercise informs the evidence base of the Review.

The meeting concluded at 7:50 pm

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

#### Questions EMS

Do you feel that education or material is required to alter the public's perception to the nuisance of litter, the cost to the Council and local residents of clearing it up and the penalties that can result?

Yes. It is clear that there are a number of educational campaigns that must be undertaken to re-engage the public's emotional contract with the tidiness of the town.

It is also clear that there is a substantial lack of enforcement which has led to complacency and a lack of any consequences for littering in our town centres.

It is also important that relationships are strengthened with partner organisations, alternative authority departments and businesses generally. Examples include smoking areas, independent food outlets and car parks. A consistency in approach is required so that the standards can be maintained and scopes of service fully understood. For example there is confusion around the responsibility for certain town centre car parks that do not form part of our contract.

Possibility exists of closer relationships with outreach centres that can help reduce the impacts of rough sleepers and vagrancy.

A holistic approach to planning that gives opportunity for consultation with those responsible for maintenance. For example removal of installations which give opportunities for graffiti. And the use of "buff" coloured slabs.

Containerisation of waste from businesses should also be on the agenda.

Please provide details of the cleaning rota for the town centre?

We have attached the complete rota and below is the sweeping schedule for the town centre:

	Monday - Friday			Saturday			Sunday
	(Market Sweep Tuesday - Friday only)						
05:00	High Pressure Washing, Trunk road mechanical sweeping, Car Park Sweeping			Early Morning Sweep (inc, Kettering Rd, W'boro Rd & St James)			Early Morning Sweep (inc, Kettering Rd, W'boro Rd & St James)
06:00							
07:00							
08:00							
09:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
13:00							
14:00							
15:00							
16:00							
17:00							
18:00							
19:00							
20:00							

Improvements:

1. Extended working days to cover peak shopping and home times which sees street sweeping delivered until 8pm (previously 3pm)
2. Provide litter bin washing programme
3. jet wash for urination hotspots every Monday morning
4. Reintroduced barrow sweeping rounds around town centre residential areas for a more effective sweep.
5. Provide additional services of abandoned shop front clean-up which we are looking to extend.

Are there any particular 'hotspots' regarding littering in the town centre, and how do you deal with these?

The following are identified as hotspots from our trend data in the town centre.

Our people work with Wardens and liaise on a day to day basis to highlight and alert immediate issues across the town centre but with particular focus on these hotspots at certain times and days. For example Saturdays outside Fast food outlets and graffiti hotspots during school holidays and weekends..

We respond to incidents within timescales that are strictly monitored and fall within the contract KPIs.

Resource within the town centre is immediately diverted to problem areas when notified. However as issues become more prevalent and are not addressed by education or enforcement it is plain that the resources will be severely stretched and unable to fulfil many daily routine duties.

#### **Hot spots litter from food outlets**

1. The drapery MacDonal'd's (they clear the mess up)
2. the ridings sports direct
3. gold street
4. Abington street kfc

#### **Hot spots leaflets pubs & clubs**

1. Bridge street
2. lady lane roadmender

#### **Hot spots General**

1. mercers row black bags
2. gold street black bags
3. the drapery black bags
4. market square black bags
5. abington street black bags

#### **Hot spots gaffitti**

1. emporium walk
2. drum lane
3. swan yard
4. lady lane. County court walkways
5. jeyes jetty

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Northampton TC Car Park prog</b>	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.	Car Parks - Mechanically sweep car parks, litter pick adjacent shrubs and empty litter bins.
	Midsummer Meadow	Wellington Street	Commercial Street - St. Peters Way Lower	Midsummer Meadow	Commercial Street - St. Peters Way Lower
	Commercial Street - St. Peters Way Lower	Upper Mounts	Iceland Car Park - St. Peters Way Upper	Wellington Street	Iceland Car Park - St. Peters Way Upper
	Commercial Street - TK Max	Newland	Market Street	Doddridge Street (St. Marys Street)	Upper Mounts
	Campbell Square	Iceland Car Park - St. Peters Way Upper	Melbourne Street	Horsemarket (Bath Street)	St. Johns Street
	Doddridge Street (St. Marys Street)	Albion Place	Mairfair - Free School Street	Chalk Lane	Albion Place
	Horsemarket (Bath Street)	Abington Place - St. Edmunds Road		Newland	Abington Place - St. Edmunds Road
	Chalk Lane			The Ridings	
	The Ridings				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Round C1 mini mec</b>	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)
	CAMPBELL STREET	CHEYNE WALK	CAMPBELL STREET	CHEYNE WALK	CAMPBELL STREET
	CAMPBELL SQUARE	SPRING GARDENS	CAMPBELL SQUARE	SPRING GARDENS	CAMPBELL SQUARE
	CHURCH LANE ©	ST. JOHN'S STREET	CHURCH LANE ©	ST. JOHN'S STREET	CHURCH LANE ©
	NEWLAND ©	PASSAGE- St.John's St. to Victoria Gardens	NEWLAND ©	PASSAGE- St.John's St. to Victoria Gardens	NEWLAND ©
	VICTORIA STREET ©	SWAN STREET ©	VICTORIA STREET ©	SWAN STREET ©	VICTORIA STREET ©
	UPPER MOUNTS	ANGEL STREET ©	UPPER MOUNTS	ANGEL STREET ©	UPPER MOUNTS
	GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)	FETTER STREET ©	GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)	FETTER STREET ©	GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)
	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)	VICTORIA GARDENS (Main road)	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)	VICTORIA GARDENS (Main road)	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)
	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs	VICTORIA GARDENS (Side road) ©	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs	VICTORIA GARDENS (Side road) ©	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs
	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)	VICTORIA PROMENADE (inc. parking bays- 293 yds shrubberies- 1152 sq. m	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)	VICTORIA PROMENADE	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)
	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)	ST. PETERS WAY	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)	(inc. parking bays- 293 yds	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)
	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)	BRIDGE STREET to cotton end (paths and channels)	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)	shrubberies- 1152 sq. m	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)
	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St.	GAS STREET	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St. including litter-pick grass and shrubs ( 875 sq. mts. )	ST. PETERS WAY	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St. including litter-pick grass and shrubs ( 875 sq. mts. )
	including litter-pick grass and shrubs ( 875 sq. mts. )	HORSESHOE STREET	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.	BRIDGE STREET to cotton end (paths and channels)	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.
	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.		LOWER MOUNTS including litter-pick grass & shrubs	GAS STREET	LOWER MOUNTS including litter-pick grass & shrubs
	LOWER MOUNTS including litter-pick grass & shrubs	town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900	GRAFTON STREET	HORSESHOE STREET	GRAFTON STREET
	GRAFTON STREET		FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street ST. ANDREWS STREET	town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900	FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street ST. ANDREWS STREET
	FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street ST. ANDREWS STREET		BROAD STREET		BROAD STREET
	BROAD STREET		HORSEMARKET		HORSEMARKET
HORSEMARKET		town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900		town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900	
town centre plus markets 16.00 -1900					

Round C1 "Applied Green Machine"		Round C2 "Applied Green Machine"		Round C3 "Applied Green Machine"	
Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)		STREET SWEEPING (inc. litter-picking of grass + shrubberies + empty bins)		Street Sweeping (inc. litter-picking grass + shrubs + empty bins)	
		Early morning sweeping	Other sweeping	Early morning sweeping	Other sweeping
ABINGTON SQUARE (outside paths only)	EAST END OF BUS STATION (paths, steps and grass)				
KETTERING ROAD (Abington Square to Wellingborough Road) (outside paths only)	inc. 675 sq. mts. of grass and shrubs	THE DRAPERY (McDonalds side) (path and channel)	GREYFRIARS (Toilet Subway)	THE DRAPERY (Auctioneers side - path only)	NOTRE DAMME MEWS ©
CHAPEL PLACE ©	SUBWAY UNDER GREYFRIARS & WOOD STREET WALK (paths to rear of Grosvenor Centre to Beatties etc.)	GOLD STREET (paths and channels)	MAYORHOLD - SUBWAY AND APPROACHES (including litter-pick shrub areas)	EMPORIUM WALK - Paths from The Parade to Sheep St. and Bus Station ( includes subway under Ladys Lane ) Inc.litter pick grass + shrubs	ALBERT PLACE ©
KETTERING GARDENS ©	LADYS LANE (incl. Litter picking of shrubs)	MAREFAIR (paths and channels)	ST. KATHERINES STREET ©	ALL SAINTS FRONTAGE inc. empty litter bins	WELLINGTON STREET
KETTERING ROAD (St. Michaels Road to Talbot Road)	LADYS LANE (Roadmender cul de sac)	BLACK LION HILL (paths and channels)	ST. KATHERINES TERRACE	MERCERS ROW (both sides)	( including 2 litter bins in Car Park)
KETTERING ROAD (Clare St. to Abington Ave.) ©	LADYS LANE SUBWAY and approaches from Wellington St.	BRIDGE STREET (Gold St. to St. Peters Way) (paths and channels)	ST. PETERS GARDENS (by church wall)	WOOD HILL (both sides)	SPENCER PARADE
MARKET ST. (entrance off Kettering Road) ©	including litter-pick grass and shrubs ( 875 sq. mts. )	COLLEGE STREET	KINGSWELL STREET ©	GEORGE ROW (both sides)	HAZELWOOD ROAD
WELLINGBOROUGH ROAD (Victoria Road to Abington Square) (outside paths only)	COUNTY COURT RAMPS and paths leading from Upper Mounts / Ladys Lane to subway.	COLLEGE STREET MEWS	FRANCES JETTY (Bridge Street to Kingswell St.)	MARKET SQUARE and THE PARADE (footpaths and channels)	DERNGATE
WELLINGBOROUGH ROAD (Victoria Rd. to Market St./ St. Edmonds St.) ©	LOWER MOUNTS including litter-pick grass & shrubs	KING STREET ©	ST. KATHERINES GDNS (sweep footpaths,litter pick grass & shrubs & empty bins)	OSBORNES (or COCKERILLS ) JETTY	CASTILLIAN STREET
WELLINGBOROUGH ROAD (Market St./ St. Edmonds St. to Bostock Avenue)	GRAFTON STREET	SILVER STREET (including litter-pick shrub areas) ©	GREEN ST. & WESTERN TERRACE (as far as subway to Station) ©	DRUM LANE	CASTILLIAN TERRACE
MARKET ST. cul de sac by Spread Eagle ©	FITZROY TERRACE (passage of Grafton Street	BRADSHAW STREET ©	TANNER STREET ©	CONDUIT LANE	ALBION PLACE
MELBOURNE ST. ©	ST. ANDREWS STREET	ALLEY YARD (including motor-cycle area)	NARROW TOE LANE (St. Peters St. to The Green) ©	ABINGTON STREET	GUILDHALL ROAD
NEW TOWN ROAD ©	BROAD STREET	MARKET SQUARE (paths and channels)	ST. PETERS STREET (St. Peters Way - Horseshoe St.) ©	FISH STREET	ST. GILES CHURCHYARD (sweep paths, litter pick grass & shrubs, empty bins)
BOUVERIE STREET ©	HORSEMARKET	JEYES JETTY	THE GREEN & COURT ROAD ©	DYCHURCH LANE	CHEYNE WALK
WEST STREET ©		SWAN YARD	GREGORY STREET ©	THE RIDINGS	SPRING GARDENS
VERNON STREET ©	<b>PLUS MON / WEDS / FRI.</b>	SHEEP STREET (Greyfriars to The Drapery)	FREESCHOOL STREET ©	ST. GILES STREET	ST. JOHN'S STREET
REGENT SQUARE & SHEEP STREET (Campbell Street to Ladys Lane)	Empty 4 litter bins at Upper Mounts Car Park and Campbell Square Car Park		WESTON WHARF (Carlsberg entrance) ©	ST. GILES TERRACE	PASSAGE- St.John's St. to Victoria Gardens
CAMPBELL STREET			ST. PETERS SQUARE (St. James St. to St. Peters Walk inc. link to Woolmonger St.)	ST. GILES SQUARE	SWAN STREET ©
CAMPBELL SQUARE			WOOLMONGER STREET ©	YORK ROAD (path only)	ANGEL STREET ©
CHURCH LANE ©			FOUNDRY STREET ©		FETTER STREET ©
NEWLAND ©			ST. JAMES STREET (Foundry St. to Commercial st.) ©		VICTORIA GARDENS (Main road)
VICTORIA STREET ©			COMMERCIAL STREET ©		VICTORIA GARDENS (Side road) ©
UPPER MOUNTS					VICTORIA PROMENADE (inc. parking bays- 293 yds shrubberies- 1152 sq. m
GREYFRIARS (including shrubberies)					
<b>Extras:-</b>					
			<b>(MON ONLY)</b>		<b>(TUES,THURS)</b>
			Litter-pick grass area adjacent to St. Johns Catholic		ST. JOHN'S TERRACE and RUSSELL TERRACE
			Church.(between Bridge St. & Victoria Gdns.)		(old streets off Swan St.inc.steps to Albion Place)
			<b>(MON,WEDS,FRI)</b>		<b>WEDNESDAY ONLY</b>
			ALBION PLACE Car Park- empty 3 litter bins CE Car Park empty 3 litter bins		ST. JOHN'S ST. - litter pick grass & shrubberies ST. JOHN'S ST. to VICTORIA GDNS. Passage (litter pick shrubberies)

## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### **SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – RETAIL EXPERIENCE**

##### **CORE QUESTIONS - NCC Highways**

How will NCC communicate proposed highway changes to town centre businesses?

How will NCC consult with town centre businesses on highway changes?

Is NCC planning to undertake any improvement works to street furniture in the town centre. and if so when by?

How can Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) develop partnership working with the town centre business community?

How can NCC support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre?

How can regulations and advice regarding the retail sector be utilised and accessed more by retailers?

What would you like the town centre will look like in 5 years time?

How good are the communication channels from the Borough Council regarding new town centre developments?

What do you feel would enhance the retail experience to attract new visitors / shoppers and increase the number of return visits to the town centre

Personally could we ask you:

- 1) do you personally shop in the town centre? if not why not?
- 2) do you shop via the internet and if so what for?

Any other comments

10/1/2013.

Retail Experience Scrutiny review Northampton town centre.

Northampton town centre has obviously deteriorated during the last two decades. One can easily blame many causes as follows

1. Car parking the annual income has reduced by £89,000 over the last three years implying that the number of people using the town centre has fallen, indicating that possibly charges are too high.
2. The large number of empty premises provide no attraction
3. Over provision of Bookmakers, Pawnbrokers will not attract either tourist or shopper.
4. Lack of premier businesses we have lost far too many first class outlets in recent years.
5. Lack of residents in the town many thousands were lost in the clearing of the Mounts, Lady's Lane, Barliff Street areas etc.
6. Empty offices in abundance indicate lack of workers in town centre.
7. The immediate approaches to town centre i.e. Kettering Road, Barrack Road etc are a disgrace certainly no enticement for any visitor or shopper.
8. The Market alas! once the pride of Northampton town centre, now a shadow of its former glory.

In conclusion a complete rethink to the retail shopping experience in Northampton is needed. The proposed extension to the Grosvenor Centre will not itself be the elixir to solve the problem. It is emphasised that to attract custom Northampton needs a unique new outlook in its format, something other neighbouring towns do not have, we need class once again. Why not capitalise on the growing interest in the Arts, Music and learning, become a centre of culture for everyone's taste.

Jony Mallard.

Chair of <sup>15</sup> Northampton Federation  
P. 11 P. 12

**Northampton Borough Council  
Overview and Scrutiny**



**Overview and Scrutiny  
Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience  
14<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

**Briefing Note: Response to the core questions: Association  
of Town Centre Managers (ACTM)**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 At its inaugural meeting the Scrutiny Panel agreed that as part of its evidence gathering process the Association of Town Centre Managers (ACTM) would be contacted and asked to provide a response to the core questions.
- 1.2 The Director, ACTM, provided some documents that he felt would be useful background information for the Panel. This information was provided instead of a formal response from ACTM to the Panel's core questions.

**2 Information**

- 2.1 The documents provided, as attached, are:-
  - 100 ways to help the High Street – A Toolkit for Town Centres
  - Getting it Right – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives

**2.2 100 Ways to help the High Street**

The Toolkit comprises eight key sections:

- Building a Sustainable Partnership
- Accessing the High Street
- Enhancing the Streetscape
- Place Identify, Branding and Experience
- Attracting New People and Businesses to High Street and Keeping the Old Ones
- The Safe and Secure High Street
- The Evening and Night-time Economy
- Training, Development and Accreditation

[www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny)

Call 01604 837408

E-mail: [tiff@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:tiff@northampton.gov.uk)



# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

- 2.3 The Toolkit reports that it is a collection of schemes which, if implemented in the right place at the right time, can have a positive effect for town centres. It goes on to say that the Toolkit is primarily for town centre managers and local government. A running theme throughout the Toolkit is that whatever resources you have, and whoever takes the lead on many of these activities, success is achievable through co-operation.
- 2.4 The Toolkit comprises a number of case studies, the purpose of which is to demonstrate how some of these hints and tips originate from real life examples.

**Building a Sustainable Partnership** – The Toolkit states that good town centre management is often dependent upon strong partnership.

**Accessing the High Street** – The Toolkit advises that transport considerations are amongst some of the most important for town centres. Manchester was provided as a case study.

Manchester city centre is linked together by its free city centre bus service, the Metroshuttle, which has been operating since 2002. It has three routes that navigate the city centre, linking the city's major thoroughfares and stations with its main commercial, financial and cultural districts. The Metroshuttle costs around £1.2 million to operate. Smaller schemes operate in Bolton and Stockport.

**Enhancing the Streetscape** – The Toolkit reports that streetscape is the physical aspects of public spaces in town centres. It advises that there are a number of different components which work together to create a streetscape, that would ideally be unique to the town but also being clean and orderly, avoiding clutter and dereliction, including landscaping, lighting, paving, planting, public art and effective signposting.

Edinburgh was provided as a case study – Castle Street Project. A new road surface was laid using granite setts and Caithness flags. New street furniture and improved lighting was also installed. Power pods were put in for activation of the streets for events. It is reported that controlled vehicular access and the restoration of a quality streetscape has made walking and exploring the whole area a more pleasant and satisfying experience.

# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

Cardiff was provided as a case study – The project was put together by city centre management and Cardiff City Council, the Keep Wales Tidy Campaign and a range of private sector organisations as an innovative and direct way to engage with the growing population that live in the city centre. It featured a unique process of recycling and key locations were branded 'thanksbanks'.

It was reported that as a result, more waste is recycled than deposited in standard litter bins and recycling in the city has increased by 43%.

The Kirkcaldy Art Trail was provided as a case study; the aim of which was to inspire and encourage people to visit different areas of the town centre. Art in shop windows was a creative initiative that transformed eight empty shop windows in Kirkcaldy town centre into works of art. An arts trail leaflet was produced providing details of a map and information of the displays.

**Place Identify, Branding and Experience** – The Toolkit reports that it is impossible for town centre managers to dictate, or predict what type of experience each visitor may have because there are so many disparate elements that make up a high street.

Wood Green: International Short Film Festival was provided as a case study. The Town Centre Manager was a film fan and filmmaker who had the idea of the best way to achieve this would be through the magic of cinema. In 2003 the Wood Green International Short Film Festival was launched as a one day event. By year three it was selling out in minutes of opening and attracts short films from all over the world.

**Attracting New People and Businesses to High Street and Keeping the Old Ones** – The Toolkit reports that effort has to go into getting the basics right to make any high street the primary destination for people and business. It suggests a few schemes that can act as the building blocks to constructing a viable place for people to trade, employ and reside:

- Developing a general town centre website
- Virtual tour of the High Street
- On-line Town Centre Shopping
- Free Wi-Fi Hotspots
- Town Centre Loyalty card
- Empty Property Scheme
- Offering Incubator units
- Community Ownership of businesses
- Temporary Pop-up Services
- Entrepreneurial Competition for Incubator Space
- Building Upon Existing Footfall Generators

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# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

- Branding of your Town Centre
- Marketing with Neighbouring Town Centres
- Turning Empty Shops into Temporary Art Galleries
- Getting the Right Mix of Businesses
- Cheque Book Promotion
- Using Evidence to Promote your Town Centre to Investors
- Distribution of Shopping Guides to Households
- Know your consumers
- Auction

Mansfield Christmas Auction was provided as a case study. The purpose of the auction was to raise funds for the town's Christmas lights by selling a range of goods and services pledged by local businesses. A total of £23,000 was raised in one day. It was stated that the event demanded effort and goodwill but very little cash outlay.

**The Safe and Secure High Street** – The Toolkit reports that the town centre is a central point for many. It goes on to say that it can attract undesired activities that threaten otherwise healthy high streets and damage people's perceptions of the town centre. It gives examples of successful efforts to improve safety and security of all town centre users:

- Creating a Retail Specific Crime Reduction Partnership
- Working with your Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- ShopWatch Scheme
- PubWatch Scheme
- Community Alcohol Partnerships
- Retail Radio Link
- Using on-Line Technology for Real-Time Crime Tracking
- Re-Deployable CCTV Capability
- CCTV Video Analytics
- Making Crime Reductions Visible
- Community Wardens
- Member Exclusion Scheme
- Safety Scheme for Lost Children
- Penalty Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices

Rochdale's Safer Communities Strategy was provided as a case study. The Project introduced a number of initiatives, including:

- Talking signs around the town
- Dispersal orders and high visibility patrols
- Subway murals
- A magazine to 30,000 people informing them of what business is doing to combat crime
- Local press advertising to promote safe venues

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# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

Plaques in situ around the town centre reminding visitors that the town has received a Safer Business Award  
Monthly town centre columns in the local press

**The Evening and Night-time economy** – The Toolkit states that versatility can be the making of a great town centre. A town centre must strive to offer a clean, safe, vibrant and engaging environment for different types of people. It details a number of schemes which it feels would make this a possibility during the evening and night-time:

- Planning for the evening
- Managing the transition between day and night
- Promoting of late night transport
- Taxi marshal Scheme
- Late night bus service
- Purple flag – to establish national standards and raise the image of Britain's town centres at night.
- Dedicated ambassadors for the evening economy
- Accreditation Scheme for Licensed Premises

A case study was provided - Bolton has pioneered a time-time management structure that involves the employment of ambassadors for the evening economy. The aim being to reduce alcohol related anti-social behaviour and reassure the public that the town centre is a safe place to visit at night.

**Training, Development and Accreditation** – The Toolkit encourages a culture where training, development and accreditation are prerequisites. It goes on to support professional accreditation for Town Centre Manager and auditing the quality of the town's retail offer. Support is also given to:

- Pointing retailers towards advice on training
- Learn from real-life retail expert
- Become a retail ambassador
- Encourage junior managers to apply to Oxford summer school
- Get young learners to learn through retail
- Know what qualifications are out there
- Local Business Awards

### 2.3 Getting it Right – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives

2.3.1 The reported purpose of the Guide is around setting up and evaluating town centre management initiative. The Guide is set out in two sections:

[www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny)

Call 01604 837408

E-mail: [tiff@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:tiff@northampton.gov.uk)

# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

**An outline of set up and evaluation** – A brief description of the core elements in the life cycle of a successful town centre management initiative, an explanation of the set up and evaluation process, and guidance on when, why, how and by whom the process should be undertaken.

**Implementing set up and validation** – Examples of good practice are provided and detailed checklists for setting up and validating each of the core elements of successful town centre management initiatives:

- Strategy and vision
- Partnership and structure
- Business and Action Plans
- Funding
- Key Performance Indicators

2.3.2 Examples of good practice have been drawn from the Guide:

**Implementing set up and Validation** – The Guide reports that the essentials of good practice are both set up and evaluation must work to build and maintain Town Centre management initiatives based on good practice, including a focus on:

- A clear Strategy, shared by all stakeholders
- Robust partnerships
- Strong partnerships
- Matched funding and leverage
- Consultation
- Outputs

**Strategy and Vision** – The Guide reports that a shared vision is an essential component in finding the common ground necessary for all stakeholders to give their fullest commitments to the objectives of town centre management.

**Partnership Structure** - The Guide reports that to be successful, town centre management must comprise a genuine, robust and stable partnership between the public, private and community sectors.

**Business and Action Plans** – The Guide reports that key aspects of good practice are that the range of stakeholders and their differing contributions must be recognised for a town to achieve competitiveness and the best way to achieve this is for all parties to follow the same well developed business plan.

# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

**Funding** - The Guide reports that key aspects of good practice are that several sources of funding exist for town centre management, most importantly the public sector and private business, both large and small, all of which need to be fully explored.

**Key performance indicators** – The Guide reports it is important that the town centre management partnership establishes a number of benchmarks to determine how the town centre changes over time.

### 3 Conclusions

- 3.1 That details from the documents referred to in section 2 of this briefing note inform the evidence base of this Review.



# 100 Ways to Help the High Street

## A Tool-kit for Town Centres

**ATCM**  
association of town centre management

**Local Government**  
Improvement  
and Development

The National Skills Academy  
**RETAIL**  
Led by  
skillsmart retail

**IPM**  
Institute of Place Management

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# Introduction

**100 Ways to Help the High Street is a collection of schemes which, if implemented in the right place at the right time, can have a positive affect for town centres. Some of these schemes are more ambitious than others, and some more expensive to put in place. However, with a variety of schemes covering different dimensions to the high street it is hoped that regardless of your town centre's size, regardless of whether you have developed a mature partnership and regardless of the size of the budget at your disposal you will find something here which is useful.**

**100 Ways to Help the High Street is primarily for town centre managers and local government. However, job title is not a precursor to the successful implementation of many of these schemes. A running theme throughout 100 Ways to Help the High Street is that whatever resources you have at your disposal, and whoever takes the lead on may of these activities, success is achievable through cooperation.**

**With the UK home to a diverse range of town centres, it will be for town centre managers, officials of local government, elected members and anyone else leading high street rejuvenation to decide which mixture of these schemes would make a difference, and how those schemes should be implemented.**

To ensure 100 Ways to Help the High Street is easy to follow, all schemes have been grouped into 8 sections:

- **Building a Sustainable Partnership**
- **Accessing the High Street**
- **Enhancing the Streetscape**
- **Place Identity, Branding and Experience**
- **Attracting New People and Businesses to the High Street and keeping the Old Ones**
- **The Safe and Secure High Street**
- **The Evening and Night-time Economy**
- **Training, Development and Accreditation**

Some case studies are included to demonstrate how some of these hints and tips emanate from real-life examples using the ingenuity of town centre managers and other champions of the high street.

# Building a Sustainable Partnership



Good town centre management is often dependent on strong partnership. However, strong partnerships are not easy to forge. Funding is often required to ensure the costs of a partnership can be met. Furthermore, the co-operation of different stakeholders is essential but, sometimes these stakeholders can have competing objectives. This section outlines what town centre managers can do to build the foundations for good partnerships, who can govern the high street with the interests of all stakeholders in mind.

# one.

## The Basics - Create a Partnership

Town centres are one of the few locations which are used by every section of the community. To ensure a high level of inclusivity representatives of all town centre user groups should be involved in developing a high street business plan. Representation might come from spheres as diverse as the economic, social, political, cultural, religious or educational. The resulting partnership might include:

- local authorities,
- retailers,
- shopping centre managers,
- landowners,
- employers,
- Chamber of Commerce,
- transport operators,
- the leisure and hospitality sector,
- media,
- police,
- residents,
- charities,
- community groups, and
- other working groups.



## two.

### **Include a Member of the County Council in your Partnership**

Including a member of the County Council in your partnership can have a myriad of benefits, including; partnership access to knowledge on the region, improved decision making, and strategic direction. The involvement of a County Council representative can also be useful when considering the relationship between neighbouring centres.

## three.

### **Form a Membership Scheme**

Membership schemes are being set up with businesses invited to become formal contributors in town centre management partnerships. For an annual fee they buy a share in the town centre management operation with the promise of a return in the form of an increase in forecast cash flow or business cost reductions at levels that exceed their subscription rate. Various incentives and opportunities can be provided but essentially services and discounts are offered which are exclusive to the membership. The service offering for members can differ depending on the needs of each town centre.

The more far-sighted partnerships have focused on ways to engage a broader representation of the business community both financially and by direct involvement via town-wide membership programs.

# four.

## Planning for a Healthy High Street

Evolution is an enduring featuring for many of our high streets. Often, the most positive evolution is that which is managed, grounded by strategic planning. It allows actors on the high street to be pro-active in the light of rapid change which can be forced upon town centres. A plan needs to identify the strategic priorities for a partnership over a 3 to 5 year period.

To write a good plan it will be important to review the internal factors affecting the high street such as resources available, size, character etc... This should be combined with a review of the external environment in order to identify a high street's aims and objectives. For those with little experience of writing business plans, it may be best to follow popular models to help guide the process. Use a 'SWOT' analysis for the internal review. This is a study of the high street's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Use a SLEPT analysis for the external review. This is a study of the Social, Legislative, Economic, Political and Technological factors that are affecting the high street. Finally, ensure all resulting objectives meet the SMART test. This means making sure they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Orientated.

## five.

### Limited Company Status for Partnerships

By using limited company status, a partnership can be formalised and transformed into a legal entity. As well as creating a defined structure, this could have a number of other impacts including expanding the influence and credibility of the partnership and making it eligible for larger funding streams.

## six.

### Form a Business Improvement District

Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, are a great tool for partnerships to raise money to improve the high street, especially in areas where local authorities do not have the resources needed to make the high street as attractive a proposition for consumers and investors as possible. BIDs involve charging businesses within a designated area a negotiated additional supplement on top of their existing business rates. A BID levy is typically compulsory, but can only be legally enforced once a majority of businesses vote to accept the BID's prospectus. This provides a framework for accountability which improves the operations of BIDs.

To make a BID more effective voluntary agreements with property owners could be negotiated. Many will be happy to contribute if the BID proposal is strong because a vibrant high street is also in their interest.

For more information, visit [www.ukbids.org](http://www.ukbids.org).

# seven.

## Building an Evidence Base to Monitor Performance

To be able to improve the performance of your town centre, you first need to construct a picture of what is actually happening. By selecting Key Performance Indicators, such as footfall, vacancy rates or local spend, you can quickly build an evidence base which informs you of the strengths and weaknesses of your town centre. Collecting this data over a number of years can tell you how your town centre is evolving and bring to light interesting trends. Knowing these trends is vital for a strategic approach to town centre management.

The Research Team at Skillsmart Retail regularly prepares and publishes authoritative reports, looking at different issues within retail, often with regional breakdowns. Recent research has included The Impact of Online Trading; Quantifying Perceptions of a Career in Retail; Skills Priorities for the Retail Sector and its Four Nations, as well as a series of regional background briefs. In-depth market intelligence will help you assess the sector as a whole and allow you to plan a way forward for your town.

For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).

# eight.

## Keep in Touch with your Partnership

Continuous engagement with your partnership can help retain cooperation. Make sure you keep in touch with your partnership, especially to communicate your achievements. The media, emails, newsletters, performance panel reports, websites, lunches and meetings are all viable ways of keeping in touch. Ensuring that any dialogue is a two-way process is just as important. Membership surveys are a useful tool of achieving this by providing a feedback outlet.

One way this can be implemented is for the town centre partnership or local authority to have a physical presence on the high street by making the most of otherwise vacant property. Such a presence could act as a first point contact for stakeholders, deal with partnership enquiries face-to-face and even act as a vehicle for the distribution of certain local services.

# nine.

## Attracting Sponsorship

Town centres are good environments for companies to promote themselves. The key is matching specific business objectives to particular projects.

Be aware that companies have different reasons for sponsorship: brand awareness, charitable impulse, a source of customer information, community

and business to business involvement, new product launches, PR benefits, local staff loyalty, customer communication etc...

ten.

## Apply for Funding

Widening the participation of different parts of the community in the high street is a social agenda valued by numerous local, regional, national and international bodies. Consequently, there will be plenty of opportunities to bid for funding where innovative ideas exist to enhance community cohesion.

# case study

## Remaking the Heart of Sheffield's City Centre

This ambitious project was made possible by a creative funding cocktail, which drew £130 million from the Millennium Commission, Central Government and European sources. It was designed to bring a vibrant new focus to Sheffield city centre, attracting jobs and investment through a sea change in the quality and sustainability of the public realm. A series of co-ordinated regeneration works began with the transformation of the city's Peace Gardens, creating an award-winning, busy and beautiful public space that set the tone for additional major improvements to the quality and attractiveness of the Town Hall Square and other central thoroughfares. The project's crowning glory is the spectacular Winter

Garden, a massive, arched, architectural icon which is the largest glasshouse in any European city centre, housing 2,500 exotic plants and supporting social enterprise through a number of associated business starter units.

# eleven.

## Learn from Others

Many town centres share common problems. Meetings and workshops attended by town centre managers, local authorities and elected members provide an environment where people can bounce ideas off each other, learn new approaches and bring fresh impetus to high streets can help to solve these problems.

Although town centre management might be a product of the UK, Britain does not hold a monopoly on progressive ideas to rekindle interest in the high street. Wherever possible Town Centre Managers should look to work with those abroad, through twinning schemes, funded projects or international events to learn about some of the fascinating schemes happening across the globe.

One opportunity for Town Centre Managers to do this is through ATCM's Summer School which takes place every year, bringing together individuals and partnerships in the industry to discuss themes common for many of our high streets.

For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).

# Accessing the High Street



Transport considerations are amongst some of the most important for town centres. With limited amounts of space, busy roads quickly become congested bringing hazards and pollution to open spaces. Yet, car users are a large and profitable market segment thanks to shifts in consumer lifestyles in recent decades. Therefore, town centres have to balance being car friendly with preserving an open, clean and safe environment for cyclists, pedestrians and users of public transport.



# twelve.

## **Borrowing Private Car Parks**

Town centres which struggle to meet the car parking needs of shoppers, could consider borrowing well located parking space from businesses and institutions in times when these organisations are closed. This measure can be used during busy shopping periods such as weekends and Bank Holidays.

# thirteen.

## **Park and Ride**

Park and Ride helps alleviate car-parking pressures in the town centre by promoting commuter parking on edge-of-town and out-of-town sites. This ensures that shoppers parking requirements can be met.

A successful Park and Ride scheme offers customers a suitable alternative to in-town parking. They should be located on the main routes into the town and must be prominently signed. The cost of Park & Ride should be competitive compared with town centre car parks and the service must be frequent.

Park and Ride routes should also be integrated with railway stations and other major public transport interchanges to offer commuters a viable alternative to driving and parking in the centre.

# fourteen.

## Replacing Pay and Display Car Parks with Barrier Operated Systems

A significant percentage of car crime happens in car parks. To improve the security of vehicles, Pay and Display car parks could be replaced by barrier operated ones? This removes the need for car owners to publicly display a return time on the windscreen which opportunist thieves may take advantage of. This also reduces the chances of a vehicle leaving the car park without its owner and their ticket.

Furthermore, if a customer uses Pay and Display they must predict how long their shopping trip will take. An enjoyable visit could be brought to a hasty end to avoid a parking fine which results in loss of income for town centre businesses. A barrier operated system allows the customer greater flexibility.

A barrier operated system would not necessarily incur costs from employing a car park attendant. A “payment on foot” policy where the customer obtains a ticket on arrival and then pays at a self-service machine on their return to the car park removes the need for barriers to be manned.

# fifteen.

## Displaying Real Time Parking Information

Real time electronic parking information, can significantly assist the flow of traffic and lessen customer frustration. These systems could promote alternative car parking as popular and convenient parks reach capacity.

# sixteen.

## Linking a Town Centre Together

Helping people to move around inner town and city centres quickly and easily can be a good way of encouraging visitors and increasing footfall in areas which might not be a regular destination for many. This can be especially helpful in larger centres where people may be put off carrying shopping longer distances.

# case study

## Manchester Metroshuttle



**Manchester city centre is linked together by its free city centre bus service, the Metroshuttle. In operation since 2002, the Metroshuttle consists of three routes that traverse the city centre, linking the city's major thoroughfares and stations with its main commercial, financial and cultural districts.**

**The Metroshuttle is a partnership between the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive, Manchester City Council, National Car Parks and the property developer Allied London, and is partially supported by advertising. The service is completely free and does not require any tickets or passes. It costs approximately £1.2million a year to operate. Similar smaller scale schemes are in operation in nearby Bolton and Stockport.**

**For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).**

# seventeen.

## Unifying Public Transport

A holistic review of public transport followed by genuine integration on everything from infrastructure to branding could offer visitors a viable alternative to the car. A unified transport system for the town centre depends on high levels of cooperation between transport operators but can have a significant affect on convenience for shoppers and commuters.

Transport for London have utilised this method to great effect with the introduction of the Oyster Card – a pay as you go card which can be used to travel on any public transport in London by simply scanning it as you enter and depart stations or vehicles.

The Oyster Card offers cheaper transport than standard fares and makes it easy for people to move around the city without the need for numerous paper tickets. Whilst a scheme of this nature requires significant planning and investment, for larger cities a similar incorporative transport card could be something to consider.

For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).

# eighteen.

## Shopmobility

Shopmobility is a service that can help those who consider themselves to have mobility problems make the most of the town centre experience. Whether a person suffers from a disability, injury or illness, Shopmobility can help them get around a town centre as well as take advantage of the local services on offer. A Shopmobility scheme can work well when integrated with public transport and disabled car parking spaces.

For more information, visit [www.shopmobility.org.uk](http://www.shopmobility.org.uk).

# nineteen.

## Maximising 'Gateway' Opportunities

Bus stations, train stations, car parks and key pedestrian routes into the high street are all gateways to the town centre. Use these entry points to promote what tourist, cultural and retail attractions your town centre has to offer. Town maps and visitor information should be made available at these points.

# Enhancing the Streetscape



The streetscape refers to the physical aspects of public spaces in town centres. While it includes the design and appearance of buildings, there is much more town centre managers, local authorities and elected members can do about the quality of the spaces between buildings and the furniture and equipment that occupies these spaces. There are a number of different components which work together to create a streetscape which ideally will be unique to the town, while also being clean and orderly, avoiding clutter and dereliction. These include landscaping, lighting, paving, planting, public art and effective signposting.

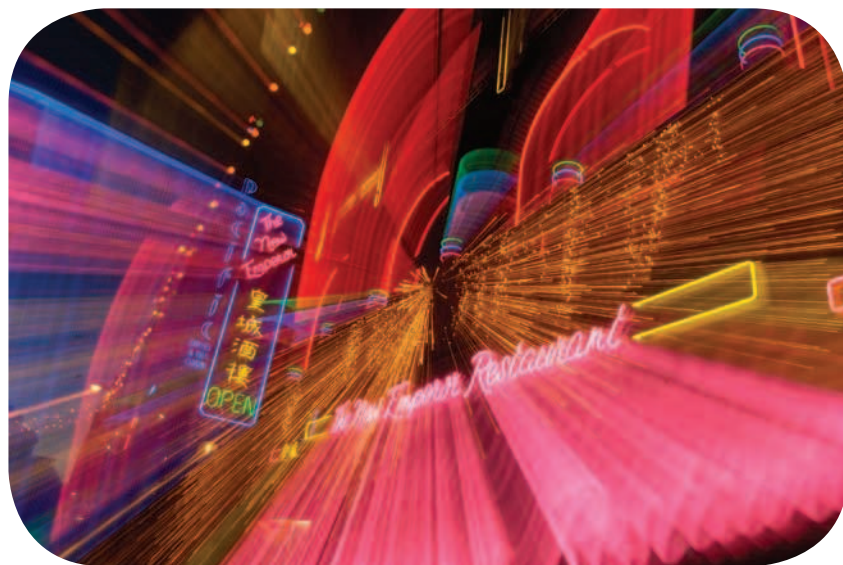
## General Design Guide

**A design guide or streetscape manual for a town centre is desirable. It typically sets out policies and practices for coordinating the design, choice of materials, management criteria and quality of workmanship for a town centre's streets, pavements and public squares. It also brings together the activities of all the different agencies who have a responsibility for delivering a service affecting the appearance of the streets. It is a statement of agreed policies and practices which can infuse some order and strategy into the complex processes by which a streetscape both evolves and is maintained.**



# twenty one.

## Strategy for Illuminating the Public Realm



There are broadly three types of lighting in town centres: street lighting for safety and convenience; decorative lighting for special occasions such as Christmas or Diwali; and public lighting which may be used to accentuate important buildings, spaces or monuments in a more permanent way. The floodlighting of important or interesting buildings is quite common, and normally occurs according to the inclination of the individual owner. However, because architecturally or socially important buildings may not necessarily have owners who are willing or able to undertake a lighting scheme, it is important to develop a public lighting strategy which can add much to the appeal of a town centre at night.

# twenty two.

## Creating Coherent Fascias

Shopfronts are an important part of the streetscape, providing colour and an overall sense of the quality and diversity of a town. In order to create a sense of cohesion, it is important to develop design guidelines to assist building owners and architects. Shopfronts should relate visually to the overall design of the building. Without this, a high street can appear cluttered and advertising signs can obscure the architectural uniqueness of the building. The design of each shopfront may vary, but the presence of consistent elements in every shopfront will create an impression that the street is complete.

# twenty three.

## Pedestrian Signposting

Traffic signs have to conform to national standards governing their colour, size and position, but pedestrian signs do not. Pedestrians also have more time to read street signs which means more scope to make them imaginative and interesting. Good quality street signs look attractive and convey their information easily, often with clear symbols and few words.

Increasingly, towns which have refurbished or upgraded their signposts have sought sponsorship from the private sector, enabling higher quality signs to be purchased in return for the incorporation of a small logo.

# case study

## Capital Streets Project in Edinburgh

The Castle Street project was the first of a series of public realm improvements undertaken through a city centre management Capital Streets project to improve the quality of streets and spaces in order to enhance the city centre experience and generate economic activity. Supported by funding from the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian, the work aimed to increase footfall, whilst improving the amenity of the space for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. A new road surface was laid using granite setts and Caithness flags, along with new street furniture and improved lighting. Power pods were included in the infrastructure to enable activation of the street for events, an essential facility to ensure that enhanced spaces achieve their full potential and reduce opportunities for crime by providing a people-friendly environment.

Castle Street's location within Edinburgh's World Heritage site demanded extensive consultation with conservation bodies, residents and other agencies throughout the city, ensuring that everyone had an opportunity to participate in the design process. The outcome has exceeded expectations, both by creating an extremely attractive streetscape and generating very positive feedback across the spectrum of city centre stakeholders. Controlled vehicular access and the restoration of a quality streetscape has made walking and exploring the whole area a more pleasant and satisfying experience.

# twenty four.

## Streetcare Audits

A streetcare audit identifies what type of improvements are required in the public realm to make it a more attractive and unified place. This could be the removal of unnecessary street signs, graffiti and flyposting, repainting of street furniture and cleansing of underpasses. A streetcare audit can help town centre managers to prioritise which street improvements to undertake first as finite resources usually prohibits all of them being undertaken simultaneously.

# twenty five.

## Removing Clutter

Clutter is a term to describe the affect of redundant street signs and visually discordant objects which collectively define the street scene. Clutter accumulates as pavements collect additional pieces of equipment and signs over time. Clutter has the affect of reducing the individuality of a town centre, making a street scene look confusing and shabby. Clutter cannot be dealt with in a piecemeal fashion, since to remove only one unnecessary object at a time will lack impact. Following a streetcare audit redundant objects could be removed in a 'clutter blitz'.

Clutter ought also to be minimised through the imaginative positioning of

necessary items. For example, it may be possible to attach signs and street lights to buildings, and careful planning can minimise the number of separate street signs.

In circumstances where landowners may be responsible for clutter then local authorities have the power to ensure they are responsible for the clean up of an area under section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. For guidance on this please visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).

## twenty six.

### Installation of 'On-the-Go' Recycling Zones

Recycling is becoming a part of the daily routine for many people. The installation of an On-the-Go Recycling Zone designed for post-consumer waste can provide an image for a town centre that is clean, attractive and environmentally friendly. Although there are costs to installing a recycling zone, service costs associated with traditional landfill activities can be reduced in the long term.

## case study

### Cardiff's Thanksbank

This project was devised by city centre management in association with Cardiff City Council, the Keep Wales Tidy campaign and a range of private sector

partners as an innovative and direct way to engage with the growing population that chooses to live in the city centre. It featured a unique process of recycling, designed specifically to meet the needs of a highly populated area of the city centre. Key locations were chosen to house recycling facilities branded 'Thanksbanks.' A unique circular drum design based around a multi-pole facility, the banks were introduced to high customer flow areas throughout the main shopping parades to encourage recycling by the residents and visitors alike and provide an effective means of collection. The facility and its associated branding campaign has demonstrated increased public awareness of environmental issues generally, as well as promoting the benefits of recycling among city centre residents. As a result, more waste is now recycled than deposited in standard litter bins and recycling in the city centre has increased by 43%.

## twenty seven.

### Window Dressing for Vacant Property

The image of boarded up shops and permanent shutters do not offer positive perceptions of high streets. However, the streetscape does not need to be dogged by boarded up shops, even if there are vacant properties. With the property owner's consent, vacant properties can display high quality images which enliven the streetscape. With additional planning consent, shop windows could be used to display advertising that can bring in a small revenue stream for property owners. The overall result is a high street which avoids the image of run down shops making it a more attractive prospect for those wanting to rent commercial property.

# twenty eight.

## Graffiti Removal Scheme

Graffiti is an illegal and anti-social activity that, in general, can create negative impressions of an area contributing to peoples' perceptions of crime. Belfast City Centre Management launched a novel scheme to help tackle the problem. The scheme offers all property tenants a free graffiti removal kit comprising of graffiti wipes and protective gloves. The idea is that businesses are keen to avoid images associated with graffiti, and so with a little help, will willingly keep their own premises graffiti free. Therefore, the manpower required to keep an entire town centre cleansed of graffiti can be shared resulting in a low cost initiative. Improving the appearance of the area may consequently have a positive effect on visitor numbers and crime perception levels.

# twenty nine.

## Litter Wardens

If litter is a big problem in your town centre, it may be worth considering employing litter wardens. Whilst this type of scheme is generally suited to larger places, smaller areas may find scope for incorporating aspects of the job into existing employee roles. The litter warden patrols the streets, ensuring that both the public and businesses are disposing of waste responsibly. If anyone is caught breaking the law, fixed penalty notices can be issued – in addition, the

presence of litter wardens represents a key deterrent for people who drop litter or illegally dump.

**thirty.**

## **Dedicated Cigarette Bins**

Although not a new development, cigarette bins can be extremely useful for maintaining a clean environment. Most bins are small in size and can be wall mounted, meaning they are discrete and do not act as an eyesore on the public realm. They are fairly cheap to obtain (a standard wall mountable cigarette bin costs in the region of £100), and they will provide years of service thanks to their fire-proof metal construction.

**thirty one.**

## **First Impressions Exercise**

The first impressions exercise has been developed by ATCM as a means of gaining a clear understanding of a town centre's strengths and weaknesses, as seen by other town centre managers. ATCM guide the scheme, matching participating towns and providing templates for evaluation. If you are unsure of how your town is perceived, this could be a good cost-effective way of finding out. It also presents the opportunity for working with other towns and making new contacts.

For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).



# thirty two.

## Improvement of Planting and Floral Displays

Planting in town centres is central to sustainable development and regeneration, introducing seasonal colour to urban settings. Trees can be used to enclose public spaces, providing movement, colour and contrast, and bringing a different quality of light to a street. However, they take time to grow so their affect is not immediate, and young trees are both expensive and vulnerable to vandalism and disease.

Effective planting should take account of the local environment. It is essential that care be taken over the species of trees which are planted since some trees can damage property, block out light and obstruct views as they mature. If well trimmed, trees can also be a visual asset during the winter and therefore should be pruned so as to preserve their basic branch structure.

In the short term, flower baskets can provide splashes of colour throughout town centres during the summer months. It is very important that these are carefully maintained, as neglected baskets quickly start to look unpleasant.

# thirty three.

## Using Public Art

Public art encompasses a wide cross section of physical forms, including sculptures and murals, shop signs and window displays, paving patterns and street furniture. These features can add humour, colour, movement and talking points for a town centre. Art in public places can be figurative or literal, walked through as well as walked around, tactile as well as robust, live and interactive or still and passive, and permanent or temporary.

Successful public art should relate in some way to the setting in which it is placed, contributing to a sense of place by reinforcing existing themes and character. In this way it will be easily accepted, owned and enjoyed by a wide audience of town centre users.

## case study

### Art at the Centre of Reading

This project forms part of Reading Borough Council's 'Art at the Centre' programme, an Arts Council England initiative which aims to involve artists in regenerating the city centre by exploring different ways to influence the spirit of the places in which people live, work and play. Known as 'Dwelling,' the artwork introduces a new element of lighting to stained glass panes installed in the

upper windows of city centre buildings of historical and architectural interest. It draws attention to this element of the city's heritage by using specially made light boxes, each controlled by an astronomical clock to intensify the coloured glass from the street with a consistently bright glow. The effect is to punctuate the area with irregular points of light and colour, providing a permanent piece of public art that links the city's recently restored Museum and Art Gallery with a new mixed use development and adds a unique flavour that will attract visitors and investors alike.

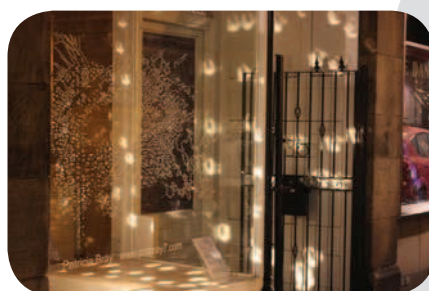
## thirty four.

### Town Trail

Signposts are particularly important for tourists who may be visiting a place for the first time. An effective option for tourists is the creation of a 'town trail', which provides a route through the town calling at the major visitor attractions and heritage sites. This can be marked out either with signposts or with paving stones. In addition to directional signs pointing the way to visitor attractions, heritage plaques which offer a brief explanation of the historical interest of a building or area can enhance both visitor enjoyment and the physical appearance of an area.


# case study

## The Kirkcaldy Art Trail



With the aim of inspiring and encouraging people to visit different areas of the town centre, Fife Council introduced the Kirkcaldy art trail at the beginning of 2010. 'Art in Shop Windows' was a creative initiative which transformed eight empty shop windows in Kirkcaldy town centre into works of art.

Beginning on the intersection between Whytes Causeway and the High Street, the trail went north onto Esplanade before coming full circle onto Hunter Street. An art trail leaflet was produced, providing a map and information on the displays which feature a diverse range of art works, from coloured doilies to a creative display using items washed up along the Kirkcaldy coastline.



**The idea was spearheaded by Fife Council Development Services and a group of local professional artists, Blacksand Contemporary Arts. A temporary drop-in gallery and workshop was created in the middle of the High Street for the duration of the project. This provided a place where the public could meet the artists who have created the artwork in the windows. Art enthusiasts were able to benefit from a tour of the windows by the artists on scheduled days.**

**A series of art based workshops for children and adults were also held over the course of the exhibition. This initiative was consequently very popular with town centre users of all ages.**

# thirty five.

## Alfresco Dining



**In areas with a concentration of bars, cafés, and restaurants with informal arrangements for outdoor dining, why not pool together the resources of local businesses to invest in unified; screening, branding and high quality furniture. By combining these resources with an effort to reduce street nuisances and anti-social behaviour a pleasant and attractive destination for outdoor dining can be created which could prove a key footfall generator during the summer and autumn months.**

# Place Identity, Branding and Experience



We cannot interact with the high street in the same way we interact with a product brought off the shelf. In contrast to an item, every scent, sight and sound contributes to a unique and personal experience on the high street which cannot be standardised. It is impossible for town centre managers to dictate, or predict what type of experience each visitor may have because there are so many disparate elements which make up a high street. This section has a collection of schemes to help champions of the high street do what they can to make every experience a memorable one for all the right reasons.

# thirty six.

## Street Parades and Stage Shows

Although there are a lot of consultative, management, security and practical considerations, creating a carnival atmosphere through Street Parades and Stage Shows on the high street can be a great way for significantly increasing footfall and bringing colour into a town centre. One element to making an open-air parade or show a success is choosing a unique theme which reflects positively on the character and history of the town. Another is to ensure the event meets the needs of the local demographic.

# thirty seven.

## Community Workshops

Hosting workshops on the high street could be a good way of bringing a community together. By using themes of interest to specific communities, for example local heritage, ethnic cookery or workshops for kids, then a great deal of interest could be developed. There may be some businesses on the high street who would be willing to lend their premises to such a good cause, especially if this reflects well on the image of the business as well as the image of the town centre as a whole.



# case study

## Wood Green: International Short Film Festival

Wood Green in north London needed an event to change its image and win more positive press. As a film fan and filmmaker the town centre manager thought the best way to achieve this would be through the magic of cinema, and in 2003 the Wood Green International Short Film Festival was launched as a one-day event. By year three it was selling out within minutes of opening and now attracts short films from all over the world.

Film festivals have traditionally taken place in more affluent places, but in previous years economically depressed Wood Green has now proved the potential for an initiative to both change local perceptions and become a highly respected international event in its own right. This success is reflected in the number of external partners wanting to take part now and in the future.

For more information, visit [www.woodgreenfilmfestival.co.uk](http://www.woodgreenfilmfestival.co.uk).

# thirty eight.

## Entertaining the Kids

In the spirit of being welcoming to all, town centre managers and local authorities must remember that an adult's experience of the high street is not the only one that is important. Kids are the decision makers of the future and entertaining them

will do wonders for drawing in young families. There are plenty of imaginative events which could be hosted to keep children occupied.

## case study

### Easter Hops – Jump into Poole this Easter

Poole Town Centre Management brought together a wide range of partners from the public sector, private sector and the faith community to organise and promote a unique Easter celebration, incorporating entertainment and themed decorations. “Easter Hops” was designed as a free family event, centred on the creation of an ‘urban zoo’ with rabbits, new born lambs, guinea pigs and baby chicks. A large marquee was installed in a main shopping and entertainment square. The whole area was decorated in yellow and green garlands and floral displays around the town followed the chosen colour template of yellow, white, green and orange.

An Easter Continental Market was staged on the High Street and several supplementary events were organised around the town, including appearances by Scooby Doo and Angelina Ballerina, an Easter Bunny Hunt, an Easter arts project for children and performances by the brass section of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. By working closely with Churches Together in Poole, the events were linked to a number of religious celebrations and services. As well as promoting local arts and culture, the event delivered a marked improvement in footfall. Town centre counters showed that 500,000 people passed on to the High Street over the two-week event period compared with an average 300,000

for a typical fortnight. The local shopping centre recorded a 4.6% rise in footfall over the Easter week.

## thirty nine.

### Reversing Decline of Existing Markets

The market is one of the oldest forms of retailing and the origin of many of today's high streets. Although they have been a cornerstone of retailing for hundreds of years, many traditional markets are suffering from a lack of investment and nurturing. Not only do town centre managers need to ensure that the highest calibre of entrepreneurs are running markets but also that basic infrastructure is provided where necessary such as toilet facilities, credit card payment systems and refrigeration for fresh produce.

## forty.

### Introduction of New Markets

Far from being in decline, there are many new markets which have become gems of the retail sector, encouraging high footfall and astonishing growth rates. These small businesses are as diverse and as innovative as the people who run them. The UK is now home to a selection of farmers, craft, ethnic, continental and other specialist markets which add colour to the high street. By introducing new, well managed markets an extra dimension can be added to

**your retail offer.**

**The strategic positioning of new markets can be used to bring footfall to areas of the town centre that do not traditionally get as many visitors, enticing people to explore what the town centre has to offer off the beaten track. This could make better use of public spaces in areas outside of the retail core that do not receive the same footfall levels as more prominent locations.**

# case study

## Barking's African Showcase



African Showcase is a London-based market festival that travels from borough to borough, presenting and promoting a variety of African art and culture including textiles, fashion, the visual arts, dance and food. Recently they have built a strong working relationship with Barking and Dagenham Town Centre Management, who they feel support the concept and have provided both physical and financial support. It is based on the traditional African concept of the 'Market Square', featuring a day of trading and celebration that would have been attended by all of the neighbouring townspeople. As well as the market stalls, a central stage features entertainment from bands to fashion shows. Barking and Dagenham is home to communities from all over the world and the council believes that holding international markets is an excellent way of celebrating those communities. A programme of speciality events including

French and Italian markets has been held since 2004, and the African Showcase was a response to the large and growing African community in the borough.

## forty one.

### Introduction of a Crèche

Young families may be put off visiting the high street because of the inconvenience of navigating their way around with children. Yet, a key remit of the high street is to be inclusive. By making a crèche available, ensuring it is well managed and promoted, those with young families could be tempted to the high street giving the town centre access to an important market segment and allowing parents to enjoy the town centre experience knowing their children are well looked after.

## forty two.

### Visible Collection Boxes

Aggressive begging can be a particularly difficult problem for town centres to face. On the one hand there is a desire to make a visitor feel as safe and secure as possible while, on the other, not losing sight of the genuine hardships disadvantaged people such as the homeless, face. One approach to this is to use visible collection boxes on the high street. If the money collected is distributed by local charities in the right way, to those whom it is intended, then aggressive begging can be greatly reduced.

It is important that the people who will be relied on to contribute are informed

of where the money is going and how this helps to make the high street a better place.

## forty three.

### Charitable Donations

A charitable high street can foster goodwill amongst local communities and many other stakeholders. Not only can donations reflect well on the character and image of a town centre but there have also been examples where people have been willing to contribute more to the high street, (both in time and money) because the high street itself represents a worthy cause.

One good way of directly linking customer spend to charitable donations is through a loyalty card system whereby a small percentage of revenue is earmarked for a cause of the town's choosing.

## forty four.

### Creating a Sense of Place through Narratives

Creating narratives for your town can invoke a sense of place. Narratives for your town could be based on anything from history to heritage, from local celebrities to famous local inventions, from grand architecture to the natural landscape. You cannot rely solely on the development of an interesting narrative but must

**also find an imaginative way for your town centre to convey the story. A place story can be brought to life through plaques, monuments, art or on-line media. This could be developed using ideas from residents, schools, community groups and artists.**



# case study

## Broad Street's Walk of the Stars



In January 2007 the idea for the Birmingham Walk of Stars was conceived as a Hollywood style pavement attraction, to honour Birmingham's homegrown stars and to raise the profile of the Broad Street BID. In order to make a credible impact the scheme needed some famous names, but rather than installing a number of plaques in one go it was felt by all partners that the scheme would have a stronger 'uniqueness' and long term potential if each star attended an individual ceremony. Rock musician Ozzy Osbourne and comedian Jasper Carrott were approached, and following negotiations to outline the scheme's credibility dates were agreed for them to appear at their own Walk of Stars induction ceremonies in July and September 2007. These were attended jointly by over 20,000 people, with over 100 worldwide media present.

The outcome was a spectacular event independently assessed as having a media value of £1.72M. The Walk of Stars has become a popular attraction in Birmingham city centre and presents something very different from Broad

**Street's usual offering of late night drinking establishments.**

**For more information, visit [www.walkofstars.net](http://www.walkofstars.net).**

# **forty five.**

## **Web 2.0**

**Web 2.0 is the name given to a new era in on-line activity. No longer is the Internet just a forum which institutions can talk to people. Web 2.0 means even those Internet users with little technical knowledge can talk back, talk to each other and be heard. For a high street it means the creation of brand identities are longer the sole preserve of the town centre manager as conversations across the Internet can overpower any formal co-ordinated marketing campaigns. This is a great challenge for town centre managers but also a great opportunity for those who can embrace the technology and lead the conversation.**

**Social networking on the Internet means you can open a dialogue with all kinds of stakeholders from major investors to individual consumers, keeping them informed and being kept informed of a range of developments and opinions. Web 2.0 can mobilise social opinion and social action for the good of the high street.**

**Activists in the town of Dunstable have been influential in this respect, creating Facebook and Twitter accounts which supporters are invited to join. Updates are linked to the Dunstable website, meaning multiple platforms are kept up to**

date constantly, which in turn keeps the public informed of developments in the town. In turn, public opinion on specific events or on the town in general can be garnered informally, acting as a very cost effective form of market research. Facebook, Twitter and many other social networking tools are free to set up, and require minimal technical knowledge, yet their value can be great.

For more information, visit [www.longlivedunstable.com](http://www.longlivedunstable.com).

## forty six.

### Communicate your Achievements

Communicating achievements is a key part of ongoing success, and allows you to build on previously generated good publicity. If you are finding it difficult to generate the right publicity in the right places, including a representative from the local media on your steering group is a good way of ensuring that information regarding your successes is communicated as widely as possible.

# forty seven.

## **Make a Town Centre an Attractive Proposition for Residents**

**It can be easy to forget that a town centre is not just about shopping, café culture and the evening economy. With the right kind of development it can also be a great place to live, bringing people to the heart of the action. By remembering to ensure that your town centre is as viable for residents as it is for consumers then a lot could be achieved. Each resident, with the high street on their doorstep is likely to make the most of local services, insulating your town centre against the threat of out-of-town developments and internet shopping.**

**The ‘Managing District Centres in Northwest Europe’ project has highlighted how residents can be made to feel ‘at home’ in a town centre. Participants, Hagen City Council, based in the Northwest Germany, appointed a co-ordinator of residential services to ensure dwellers had access to whatever they needed. The co-ordinator acts as a caretaker on behalf of the town centre residents ensuring they have a first point of contact for any problems they may encounter.**

**For more information, visit [www.district-management.eu](http://www.district-management.eu).**

# Attracting New People and Businesses to the High Street and Keeping the Old Ones



**The wealth of commercial destinations available today means it is no longer enough to expect people to turn up on the high street. Effort has to go into getting the basics right to make any high street the primary destination for people and business. There are many schemes that can act as the building blocks to constructing a viable place for people to trade, employ and reside. Here are a select few.**

# forty eight.

## Developing a General Town Centre Website

The rapid growth of the Internet means having a functional, visually pleasing and user friendly website is a basic requirement for the marketing effort of all town centres. This can transform your town centre from one that is promoted to a few thousand people locally, to a global brand.

A website can be used to keep people up-to-date with the services on offer and special events taking place. Businesses can contribute to the costs of building and maintaining the website through advertising. A good website would even allow businesses to keep their own offers up-to-date through a modern 'Content Management System' which could reduce staffing costs. This would provide each business with a unique login so they could up-date their own section of the website.

# forty nine.

## Virtual Tour of the High Street

A user's interaction with a town centre on-line can be increased through a virtual tour. This allows users to view 3D images of the town centre to simulate walking down the high street, entering shops and leisure facilities.

The costs of developing a virtual tour can be reduced by allowing businesses to gain a greater prominence on the site in return for financial contributions. Furthermore, property owners could be asked to contribute in return for virtual tours in vacant units, allowing them to promote their property effectively.

**fifty.**

## **On-Line Town Centre Shopping**

One of the biggest challenges facing the high street is Internet retailing which is widely assumed to have latent growth potential. Town centres may be able to combat this by pooling together resources to offer a home delivery service on the behalf of all locally based businesses. With unified branding, a dedicated on-line shopping portal and investment in high quality infrastructure and management to allow for home delivery, town centres can meet the challenges of Internet retailing head on.

**fifty one.**

## **Free Wi-Fi Hotspots**

Whether for personal, leisure or business reasons, many people want to have continuous connectivity to the World Wide Web, even when on the move. Increasingly, it is seen as vital for the 21st century town centre to offer this through dedicated Wi-Fi hotspots. This could give town centres a competitive

edge over other commercial centres as Internet access is becoming an important part of the decision making process for the choice of destination for individuals and businesses.

**fifty two.**

## **Town Centre Loyalty Card**

Due to technological progression loyalty cards are growing more sophisticated in delivering a flexible offer. Town centres now have the capacity to bring together all providers of consumer services to offer a loyalty card that rewards customers with discounts for shopping locally. These discounts can be varied depending on the level and frequency of spend. Businesses can retain the ability to dictate the levels of discounts offered by their individual stores through rented card readers.

Loyalty cards can encourage repeat shopping visits in many other ways, not just discounts from shops. Through the use of a bonus points system, loyalty card users could be given discounts on car parking, public transport, sporting or cultural events. This could be a useful way of linking town centre shopping with other amenities which allow visitors to benefit from a wider and much more convenient experience of the high street.

The town centre of Dundalk has harnessed the possibilities offered by the modern day loyalty card through a gift card scheme. To find out more about this initiative please visit [www.dundalktccm.ie](http://www.dundalktccm.ie).



# fifty three.

## Empty Property Scheme

In areas where vacancy rates are high during downturns in the economy there is a need to bring property owners and entrepreneurs together to create a scheme where both stakeholders can be protected long-term. During a recession newer businesses, especially ones with higher start up costs, will be priced out of the market stifling economic recovery. Meanwhile, property owners will suffer a double hit, paying rates on empty properties, plus a fall in the value of vacant units as this value is dependent on rental income.

An Empty Property Scheme could persuade high street property owners to rent long-term vacant properties at a set discounted rate (for example 20% of the advertised market value), for a short-term period of up to three years. When this time frame elapses, tenants are given the first refusal of leasing the unit at full market value. By this time, if the rental market has recovered the property owner can be confident of leasing in much more favourable conditions.

During the short-term tenancy, the new business would have been given time to develop with a lower cost base providing it with a much better chance of long-term survival. For the property owner, not only are rates paid for by the tenant during the length of the contract but the temporary nature of the short tenancy contract as an 'inducement' means there is no fall in the book value of the property. An Empty Property Scheme during difficult economic conditions

can support long-term financial viability.

Such a scheme has been launched by the Mayor of London for businesses and property owners in the capital city. 'London New Enterprise' not only offers a boost to the city's economy but could also serve as a template for other local authorities to utilise. For more information on London New Enterprise visit [www.londonnewenterprise.co.uk](http://www.londonnewenterprise.co.uk).

**fifty four.**

## Offering Incubator Units

There are many institutions around the UK transforming available space into incubator units for entrepreneurs to build their businesses with the assistance of low cost office space. Organisations in and around the town centre could do the same including shopping centres, office blocks and universities. New businesses with low start-up costs could one day flourish and become fresh sources of employment and the cornerstones of the local economy for a town centre.

**fifty five.**

## Community Ownership of Businesses

In smaller centres, there will inevitably not be as many local services available. Every service takes on a greater role in binding a community together. During

tough economic conditions, operating certain services may be too much of a burden for a sole trader and not an attractive proposition for larger businesses. Regardless such services remain fundamental to the functioning of that community. In these circumstances the potential exists for the community to share the burden of running its own business, whether it be a pub, a post office or a leisure centre. If the service offers an important social function, then social models of ownership may be more sustainable in the long-term.

**fifty six.**

## **Temporary Pop-up Services**

Temporary businesses can be set-up (and taken down again) in order to create a stir on the high street. Bars, cafes, restaurants, art galleries or even shops could be opened using temporary units such as stalls or could even, with a property owner's permission, occupy vacant units in return for pop-up owners helping to meet the costs of rates.

As temporary businesses, risk is not so much of a factor for entrepreneurs. With low overheads they are able to experiment with service offerings providing an opportunity for more creative and daring businesses to capture people's imagination. As the hype settles and the novelty wanes the temporary business could disappear and be replaced with something new. With the right mix of fascinating pop-ups it could also be a key footfall driver. Low property costs could make this something to be considered in times of recession.

The temporary pop-up could also be used as a form of incubator to hone the management talents of potential entrepreneurs allowing them to continuously experiment with new offers. By working in partnership with the Jobcentre Plus, pop-up businesses could provide short, bite-sized learning experiences for managers, employees and those seeking pre-employment training. Similar enterprises have been piloted as part of the National Skills Academy for Retail by members in Sheffield and Birmingham and have proved successful.

## **fifty seven.**

### **Entrepreneurial Competition for Incubator Space**

Expanding on the idea of incubator space for young businesses, implementing an open, competitive process can have many benefits. Firstly, the quality of entrepreneurs given the opportunity to benefit from low cost space to trade is likely to be higher. Secondly, by working with the local media, positive publicity can be achieved raising awareness of efforts to support business development in the guise of something like 'Dragon's Den' or 'The Apprentice'. Thirdly, by involving property owners who are having difficulty with leasing a number of units, an agreement could be negotiated whereby they offer the incubator space in return for publicity which helps them to promote other units.

Such a scheme is being successfully implemented in a number of places including a partnership between The Mall and the National Skills Academy for Retail. With 20 shopping centres across England and Scotland, including Lakeside and The

**Metrocentre, The Mall is the largest specialist owner and operator of retail space in the UK. Its Make Your Mark in Retail competition is designed especially for any small retail business hoping to grow with one business benefiting from six months free trading in one of its shopping centres each year. As well as free trading space, the winner receives free business banking for two years, access to a business relationship manager, a place on a National Skills Academy for Retail masterclass and a ticket to the Oxford Summer School. Retailers on your high street may want to think about entering future competitions.**

**A similar competition for market traders is also being co-ordinated by the Retail Markets Alliance called Make Your Market for Markets in which trading facilities are available free for six months for successful applicants.**

**For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).**

## **fifty eight.**

### **Building Upon Existing Footfall Generators**

**Footfall generators are the magnets that draw people into a town centre, such as late-night shopping, cinemas, theatres, restaurants, pubs and clubs, sports centres and bingo halls. Once people have been drawn in, it is important that key attractions are supported by a wide range of complimentary services that make people want to stay, and visit again. This could include promotional initiatives with special offers linking together a series of activities. For example, discounts could be offered to cinema goers who decide to include a trip to a wine bar or restaurant with their film.**

# fifty nine.

## Branding Elements of your Town Centre

Many town centres may have existing strengths which themes can be developed around. These strengths can have huge potential for the focusing of branding and marketing, not just to regular visitors but also to a much wider market. It may be that a particular street or area of the town centre can in itself be branded as a destination if it is renowned for a specific offer which is a footfall driver.

## case study

### Style Birmingham

This project was designed to promote Birmingham's official status as the 'best shopping destination in the UK outside London's West End' through a high quality fashion offer that would inspire customers to make repeated and more frequent visits. Led by Retail Birmingham, a city centre partnership working group comprising all major shopping centres, department stores, major retailers and markets, Style Birmingham aimed to elevate fashion from the pavements of the city centre onto the catwalk. It was built around three distinct, closely linked elements: a dedicated website at [www.stylebirmingham.com](http://www.stylebirmingham.com), a high quality magazine, distributed to 100,000 target homes in the city's wider catchment area and Style Birmingham: The Show - a professionally produced catwalk event that showcased the best of Birmingham's fashion offer – from designer

outfits and exclusive handmade jewellery to high street fashion on a budget.

A highly effective publicity campaign led to a sell-out event for the show generating more than six times the original investment by the city centre partnership and a media return of more than sixteen times the investment. A huge success in its own right, Style Birmingham has also delivered an extremely positive message about the city as a whole with its innovative approach that presented new talent and 'Made in Birmingham' alongside luxury brands from Harvey Nichols and Selfridges.

**sixty.**

## Marketing with Neighbouring Town Centres

For town centre partnerships with limited marketing and promotional resources the option of working with nearby town centres may be an attractive one. The Rhonda Cynon Taff area in South Wales is a good example of this. Eight town centres in the area took a joined-up approach to their marketing effort, creating a comprehensive response to competition from other nearby towns and out-of-town shopping outlets.

Another benefit of working with nearby centres is that it can be useful for adding weight to any proposals for sponsoring, funding or investment.

# sixty one.

## Turning Empty Shops into Temporary Art Galleries

One way of keeping empty units active and lively until a new tenant moves in is to install temporary art galleries. These galleries present the opportunity for local artists to feature their work in prominent locations, engaging the public whilst contributing to the vitality of the town centre, which would otherwise be adversely affected by the empty shops. By creating a partnership often involving agents, landlords and artists, this type of scheme can have a really strong impact in towns of any size.



# sixty two.

## Getting the Right Mix of Businesses



Whatever short-term trends may affect the high street, planning for the right mix of businesses is an important long-term consideration. Town centre managers, local authorities and elected members must carefully consider what use is allocated to property, reviewing the ratio of everything from retail stores to banks, restaurants to take-aways or even night clubs to charity shops. Their location in primary, secondary and tertiary areas must also be taken into account. If the mix is right then a vibrant and profitable high street can be created which, to some extent, is recession proof.

The difficulty here is that there is no set template for the mix of businesses which can be suggested. Factors such as customer profiles, market segmentation and your high street's positioning within the region will all impact on the appropriate mix of businesses. What should remain true for any high street is that a long-term plan is in place and is flexible enough to accommodate natural evolution.

# sixty three.

## Cheque Book Promotion

**This scheme involves the creation of an exclusive ‘cheque book’ which is designed to encourage more shoppers to the town centre by providing a range of special offers from local retailers. Cheques bearing details of individual offers are produced by town centre traders and incorporated into a cheque book. The book is then distributed free of charge to local residents and employers.**

**When a cheque book promotion was introduced by Woking Town Centre Management it triggered a significant increase in footfall and retail sales which helped to change a declining trend in visitor numbers among residents and encouraged more shopping by commuters. The idea, which was entirely self-funded by the participating retailers, quickly created a buzz and generated a spirit of partnership among local businesses, who, by working together were able to create a valuable, varied and successful offer.**

# sixty four.

## Using Evidence to Promote your Town Centre to Investors

For a business to benefit from the impetus provided by investors it will usually be asked to present a well researched business plan. Town centre managers, local authorities and elected members need to be able to provide details such as demographics, spend, local trends and the strategic direction of the town centre in order to entice major investment. The selection of relevant key performance indicators and the building of a strong evidence base will be important for this. Not only will having this knowledge help to encourage desired investment, but it will also help town centre managers identify which developments are not in the best interest of the high street.

It is also a good idea to keep a property register listing all the available commercial space together with details of its size, managing agent and rent, to support the attraction of businesses interested in moving into the area.

# case study

## Building Market Share in Belfast



**This project was designed to provide robust economic facts, figures and campaigns for key development stakeholders in the private and public sectors, reflecting Belfast's major retail-led renaissance which will see the transformation of the city's retail core over the next fifteen years. A Retail Inward Investment Guide was produced detailing market size, age and expenditure profile, retail offer and diversity, national rankings, retail yields and vacancy, retail investment opportunities and footfall counts, along with a map locating development sites. DTZ Pinda were commissioned to compile the Belfast Retail Healthcheck & Benchmarking Report, which measures and tracks the city's performance and progress against similar sized UK cities and identifies areas for action to further improve performance.**

Retail led regeneration has been identified as a major opportunity for economic growth in the city centre. The Market Share project has been developed to support this potential and includes the creation of a Retail Sales Index, a Retail Gap Analysis to identify European Brands not represented in Belfast and a £20,000 investment in computerised footfall cameras in prime retail areas. The Retail Inward Investment Guide has been pivotal in promoting Belfast at numerous trade shows throughout the UK and Europe. Initial successes have included the Spanish giant Mango's new store in Donegall Place, and the arrival of UK retailers Jane Norman and La Senza, Dune, Quicksilver, Supercuts and Trade Secrets in Castle Court.

## sixty five.

### Distribution of Shopping Guides to Households

Often, potential visitors living within the catchment of a town centre may not be aware of the unique products, services and experiences on offer. It might help to distribute a guide of the town centre featuring the unique aspects of a shopping experience or cultural activities on the high street. Costs can be shared by businesses that wish to be featured in the publication with unique businesses that may act as footfall drivers being subsidised.

# sixty six.

## Know your Consumers

Before considering the direction of any marketing campaign, it is vital that the target audience is identified and defined. The make up of the customer base of your town centre, both geographically and demographically, can be ascertained in a number of ways. Existing research including retail studies, visitor surveys, shopper surveys, housing and demographic analysis, can all be used as sources of valuable information. If this material is unavailable to you, it could be worth considering carrying out your own research. Once you know who your consumers are, you will be better placed to appeal to them.

# sixty seven.

## Auction

An auction can have many benefits for a town centre. While its primary purpose is to raise funds for the high street, an auction can meet other needs. It can be a fun activity for communities to participate in. It also, acts as a showcase for the businesses who get involved. In return for contributing goods and services to the auction, businesses can thrive on the subsequent media attention and consumer interest emanating from bidding wars. Thanks to these contributions auctions can be held at a low cost.

# case study

## Mansfield Christmas Auction

An auction conducted in partnership between Mansfield Town Centre Management, the local authority, the media and retailers was designed to raise funds for the town's Christmas lights by selling a wide range of goods and services pledged by local businesses. Auction lots including a second-hand Porsche, a London weekend theatre break, pizza delivery, plastering and painting services, beauty treatments and hotel rooms were previewed in the Chad newspaper before the local radio station, Mansfield 103.2, ran the day-long auction live on air. Bidding was brisk and a total of £23,000 was raised between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. All newspaper space, radio airtime, goods and services and staff time were given free of charge, proving that the concept can be easily adapted by towns of all types and size. It demands effort and goodwill but virtually no cash outlay.

# The Safe and Secure High Street



**As a hub of social, political and economic activities, the town centre is a central point for many. Unfortunately this can attract undesired activities that threaten otherwise healthy high streets and damage people's perceptions of the town centre. A lack of safety and security can be enough to force businesses to trade elsewhere and shoppers to buy elsewhere. However, successful efforts are being mounted across the country to improve the safety and security of all town centre users. Here are some of them.**



# sixty eight.

## **Creating a Retail Specific Crime Reduction Partnership**

**Retail crime is a great challenge for the high street. Retailers doing their best to make merchandise attractive and accessible to genuine customers simultaneously become vulnerable to theft. Far from being a victimless crime, it increases the insurance premiums for retailers with costs being passed on to consumers. In a sector where profit margins are traditionally tighter than other sectors, crime can be the difference between a profitable shop and a vacant unit.**

**Retail specific crime reduction partnerships have gained popularity because of this. As all shop owners are faced with a common challenge, town centre managers have found it possible to foster cooperation between businesses, police and local authorities, each contributing what they can. These contributions go into infrastructure for information sharing, data recording and the apprehension of offenders.**

# case study

## Cynon Valley Business Crime Reduction Partnership

This partnership between the local authority, police and businesses was established to reduce crime and the fear of crime in Aberdare town centre, with a particular focus on cutting violence in the night-time economy. A business crime coordinator was appointed, enabling information on crimes and criminals to be shared between all partners on a regular basis. The use of photographs of target criminals soon led to arrests and an exclusion scheme being set up to bar offenders from members' premises. The project now encompasses many fee-paying businesses, whose contributions have paid for a radio link system and enabled the launch of a safe child scheme. Night economy initiatives, including a successful application for Home Office funding for high visibility policing and the purchase of unbreakable plastic glasses for town centre pubs and clubs made a significant contribution to reducing violence over the festive season.

# sixty nine.

## Working with your Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

It is rare that offenders discriminate against potential victims. Depending on circumstance and opportunity, anyone can find themselves the target of crime. As such, there is great merit to linking high street specific crime reduction

partnerships with existing partnerships covering wider areas. The offenders that plague the high street could also threaten surrounding neighbourhoods and residential areas. Sharing information could be a mutually beneficial activity. Sharing learning experiences and best practice could also be of great use.

**seventy.**

## **ShopWatch Scheme**

ShopWatch is an initiative that unites the police, the retail industry and government to help make shops and town centres safer.

The way it works is shop staff volunteer as ShopWatch Special Constables and carry out patrols during some of their working hours, acting as additional eyes and ears for the police. Their presence seeks to actively deter theft and fraud and discourage anti-social behaviour, as well as offering additional reassurance for shoppers. The other advantage is that when staff return to undertaking their daily roles in-store they will benefit from a wide range of transferable, security based skills they have picked up. Skills like assertiveness, conflict resolution, leadership, confidence and management could be useful in difficult circumstances.

# seventy one.

## PubWatch Scheme

PubWatch is a community based crime prevention scheme for licensed premises. It is organised by the licensees themselves to afford each other confidence and support, as well as some form of protection. The scheme, at its simplest, is a message-passing link between licensees, the object of which is to combat violence and other criminal conduct. It also provides better communication between licensees and police and provides a forum for the discussion and solution of problems relating to violence on licensed premises.

# seventy two.

## Community Alcohol Partnerships

Community Alcohol Partnerships aim to tackle the problems caused by underage access to alcohol through cooperation between alcohol retailers and local stakeholders, such as Trading Standards, police, local authority licensing teams, schools and health networks. Central to the operation of CAPs is the sharing of information between partners to combat the purchase and possession of alcohol by those under 18, coupled with rigorous enforcement of laws designed to tackle anti-social behaviour. A total of twelve schemes are now in operation in England and Scotland.

# seventy three.

## Retail Radio Link

With the creation of a dedicated frequency, radios can become a useful tool for linking together the members of a crime reduction partnership. This hands the initiative to those working to reduce anti-social behaviour including retailers, licensees, door staff, police and CCTV control rooms who are able to instantly share information on related events in real time.

A scheme can be set up whereby local businesses can rent the necessary audio equipment in order to play their part which could provide the foundation for something financially sustainable.

# seventy four.

## Using On-Line Technology for Real-Time Crime Tracking

When an offender has been apprehended, details of the offender could be stored electronically, so all members of a scheme remain informed of the latest criminal activity. This allows members to identify potential criminals.

With developments in web 2.0 technology, websites can easily be kept up-to-date. This makes displaying real-time crime information for your town centre

possible allowing retailers to be aware of spates of criminal activity as they happen, encouraging vigilance.

## seventy five.

### Re-Deployable CCTV Capability

CCTV has been useful for defusing crime hotspots. However, criminal activity is often just displaced to other remote locations. Re-deployable CCTV means the cameras can be relocated so that crime hotspots can be tracked.

## seventy six.

### CCTV Video Analytics

CCTV with output which is not monitored is effective in viewing historic events following a crime but less useful in early prevention. However, labour cost to monitor CCTV output is expensive, and not likely to yield positive results if many cameras are monitored by one person.

One solution is the use of video analytics which uses artificial intelligence to flag up unusual behaviour in an environment. Whilst this method does have limitations, particularly in busy environments, when deployed in the right areas it can be very effective and reduce costs.

# seventy seven.

## Making Crime Reduction Visible

Sometimes the fear of crime is a bigger problem than crime itself. Perceptions can often lag behind reality leaving town centre managers, local authorities and elected members with the challenge of convincing people their high street is safe. Town centre managers can therefore, do much to bring people back into the high street by making crime reduction visible through media, on-line communications and newsletters.

## case study

### Rochdale's Safer Communities Strategy

This wide ranging project led by Rochdale Town Centre Management has been designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime under the banner, Everyone is Safe and feels safe. By working with the borough council, police, safer communities and regeneration partnerships, an impressive list of initiatives have been delivered and publicised in the media to ensure a positive impact on public perceptions.

Some of the initiatives introduced include:

- Talking signs placed around the town centre which give warning and reassurance

- **Dispersal orders and high visibility patrols introduced**
- **Subway murals introduced to enhance perceptions of safety and local pride**
- **A magazine distributed to 30,000 people informing them of what business is doing to combat crime**
- **Local press advertising employed to promote safe venues**
- **Plaques sited around the town centre to remind visitors that the town has received a Safer Business Award in recognition of its combined initiatives**
- **Monthly town centre columns in the local newspaper to promote activity**

**This determined and sustained drive to promote successful crime reduction measures generated considerable public interest and added to the town centre as a whole. Specific achievements include increased footfall in the newly cleaned and decorated central areas, enhanced pride of place and increased turnover among town centre businesses.**

# seventy eight.

## **Community Wardens**

**Using the shared resources of a crime reduction partnership, community wardens in high visibility jackets can be employed during times when crime and anti-social behaviour is most likely to occur. So long as they are visible, then they can have a positive impact on a town centre user's perception of safety and deter potential offenders. They can also act as liaisons, being a first response to reports of crime and ensuring the local police force are kept fully**



informed of criminal activity.

## seventy nine.

### Member Exclusion Scheme

Statistics show that thefts from shops are conducted by a small number of repeat offenders. By using a Members Exclusion Scheme many high streets have found they are able to significantly reduce offences such as shoplifting. This involves the identification of offenders who are caught in the act, maybe by CCTV, and ensuring they are excluded from the premises of all members who participate in the scheme.

## eighty.

### Safety Scheme for Lost Children

Promoting the safety of children by reuniting them with their parents could do a lot to put the minds of young families at rest. During busy shopping periods where it is easy for children to lose their parents, participating shops can be used as meeting points. 'Caring traders' could provide lost children with a place to stay until they are reunited with their family.

This idea was implemented in Weston town centre where free child wristbands have been circulated. Each wristband bears two emergency contact numbers

specific to the child. Each 'caring trader' can be identified through relevant promotional material and branding in the shop window.

You could look up information on Safe Child Schemes on the website of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).

# eighty one.

## Penalty Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices

Penalty notices and fixed penalty notices are both ways of deterring anti-social behaviour with wardens or the local police being able to issue fines. Fixed penalty notices are typically used for litter offences while penalty notices apply to disorders. Failure to pay a fine would result in court action with a significant increase in that fine becoming likely.

It is important that genuine repeat offenders are carefully targeted using such a scheme as there is the potential for bad publicity if the wrong person is issued with a notice or taken to court. If used appropriately, it can help to curb the behaviour of those who can make a town centre unwelcoming without the level of bureaucracy involved in pushing for criminal convictions.

# The Evening and Night-time Economy



**Versatility can be the making of a great town centre. An arena that poses a big challenge in achieving versatility is a transition that takes place everyday from the day-time economy to the evening economy. With this shift, the uses of the town centre change dramatically with individuals and businesses shifting their needs accordingly. While it can be difficult to cope with many of the changes, the basics remain the same. A town centre must strive to offer a clean, safe, vibrant and engaging environment for different types of people. Here, you can find a number of schemes to make this a possibility during the evening and night-time.**

# eighty two.

## Planning for the Evening

**It is important to plan for the evening economy. In the context of current legislation, with the help of evening economy businesses, local police, transport operation and CCTV provision, it is vital to understand how anti-social behaviour can be minimised whilst ensuring the town centre encourages a vibrant night scene.**

**A detailed and achievable plan which draws on a town centre's strengths and weaknesses in the evening must be developed and implemented in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.**

# eighty three.

## Managing the Transition between Day and Night



**A shift between day and night-time activities bring a number of problems for town centres. As the business day ends and a large flux of workers simultaneously make the commute home pressure is placed on transport infrastructure causing congestion and pollution. This is compounded by lost opportunities for town centre businesses as there is a lull in activity on the high street until the evening economy gathers pace. With careful planning, the transition from day to evening can be a profitable duration for the high street. Ideas such as working with retailers to agree later closing times could entice many town centre workers to stay in the centre a little longer, cutting congestion at peak times and increasing custom for the retail and service sectors.**

**Hosting a range of activities with the help of leisure and hospitality sectors could also be positive in increasing activity on the high street during a period when it can be quiet.**

# eighty four.

## Promotion of Late Night Transport

The lack of frequent, efficient and safe public transport late at night, or at least the perception thereof, could be having a detrimental affect on your night-time economy. As such, one way of increasing night-time visitor numbers is to promote late night travel provision. This could be done in a number of ways, including announcements which could be made inside bars and clubs at the end of a night to inform people of their options for getting home.

# eighty five.

## Taxi Marshal Scheme

Taxi ranks late at night are often hotspots for anti-social behaviour. This problem can be alleviated through a taxi marshal scheme. This scheme could be part-funded by cab drivers, and would encourage people to form an orderly queue for their taxi, eliminating potential flashpoints and moving people quickly and efficiently out of the town centre.

# eighty six.

## Late Night Bus Service

Increasing the number of late night buses is a good way of encouraging visitors and moving potentially inebriated revellers out of the town centre quickly. Funding for this increased service could be part-funded by local bars and clubs.

## case study

### Summer Sounds Better in Colchester

This programme of live music in the streets was developed in partnership between Colchester Town Partnership, Colchester Crime & Disorder Partnership, retail and leisure businesses, with a view to bridging the daytime and evening economies. It encouraged shops to stay open later and motivated office workers to stay in town longer leading to reduced traffic congestion and an enhanced café culture. With match funding from the East of England Community Safety Fund and Colchester Town Partnership, the project ran from July to September. A list of local musicians was collated and matched with suitable venues around the town, including outside shops, cafes, bars and restaurants, in shopping centres and the local music library.

# eighty seven.

## Purple Flag

The Purple Flag scheme has been set up to establish national standards and raise the image of Britain's town centres at night. By meeting the standards set by Purple Flag, a great night-time offer can be developed by town centres.

The scheme has been developed by ATCM to recognise excellence in the management of town and city centres after dark. Obtaining a Purple Flag shows that a town's night-time economy offers clean and safe environments, great bars and clubs, a variety of arts and cultural attractions and excellent transport links.

Purple Flag is supported by the Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officers, the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Service, Diageo and many other organisations.

For more information visit [www.purpleflag.org.uk](http://www.purpleflag.org.uk).



# eighty eight.

## **Dedicated Ambassadors for the Evening Economy**

**Evening ambassadors can improve the night scene in a town centre by acting as liaisons between the police, door staff, licensees and the CCTV control room.**

**Bolton has pioneered a night-time management structure that involves the employment of ambassadors for the evening economy. The aim is to reduce alcohol related anti-social behaviour and reassure the public that the town centre is a safe place to visit at night. An evening economy manager and three evening ambassadors have been employed in the past. Their tasks included organising seminars for door staff and licensees and collating data on problem customers and venues.**

# eighty nine.

## Light Night



For one night a high street can stay open for business so that its attractions and symbols are seen in a new light - literally. Light Night is an initiative where visitors get to see the unusual in a familiar environment and 'lose themselves' in the town centre, which is transformed into a stage for the night. Light Night is a great showcase for gaining wide public interest and participation so that people 'buy into' their high street overnight. A key element of the programme in each town centre is that all events are free.

Light Night is a chance for everyone to come together and celebrate the city, focusing on their shared culture, history and identity. It is a national programme of events supported by ATCM which covers the whole of the UK.

For more information visit [www.lightnight.co.uk](http://www.lightnight.co.uk).

ninety.

## Accreditation Scheme for Licensed Premises

While licensees are already required to meet a set of basic standards in order to retain their license, they can still attract anti-social behaviour. Implementing an accreditation scheme provides an incentive to raise management standards leading to a safer evening economy. If the rewards in terms of publicity, credibility and ultimately, high quality custom are great enough for licensed businesses, then they will be willing to apply.

# Training, Development and Accreditation



**Instinct, gut feeling and anecdotal knowledge are some of the aspects that have been driving forward schemes on the high street for years. Moving away from this and encouraging a culture where training, development and accreditation are prerequisites is a necessity. This cultural shift has already begun and here are some reasons why.**

# ninety one.

## Professional Accreditation for Town Centre Managers



The Institute of Place Management is the first international Membership organisation dedicated to professionalising the place management industry. Individual town centre managers can join up to receive regular place related updates, access to monthly CPD opportunities, access to the Emerald published Journal of Place Management & Development, as well as networking opportunities with other members. Local authorities and town centre partnerships can also join as Approved Partners, affording multiple benefits and demonstrating a certified commitment to making places better.

For more information, visit [www.placemanagement.org](http://www.placemanagement.org).

# ninety two.

## Support for the Retail Property Industry

While many retailers need flexibility in leasing conditions to help their business adapt to changing times, many property owners hope for stability because of the nature of their long-term investments. These two conflicting needs make the retail property industry a unique and challenging sector. Town centre managers can support retail property owners by pointing them towards credible trade associations such as the British Council of Shopping Centres and the British Property Federation who will be able to help them develop new ideas to contribute to a healthy high street.

The British Council of Shopping Centres and the British Property Federation can each provide a number of services including education and professional development but also, networking opportunities with others in the industry and assistance in forming partnerships locally which create vibrant high streets.

For more information, visit [www.bcsc.org.uk](http://www.bcsc.org.uk) or [www.bpf.org.uk](http://www.bpf.org.uk).

# ninety three.

## **Auditing the Quality of your Town's Retail Offer**

**More than 80 towns across the UK, from Aberdeen to Wrexham, have benefited from audits designed to pinpoint improvements that could be made to independent shops, as well as how the town centres could be improved as a whole. The Location Model, designed by Skillsmart Retail, the Sector Skills Council for Retail, includes a mystery shopping exercise, street interviews and a town centre assessment, all carried out by industry professionals who also work for some of the country's biggest and most famous retailers.**

**Many towns throughout the UK have struggled with their retail offer in recent times, and while there is no easy solution, Skillsmart Retail's Location Model gives independent retailers, and a range of stakeholders, intelligence and a series of practical recommendations that will contribute to the development of a diverse retail sector. Town centre managers have been at the forefront of this initiative in towns which have taken part so far, and many have found funding to be able to participate.**

**For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).**

# ninety four.

## Pointing Retailers Towards Advice on Training

A network of retail skills shops with advice on hand to meet the training needs of retailers have opened in shopping centres across the country. Their aim is to improve retail skills through a network of retail skills shops located in shopping centres and on high streets across the country. Retail employers and employees, as well as those hoping to enter the sector can walk into, or contact, any retail skills shop to access the training on offer. As a town centre manager, you can point retailers in your town to their local retail skills shop, where they will find everything from pre-employment training and licence to trade courses, to management and leadership programmes. More and more skills shops are opening across the country.

For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).

# ninety five.

## Learn from a Real-life Retail Expert

Being launched in 2010, the Mary Portas Guide to Successful Retailing is a series of seven insightful masterclasses offered by the National Skills Academy



for Retail. Delivered through retail skills shops, the Mary Portas Guide provides a unique opportunity to learn from one of the UK's most respected retail experts, in areas such as merchandising, selling, display, buying and marketing. This is a perfect opportunity for retailers in your town to tap into Mary Portas' knowledge without breaking the bank.

For more information on the range of topics covered and to register your interest, visit the [National Skills Academy for Retail website](#).

# ninety six.

## Become a Retail Ambassador

Many who manage the high street have experience within the retail sector. In fact, there are hundreds of thousands of people involved in retail across the country, who are perfect candidates to become Retail Ambassadors, and help promote the sector as a place where rewarding careers can be developed. The Retail Ambassador Programme has been designed by Skillsmart Retail and is being delivered through the National Skills Academy for Retail, to allow retail professionals at all levels to champion the sector to young people in schools and colleges. Ambassadors are needed from shop floor to boardroom level; motivated people, prepared to relate personal experiences and real life scenarios to help capture the imagination of young people, raise awareness of the diverse range of jobs in retail and present the sector in a positive light. Many Town Centre Managers will make perfect ambassadors. All Ambassadors are trained to deliver the presentations and given full support and materials.

For ambassador training dates and an application form to register to become an Ambassador, as well as information on how to book an Ambassador for a school or college event in your town, visit the [National Skills Academy for Retail website](#).

## ninety seven.

### Encourage Junior Managers to Apply to Oxford Summer School

The Oxford Summer School is the 'jewel in the crown' of UK retail training and the first destination many junior managers will have circled in red for the summer. Skillsmart Retail and the Retail Trust are joining forces to offer ten scholarships to attend the Oxford Summer School unique centre of excellence - free. This means retailers in your town can learn all the tips to reaching the top from the biggest names in the industry.

This is a credible course which counts Ian Cheshire, Charlie Mayfield, Nick Robertson, and Peter Williams amongst its past speakers. These leading stars of retail have all commended the City & Guilds accredited programme for its ability to enhance expertise in leading successful teams, monitoring stock performance, improving financial management, marketing the business and visual merchandising.

Skillsmart Retail and Retail Trust are urging every junior manager from retail

businesses with less than 1000 employees to apply. Aside from the learning, an enviable list of evening events will give delegates the perfect chance to let their hair down and network with representatives from some of retail's biggest businesses.

For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).

## ninety eight.

### Get Young Learners to Learn through Retail

There will be hundreds, if not thousands, of school and college students in your town, all looking to work out what direction they will take in their education and in the working world. For many, the traditional GCSE and A level option will seem the most appropriate, but others will seek something with more of an emphasis on vocational studies, while losing none of the academic rigour. From September this year, students aged 14 to 19 years old will have the option to take the new Diploma in Retail Business – a qualification designed by top retailers to provide a way into the sector. Championed by John King, CEO of House of Fraser, the Diploma in Retail Business will combine elements crucial to working within retail, whilst also providing a thorough grounding in subjects such as English and maths, to ensure it is a qualification which is valued in all sectors; not just retail.

For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).

# ninety nine.

## Know What Qualifications are Out There

The retail qualification system in the UK used to be a minefield with hundreds and of different courses available. Under the new Vocational Qualification Reform, however, navigating your way through what is available couldn't be easier. Designed by Skillsmart Retail, delivered by the National Skills Academy for Retail and regulated by top awarding organisations, there is now a simple structure in place for each of the four UK nations. Brochures detailing current retail qualifications are available to download from the Skillsmart Retail Careers pages.

# one hundred.

## Local Business Awards

Having an awards event for local businesses can bring many benefits to the town centre. Achieving an award for a credible competition is a great boost to the confidence for those who are successful, or even just nominated. Awards act as a marketing tool which managers can use to grow and develop the business. From the consumer perspective, an award acts as a quality mark meaning visitors have a way of spotting the best a high street has to offer. There can even be a positive affect for those businesses who are not nominated by the scheme. Awards showcase best practice allowing other managers to learn new techniques and develop their business if they aspire to participate in future

**events.**

**Huddersfield Town Centre Partnership has had success developing a scheme which celebrates environmental best practice. The Green Business Awards showcase businesses who adopt measures to reduce their environmental impact through reduced energy, water, transport, and waste disposal, encouraging other businesses to follow suit.**

**For more information, visit [www.100-highstreet.co.uk](http://www.100-highstreet.co.uk).**

# Contributors

## Association of Town Centre Management

The Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) is a not-for-profit membership organisation dedicated to promoting the vitality and viability of town and city centres. It has more than 540 members including key stakeholders in town and city centres. Over 400 of its members are town and city centre management initiatives. Nearly all of these work as partnerships, some with several hundred contributing members themselves, to develop and implement shared visions, strategies and action plans for a total of more than 700 district, town and city centres across the UK.

[www.atcm.org](http://www.atcm.org)

## Local Government Improvement and Development

LG Improvement and Development (formerly the IDeA) supports improvement and innovation in local government, focusing on the issues that are important to councils and using tried and tested ways of working. We work with councils in developing good practice, supporting them in their partnerships. We do this through networks, online communities of practice (CoPs) and web resources, and through the support and challenge provided by councillor and officer peers. We also help develop councillors in key positions through our leadership programmes. Regional associates work closely with councils in their areas and support the regional improvement and efficiency partnerships (RIEPs).

[www.local.gov.uk/improvementanddevelopment](http://www.local.gov.uk/improvementanddevelopment).

## **National Skills Academy for Retail**

Launched in April 2009, the National Skills Academy for Retail has been created to help provide, consistent, quality retail training and deliver qualifications. Led by Skillsmart Retail, it provides access to consistent, high quality training for retail businesses, their employees and future workforce, delivered through a network of quality-marked retail skills shops. It plays a key role in driving forward skills and qualifications for current and future employees within this vast sector.

[www.nsaforretail.com](http://www.nsaforretail.com)

## **Institute of Place Management**

Institute of Place Management (IPM) is the international professional body that supports people committed to developing, managing and making places better. It aims to support and develop the profession of place management.

The concept for the Institute was developed by the Manchester Metropolitan University and the ATCM in the UK. Coming together to work on a £2.7 million pound EQUAL project known as AGORA, they recognised a need to create a professional body capable of developing and supporting the creation of sustainable formal structures of place management, ensuring professional standards amongst all those involved in the management, development and marketing of places.

[www.placemanagement.org](http://www.placemanagement.org)



**Getting it Right** – A Good Practice Guide to Successful Town Centre Management Initiatives





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Designed and Produced by: Robert Barkshire Printed by: D & J Press **129**

# Introduction



**TCM STRATEGY  
AND VISION**



**PARTNERSHIP  
STRUCTURE**



**BUSINESS &  
ACTION PLAN**



**FUNDING**



**KEY PERFORMANCE  
INDICATORS**

This is a practical guide to setting up and evaluating a successful town centre management initiative. It arises from 'The Set Up and Validation Research Project' a three-year study programme managed by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) and supported by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and Boots The Chemists.

The research project assessed the methods employed by forty-four town centre management initiatives in different environments and at different stages of evolution, in order to identify and develop widely relevant examples of good practice. The information gathered has already contributed to the formation of government policy, assisted the establishment of several new initiatives and helped to build a more positive climate for town centre management generally. This document comprises a distillation of the knowledge gained and lessons learned during the research into setting up and evaluating town centre management initiatives. It is the fourth in a series of ATCM guides, which also includes *Developing Structures to Deliver Town Centre Management*, *A New Town Centre Manager's Survival Kit* and *Key Performance Indicators*.

## The guide is laid out in two easy-to-use parts:

- **An Outline of Set Up and Evaluation.** A brief description of the core elements in the lifecycle of a successful town centre management initiative, an explanation of the set up and evaluation processes, and guidance on when, why, how and by whom the processes should be undertaken.
- **Implementing Set Up and Validation.** Specific examples of good practice and detailed checklists for setting up and validating each of the core elements of successful town centre management initiatives: Strategy and Vision, Partnership Structure, Business and Action Plans, Funding, and Key Performance Indicators.

The aim is not to impose standard rules, but to help towns and cities achieve good practice solutions to the issues and challenges of their unique environments, based on a very wide variety of experience in similar circumstances.

## An outline of Set Up and Evaluation

### *Principles*

The management of town and city centres is the management of change. In the information age, it is the management of rapid change. By definition, town centres are focal points for commercial, cultural and social life and continual change is an inevitable and necessary condition of their ability to serve these evolving forces. To do so in a world of instant communication, hypermobility and virtual locations means to balance the sense of identity and community that people value, with competitiveness in the new global economy.

These attributes occur neither overnight nor by accident. Town centre management (TCM) develops them by creating partnerships of shared resources, ideas and commitment that unite and benefit all stakeholders, taking an holistic approach to traditional public and private sector divisions as well as involving the less influential. In doing so, it aims to build environments that are healthy, sustainable and socially inclusive, recognising that the unique character of individual towns and cities demands local, rather than generic, solutions.

### *Objectives*

TCM partnerships create networks that allow people and organisations to meet their objectives in ways that benefit the whole. They seek to:

- Organise mutually supportive working links between businesses, service providers, the public and voluntary sectors, and the community at large.
- Create a shared vision of the town's identity, function, market niche and image that meets the needs of the people it serves.
- Design an effective business plan and a programme of projects endorsed and funded by the partners that are achievable year by year and in the medium- to long-term.
- Develop the life of town centres for users and investors alike.
- Improve management of the public realm, so that towns are clean, safe and accessible to all.
- Help towns and cities to understand, achieve and retain a competitive edge.
- Develop projects that enhance the environment, access, car parking, signage, security, inward investment, business, marketing, customer care and attractions.

## Core Elements

Although partnerships differ in their composition and detailed methods of operation, five core elements have been identified as essential to their establishment (set up) and continued management. These five elements comprise the foundation stones for the development and continued evaluation of effective TCM, which all partnerships must address.

The elements are:



**1.** TCM Strategy and Vision.



**4.** Funding.



**2.** Partnership Structure.

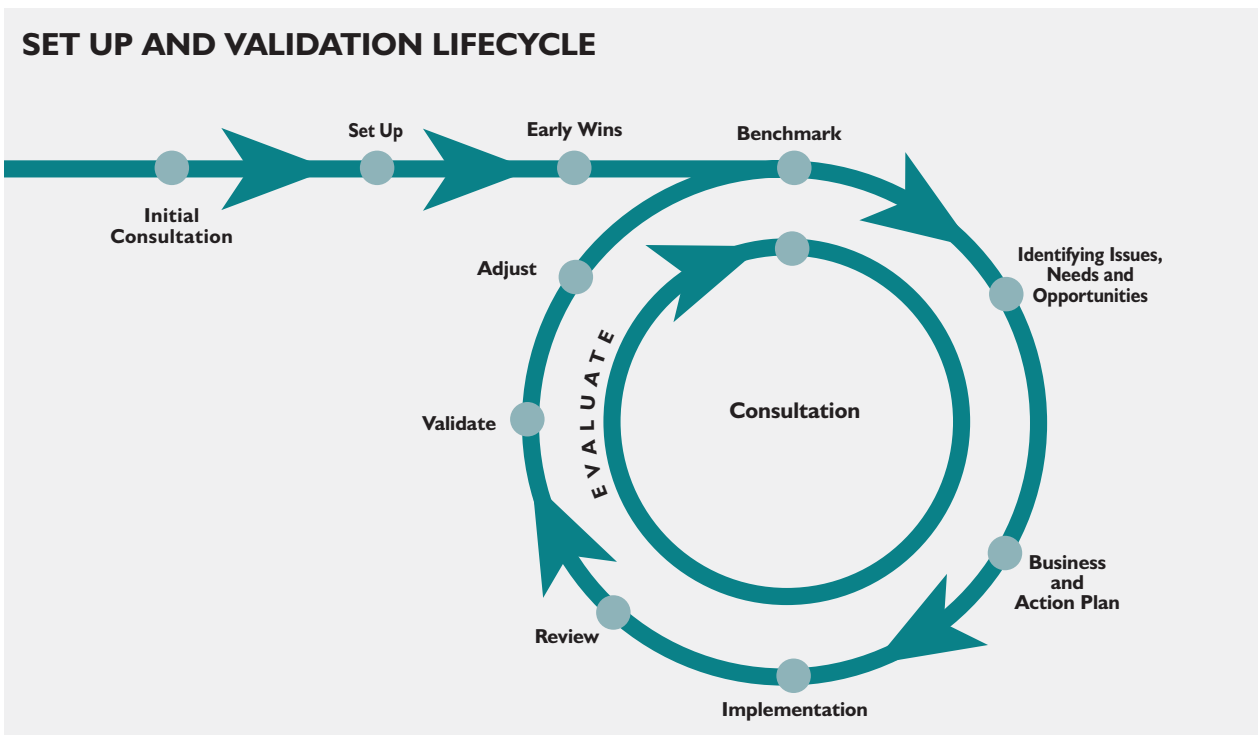


**5.** Key Performance Indicators.



**3.** Business and Action Plans.

The experience of practitioners around the country is that aspects of each of these core issues must be addressed and re-addressed throughout the TCM lifecycle shown in the illustration. Getting it right at the start can make the difference between a successful initiative and a greatly limited one, not least in the ability to accurately monitor progress. The diversity of interests and issues represented by TCM is such that review and analysis assumes fundamental importance.



## Setting Up

**What?** The term set up describes the process that establishes a formal co-ordinating focus for all town centre interests, following an acceptance that no single group or sector can do so alone.

**When?** The timing will vary. In most towns, the local authority or other groups may already be addressing individual issues and the formal set up happens when a cross-sector approach is identified as a better way to revitalise or regenerate the centre and make it work more effectively.

**Why?** A well-managed set up process is an important prerequisite to creating a successful, credible and high profile partnership, capable of attracting sustainable funding and developing achievable projects.

**How?** Well-managed means addressing the five core elements of partnership. The sequence in which the core issues are addressed may vary, since work might already have been done in some areas during the pre-set up period. A transparent approach that engenders mutual trust between all the stakeholders is crucial, irrespective of the chosen sequence. The process must be documented to demonstrate to new stakeholders who join subsequently that the development process included broad consultation and attention to cross-sector interests.

**Who?** All key stakeholders must be committed to the set up process and confident in the person or group chosen to conduct it. Set up may be undertaken by:

- An officer of the local authority.
- A cross-sector working group of stakeholders.
- A Chamber of Commerce or other business forum.
- An independent TCM consultant.
- A combination of one or more of these options.

Where a good relationship exists between local government and business, a working group may be an appropriate choice, with the local authority exercising a central co-ordinating function. In other circumstances, an independent body may be advisable. The independent approach might serve to indicate autonomy and help to attract funding for the initiative.

## Evaluating and Validating

**What?** Evaluation describes the process of analysing and reviewing the progress of a TCM initiative to enable appropriate changes and achieve good practice. It should be seen as a continuous or regular 'Healthcheck' that explores current progress, individual projects, outstanding issues and future potential. Validation describes the assessment of the TCM initiative's work against specific elements of its agreed vision, strategy and objectives. It is a more detailed form of evaluation that should take place every three to five years, possibly as part of an overall review of the business plan.

Both forms of evaluation aim to ensure that the aspirations of stakeholders are being met and to determine whether new stakeholders should become involved. They assess the sustainability of funding and delivery and recommend progress. The word evaluation is used in this guide to mean the complete process of review and analysis, except where specific information is given on validation. In reality, the two terms describe mutually complementary processes. Validation checklists, for example, may also add value to the ongoing 'Healthcheck.'

**Why?** TCM is an organic pursuit whose structure and activities take time to mature. Evaluation lends flexibility by enabling periodic checks to review change, which reflect improving relationships between the stakeholders, the increasing ability to estimate time frames and the town centre's evolving profile. It enables benchmarking against elements of good practice to highlight advances in efficiency and deliverability, such that enhance the centre's competitive edge.

**When?** Different local factors make it impossible to prescribe the exact timing of evaluation measures, but as a general rule it should be undertaken at key points in the life of the TCM initiative.

The regular 'Healthcheck,' should be undertaken:

- As part of the development of each annual action plan.
- As a regular formal review, according to the relevant provisions of the action or business plan.
- Whenever the initiative encounters obstacles to the successful implementation of projects.

Experience suggests that an in-depth validation adds most value to partnerships that have existed for three to five years. It might be conducted:

- When issues arise that affect the initiative's funding or sustainability.
- When the need to involve new stakeholders or sectors is identified.
- When it becomes necessary to examine new partnership models.
- When a new direction for the initiative needs to be considered.
- When primary objectives have been achieved.
- When a new agency such as an SRB partnership is formed locally.

**How?** The regular 'Healthcheck' will examine progress in each of the initiative's five core elements, as a means of reviewing and developing the action plan. In-depth validation will explore the wider context of TCM as it relates to the town centre strategy and the 3 to 5 year business plan. A clear understanding of the partnership's history is an important requirement that will help evaluations to identify instances of previous experience influencing current practice.

Evaluation needs to look at the history of TCM and its current partnership and funding structures, as well as progress in specific projects. It should also consider the role and status of TCM in relation to other local initiatives, its profile in the town centre and in local

government, and the need for new projects or stakeholders. The process should include a review of literature produced by the partnership itself, the local authority and other groups with an interest in town centre issues.

Personal interviews should be used to understand the different perceptions of TCM, identify the need to recruit additional expertise or address new issues, and assess the future availability of funding. Interviewees should include:

- The town centre manager.
- The town centre manager's immediate superior.
- The TCM partnership's Chairman.
- A representative of the local authority.
- Private sector members of the partnership.
- Other stakeholders, including a community representative.

Evaluation will add value only with prior agreement by the partnership's board to support the process and its potential outcomes by a formal review of its recommendations. On that basis, the evaluator should report in writing to the board, relevant groups and local authority departments.

**Who?** Evaluations may be undertaken by a number of different people and each TCM initiative must decide which approach is most appropriate to its circumstances. ATCM will advise on this issue, if required. The decision is identical in principle to choosing who will conduct the initial set up process. Prime factors are that the evaluation is seen to be objective and constructive and that interviewees feel able to speak freely. Depending on local needs, the necessary perception may be satisfied by a cross-sector group of partnership members or by the use of a consultant, although whoever conducts the task should work closely with a small internal working group to ensure ownership of the process and its outcomes.

### *Summary*

Both set up and evaluation are fundamentally interlinked activities. They must centre on the five core elements of successful town centre management. Without this fundamental structure, it will be difficult to measure effectiveness. Key aspects of good practice may be used as the basis upon which to judge progress and these are discussed in more detail in the next part of this guide.

## Implementing Set Up and Validation

### *Outline*

This part of the report identifies aspects of good practice that may be used to assess progress in the five key elements of TCM. It describes good practice in each of the five areas, and then provides checklists by which they may be set up and validated. Some of the processes outlined in the checklists may already have been undertaken and it is important that the results of any such work are incorporated. The checklists highlight the steps necessary to set up and validate TCM and indicate essential components of each step, which may be carried out separately or concurrently.

### *Essentials of Good Practice*

Both set up and evaluation must work to build and maintain TCM initiatives based on good practice, including a focus on:

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ● A clear strategy, shared by all stakeholders. | ● Matched funding and leverage. |
| ● Robust partnerships.                          | ● Consultation.                 |
| ● Strong projects.                              | ● Outputs.                      |

'Town Centre Partnerships – A Survey of Good Practice,' published in 1997 by ATCM and DETR, describes basic requirements for the development of a successful TCM initiative, which should be considered throughout set up and evaluation. They include:

- Local authorities must be clearly committed to playing a leading role and commitment must be shared at senior officer and political level.
- A shared vision and a clear strategy are required.
- Early wins and a budget to tackle basic concerns must be demonstrated.
- The need to build trust across sectors.
- A structure that evolves over time.
- The importance of building a track record.







## 1. Strategy and Vision

**Key Aspects of Good Practice.** A shared vision is an essential component in finding the common ground necessary for all stakeholders to give their fullest commitment to the objectives of TCM.

- The development of strategy and vision is an active process that must involve representatives of cross-sector interests to agree and co-ordinate perceptions and aspirations for the town centre.
- The strategy should support a coherent approach to managing agreed aspects of the centre in ways that accord with the overall direction for the town contained in the local authority's Local Plan.
- The concept of shared vision should mean a plan for the whole town centre that deals with issues common to all interests.
- Although one person may act as an originator or catalyst, ideas must be tested within the partnership as a whole to develop ownership and plans for implementation. Consultation mechanisms must be developed that enable all groups to contribute to decision making.
- Consultation should be seen as a continuing process, a means of evaluating the performance of individual projects and TCM as a whole.
- Partners need not contribute equally in skills, commitment or resources but they must possess a mutual trust, based on the recognition that effective change comes from a combination of small efforts.
- Town Centre Forums may be employed once or twice a year, as appropriate, to give a wider group of town centre users the opportunity to respond to TCM progress.
- All those supporting and implementing the new vision must be given appropriate recognition.
- A document providing results of the strategy could be published to allow maximum consultation as well as being used as a marketing tool to attract other stakeholders.



**Set Up Checklist.** In developing a strategy and vision, the set up process involves four main areas of activity:

**Identify who should be Involved**

- Generate and raise awareness by contacting members of the public, private and community sectors with an interest in the town centre.
- Approach organisations with national expertise in TCM for advice and assistance, including the ATCM and town centre champions such as Marks & Spencer, Boots The Chemists and Sainsbury's.
- Make initial contact with the local authority at Chief Executive level, then with the departments most likely to be involved with TCM projects, such as planning or economic development. It may be necessary to contact both district and county authorities.
- Identify key 'players' in the town by reference to the following list of examples:
  - Large retailers
  - Independent retailers
  - Chambers of Commerce and Trade
  - Street and Shopping Centre Associations
  - Property owners and managing agents
  - Property investors and developers
  - Service providers
  - Car park operators
  - Public transport providers and taxi operators
  - Hoteliers Associations and publicans
  - Major tourist venues and Tourism Boards
  - Universities and colleges
  - Health services
  - Financial services
  - Market traders and operators
  - Leisure operators
  - Restaurateurs
  - Police
  - Major local employers
  - Local press editors and radio producers
  - Telephone and cable companies
  - Government agencies such as TECs and their equivalent
  - Community groups such as churches, Housing and Residents' Associations





- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- District or Borough Council
- Town Council

#### Review Past and Present Information

- To add value TCM must understand the town centre strategy, which involves a review of past and present documentation, including the Local Plan, transport strategies, crime and safety strategies, development proposals, shopping surveys and local demographics.
- It is important for TCM objectives to complement any plans currently in place for the town centre and the review should include previous research in these areas.
- Undertake a SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths) analysis of the centre to identify key local issues that TCM might address.

#### Hold a Visioning Exercise

- A 'visioning' exercise with town centre stakeholders will help to identify the key issues of interest to different sectors, encourage understanding of individual perspectives and enhance cross-sector communication. It will also start to prioritise what needs to be achieved.
- The careful management of stakeholders' aspirations for the town is crucial to an appreciation of what are achievable, time frames and required inputs.
- Involving stakeholders at an early stage increases the likelihood of securing their participation and sense of ownership and may lead to the emergence of champions who will join the steering group.
- Use the exercise to introduce a guest speaker such as a town centre manager to share evidence of achievement by other initiatives.

#### Agree Clear Objectives

- Use the town centre issues identified during the review and visioning stages to set clear TCM objectives.
- Choose objectives that reflect the need for TCM to add value to other work being undertaken in the centre.
- Ensure that the objectives contribute to achieving a clear vision and enjoy the agreement of cross-sector stakeholders.



**Validation Checklist.** Evaluation assesses whether TCM is working to a clear strategy and vision by reviewing relevant documents and conducting one-to-one interviews with key partners.

**The review of documentation will include:**

- The TCM Vision Statement.
- The TCM Management Strategy.
- The local authority's town centre strategy.
- Other strategic local authority documentation, such as the transport plan, Local Plan, and crime and disorder strategy.

**The interview process should include asking the following questions of key stakeholders:**

- What is the TCM strategy and vision?
- Is the current strategy and vision appropriate for TCM in this town?
- Is the strategy and vision endorsed by the local authority?
- Is the strategy and vision endorsed by the town's retail and business interests?
- Is the strategy and vision supported by the local community?
- Could a more focused strategy and vision statement be prepared, or could it be added to?
- Can any new partners be identified who could contribute to the strategy and vision?
- Are current methods of communication effective in keeping all stakeholders informed on a continuing basis?





## 2. Partnership Structure

**Key Aspects of Good Practice.** To be successful, TCM must comprise a genuine, robust and stable partnership between the public, private and community sectors. Structures may vary according to the views of the stakeholders, the lead body involved and the nature of the agreed objectives. ‘*Developing Structures to Deliver Town Centre Management*,’ published in 1996 by ATCM, outlines a range of possible structures under three main categories of local authority led partnerships, ad hoc cross-sector partnerships, and companies limited by guarantee.

- The partnership must have clear terms of reference and working objectives that define its responsibilities and relationships with different working groups and forums.
- The partnership’s board, ideally comprising 8 to 12 members, must represent a range of town centre interests to ensure balance by avoiding the dominance of a particular view.
- Board meetings should be structured to ensure the most complete representation, by allowing each representative the opportunity to raise issues within their own interest groups.
- The partnership must take responsibility for funding and helping to attract inward investment.
- The partnership must work closely with relevant external agencies and sponsors, taking care to preserve its independent status.
- The partnership must have the openness and strength to take majority decisions and prevent the reality or perception of control by any single group.

### Structural Conditions Influencing Success

- An acceptance by local government that the centre is a competitive location that benefits the area as a whole.
- A private sector commitment that outstrips the immediate bounds of individual investment to recognise that its value is enhanced by competitiveness of the whole centre.



- Clear and identifiable objectives in specific areas that can be shared by stakeholders.
- Potential for growth or improvement.
- A demonstrable willingness by local government to encourage private leadership.
- Inclusive arrangements that empower all stakeholders.
- A clear strategy and business plan that each stakeholder can support.
- Effective communication with external cross-sector bodies.
- The commitment of all member organisations at senior level.
- Effective individual leadership to champion the partnership and its aims.

**Recruiting a Town Centre Manager.** The ATCM will provide information and advice on appointing a manager.

- It is important that the partnership is in place before a town centre manager is recruited. Its strategy and vision must be clear and work should have begun on the business plan, in order that the right candidate is chosen with appropriate qualifications.
- The partnership must develop in advance a clear view of the manager's role, based on a realistic expectation of an individual's capacity.
- The partnership must consider how the manager's role may expand over time and ensure that any future requirement for additional support or expertise will be addressed.
- It is important that a means of evaluating the manager's performance is put in place.





**Set Up Checklist.** Establishing the partnership's structure involves four main areas of activity.

**Hold Open Forums**

- A regular open forum should be held to enable key stakeholders to emerge as natural members of the steering group or different working groups, to build endorsement of the TCM through ongoing consultation.

**Establish a Steering Group**

- TCM must be a working partnership and a good organisation will have a steering group, comprising the key stakeholders and sponsors who will direct the initiative.
- The steering group must have cross-sector representation and not just those who are funding the initiative.
- It should reject the view that its function is simply to control the work of others by operating on the principle that better organisations are not hierarchical in nature.
- The steering group must avoid exclusivity by accommodating new members when appropriate and the constitution should allow for the group to change as the initiative evolves.
- Establish terms of reference for the steering group. Consider the following specimen clauses:
  - To serve as the forum for the TCM initiative by bringing together cross-sector stakeholders in the town centre to work in partnership and co-ordinate their activities towards a common goal.
  - To set the broad direction for the initiative, taking into account the needs of town centre customers, employees, retailers, business interests, freeholders, developers and the local authority.
  - To prepare a shared vision and strategy that is clearly defined and understood.
  - To develop a credible three- to five-year business plan with clear objectives and realistic actions, derived from the vision and strategy and incorporating financial information.
  - To foster a customer care philosophy among all town centre service providers.
  - To co-ordinate the activities of all providers of town centre services.
  - To seek both core and project funding for the furtherance of TCM.
  - To participate in the selection of the town centre manager and other TCM employees.
  - To regularly monitor and review the initiative's progress and monitor competing organisations.
  - To manage the TCM budget.



### Form Working Groups

- Working groups should be formed to address specific issues and projects.
- A member of the steering group should sit on each working group to ensure two-way communication.
- Working groups should share equal status with the steering group and maintain cross-group co-ordination.
- Establish terms of reference for the working groups. Consider the following specimen clauses:
  - To support the steering group and the town centre manager in the execution of their roles.
  - To investigate specific town centre issues such as accessibility, security, promotion, transportation, car parking, the environment, events and the evening economy, and to recommend appropriate action to the steering group.
  - To assist in attracting appropriate development, investment and occupiers to the centre.
  - To implement agreed projects.
  - To conduct self-monitoring and seek opportunities for improvement.

### Establish Links with Existing Groups

- Where other groups or committees already exist, link them to the TCM initiative through effective liaison or as a working group.
- Relationships with other groups must never be confrontational.







**Validation Checklist.** The validation should review all literature produced during the set up process, including proposals for the partnership's composition and structure, consultation mechanisms and decision making. It must determine whether the partnership is balanced, inclusive and efficient and effective in consulting and decision making.

**The review of documentation will include:**

- Minutes and Agendas of meetings including the steering group, working groups and forum meetings.
- Terms of reference.
- Membership documents.
- Annual reports.
- Business plan.

**The validation process should ask the following questions of stakeholders:**

- Is the current composition of the Board able to deliver the agreed vision?
- Which new partners would add value to TCM?
- Is it possible to increase the consultation network?
- Will the current structure attract the funding required for the future?
- Which aspects of the partnership and its working groups need to be reviewed to ensure future delivery of TCM?
- Would it be appropriate to investigate different partnership models?
- Does the partnership possess the sustainability to become a stand-alone company?
- Do the partnership's criteria need to be reviewed?
- How effective are the working groups?
- Do the working groups need to change or expand?
- Could the working groups become more task-specific?
- Does the local authority support the partnership's decisions?
- Do all stakeholders have an input to the partnership's agenda?
- How are decisions reached?



### 3. *Business and Action Plans*

**Key Aspects of Good Practice.** The range of stakeholders and their differing contributions must be recognised for a town to achieve competitiveness and the best way to achieve this is for all parties to follow the same well developed business plan.

- The town centre business plan is the working document of the TCM initiative that defines its objectives, arising from the strategy and vision, it's funding and who is involved.
- To be credible, the business plan must outline concisely the ultimate objectives of TCM activity and its financial elements.
- The business plan belongs primarily to the partnership and representatives should therefore write each sector. It is an internal document and need not be designed as a marketing tool.
- The best business plans are short and direct, employing accurate market research, sound financial planning and a strong commitment to success.
- Developing the business plan demands broad consultation to add value and avoid duplicating the efforts of others.
- Business plans have a limited life span, usually three to five years, so time should be allowed for review and revision.
- The business plan should include the following information:
  - Vision. The agreed perception or aim for the town's situation at the end of the plan's lifetime.
  - Aims and Objectives of the TCM Partnership. The means by which the partnership will achieve its vision.
  - Priority Areas. The priority in which the aims and objectives are to be addressed.
  - Timeframes. The timing of projects or phases of projects, including both specific dates and non-specific long-term activities.
  - Agreed Funding. Details of both core and project funding already agreed for the duration of the business plan.
  - Funding Requirements. The funding required for each project, whether or not its provision has been agreed.



- TCM Partners. The key stakeholders in the partnership.
- Funding Partners. Sponsors and other sources of agreed funding for core activities and projects.
- The TCM **action plan**, often part of the business plan, is the practical means by which specific achievable projects, timescales, funding, and participants are defined.
- The action plan should be updated annually.
- It should lie out what projects can realistically be achieved in the timescales.
- The action plan should include the following information covering each of the projects it intends to deliver:
  - Objective Area. One of the objectives identified in the business plan.
  - Project. Description of the task designed to achieve the objective.
  - Date and Timeframe. The start time and duration of the project.
  - Process. The actions needed to complete the project.
  - Key Performance Indicators. The methods by which the effectiveness of the process will be measured.
  - Partners. The key stakeholders involved in the project, whether of providers of funds or other inputs.
  - Funders. The sources and amounts of project funding.
  - Output. Comments about the impact achieved by the project.
- Both the business plan and the action plan must be realistic documents against which the progress of TCM can be managed and evaluated.



**Set Up Checklist.** Creating the business plan and action plan involves five main areas of activity.

#### Defining Key Objectives

- Once the TCM strategy has been clarified it is important to define the various objectives that should be pursued. These commonly include transport and access, environment, tourism, marketing, public safety and community initiatives.

#### The Planning Process

- It is important to identify a number of projects that address challenges in each of the objective areas. This should be a 'long list' of projects developed by the stakeholders to reveal their view of priorities.
- The planning process should be undertaken in a Business Planning Workshop to allow all stakeholders the opportunity to discuss projects in cross-sector groups.
- All stakeholders must have time to consider the list of projects and a three to four week period of deliberation after the workshop may be appropriate before formalising priorities.
- Stakeholders should be encouraged to offer views on the duration of projects, the choice of key partners and sources of funding.
- All stakeholders need to be urged to take a proactive role to develop their ownership of the plans.

#### Consultation

- The outcome of the business planning process should be the publication of a draft business plan for consultation.
- All stakeholders need to see who was involved in the planning process and what priority was given to the projects.
- Demonstrating that the process was open and inclusive will attract the greatest ownership and show that any disagreement over priorities was approached in a spirit of partnership and compromise.

#### Reality Check

- There is no point including projects that cannot realistically be delivered. A 'reality check' should be conducted for any projects that do not contain the following key elements:
  - Project objectives.
  - Timeframe. There should be a balanced mix of short-, medium-, and long-term projects.



- A delivery body responsible for implementation.
- The role of TCM, if appropriate.
- The role of key partners.
- Funding status and source.
- Performance indicators.

#### **Launch the Business Plan**

- Once the draft plan has been agreed by all partners it should be launched publicly to enhance the profile of the plan itself and the TCM initiative in general.
- The launch should be used as an opportunity to promote funding and sponsoring organisations and to attract new contributors and members.
- Projects capable of delivering early wins should be highlighted to boost confidence and participation.



**Validation Checklist.** The validation should examine closely which projects have been previously selected and successfully implemented.

**The review of documentation should include:**

- The Business Plan.
- The Action Plan.
- Minutes of Steering and Working Group meetings.
- Individual projects.
- Promotional literature.
- The TCM newsletter.
- Project literature.
- Press clippings.
- Relevant market research.

**Stakeholders should be asked the following questions:**

- Is there a current business plan detailing actions for the next three to five years?
- Is the business plan a useful document?
- Has an action plan for the current year been identified and costed from within the business plan?
- What are the most and least successful projects and why?
- In which areas can TCM add most value in the future?
- Which sectors have been involved in implementing projects to date?
- Which sectors or partners should be more involved in future?
- How should these sectors be involved?
- Is the initiative dependent on a core group of key players or upon the town centre manager?
- Is there a need to change key stakeholders?



- How can TCM build on its strong projects for the future?
- Is it possible to sell TCM on its past achievements?
- Is it appropriate to revise the current business or action plan?
- What direction should the next business plan take?
- What process should be used to develop a new business plan?



## 4. Funding

**Key Aspects of Good Practice.** Several sources of funding exist for TCM, most importantly the public sector and private business, both large and small, all of which need to be fully explored.

- Funding poses a challenge for most town centres and it is important for TCM to be perceived by both the public and private sectors as a cost-effective discipline that adds value with clear objectives and achievable action plans.
- TCM funding can take various forms, including core funding, project funding and funding in kind. Many partnerships currently look to the public sector for their core funding and support individual initiatives through private sector contributions.
- Types of contribution to be sought include money for core activities, goods and services, staff secondments, event sponsorship and the use of appropriate influence.
- TCM must make relevant local authority departments aware of its objectives if public sector support is to be utilised effectively. In particular, the partnership should work to identify unspent funds and explore new ways of doing tasks more efficiently.
- Public sector funding should be sought from existing grant programmes such as the SRB, from Section 106 funding and from resources 'bent in' or allocated from local government departments with town centre responsibilities.
- The key to a well funded TCM initiative is to secure sufficient resources for an initial period of confidence building, during which the partnership may demonstrate its effectiveness.
- Sustainable funding is a key factor in attracting new sources of income. A mix of funding sources is preferable to a single sources, since it reduces the initiative's vulnerability.
- Private sector funding is contingent upon an accurate assessment of business agendas and their relationship to town centre issues. Business refurbishment, expansion or relocation, for example, might provide funding opportunities, especially if TCM activities have the potential to increase profits or reduce costs.
- Businesses have begun to set their own TCM funding criteria and these need to be understood. Broadly, successful partnerships with clear objectives and established methods for measuring performance will attract most support.







- The importance of TCM understanding the aims of public, private and community stakeholders in the short-, medium- and long-term cannot be overemphasised.

**Set Up Checklist.** Establishing sources of funding involves five main areas of activity.

#### General Funding

- It is important to establish at an early stage which partners will act as funders.
- Funding must be sustainable and a minimum commitment of three years should be sought.
- TCM should obtain significant core funding from the local authority. To do so, it is important to meet local government criteria by understanding the key objectives of Best Value legislation. (The meaning of Best Value is described in Appendix B).
- It must be clearly understood that the partnership approach prevails in TCM and that funding confers no right to control its direction.

#### Project Funding

- Project funding may be either general or specific. Ongoing general funding for projects is important to ensure the availability of a running budget.
- General funding for projects is most likely to be provided by traditional supporters of TCM such national multiples and the local authority.
- Projects with a specific focus should be promoted to potential new sponsors to enable them to see in advance the value of joining the partnership.

#### In-Kind Funding

- Never underestimate the value of in-kind funding.
- Many organisations that cannot donate cash will be able to provide, time, expertise, staff members, office space or prizes.
- It is important that in-kind sponsors are given proper acknowledgment and promotion.
- In-kind sponsors may become cash sponsors if their initial experience is favourable.

#### Funder Requirements

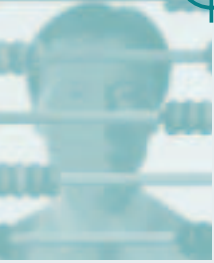
- It is important to take the time to understand the official or unofficial funding criteria applied by public and private sector stakeholders. Broadly, they will only become funders if they believe that doing so will add value to their business or interest.
- Work with local managers to achieve results that will benefit both TCM and potential funders.
- Businesses base their funding criteria on fact, research and ongoing monitoring, so apply the same standards to defining projects and raising funds.



### Look after Sponsors

- Treat sponsors as partners, not cash cows. Make sure they receive the best possible publicity and suggest other town centre contacts that may be useful to them.
- Consider schemes that add value to businesses, such as membership schemes. Membership schemes provide participants with the chance to receive different pieces of information including data on KPIs, being part of radio link or a security initiative, regular updates and a chance to advertise in certain journals.
- Follow up each project with an assessment form to generate sponsor feedback and enable TCM to evaluate its value to the sponsor and identify the need for future changes.
- Always maintain a close dialogue with sponsors and partners before, during and after a project to preserve their interest and involvement.





**Validation Checklist.** The funding validation should focus on the funders and on the types of project that have been successful in attracting ongoing resources.

**The documentation review should include:**

- Business Plan.
- Project worksheets.
- Media releases.
- Funding applications.
- Promotional material.
- Consultation material.
- Membership schemes.
- Sponsorship Assessment forms.

**The validation should ask the following questions of key stakeholders, particularly those that have committed funding to the initiative:**

- How sustainable is TCM funding?
- Is agreed core funding in place for the next three years?
- What level of project funding has been committed for the next three years?
- Are funders' main criteria addressed adequately by the present partnership structure and business plan and by future proposals?
- Are the outputs required by funders over the next three years fully understood?
- Does the funding prognosis indicate that TCM is regarded sufficiently seriously?
- Is the business plan realistic, or merely a wish list dependent upon the acquisition of funding?
- Does the funding base need to be increased?
- Have all current sponsorship opportunities been developed fully?
- Do new funding opportunities need to be found?
- Can in-kind sponsorship be further developed?
- Have all relevant external agencies and government departments been approached for funding?
- Is a specialised sponsorship working group needed?
- Is funding available for future training requirements?
- Is funding available to buy in expertise, when required?
- Has the role of TCM being considered in the event that funding is not achieved?



## 5. Key Performance Indicators

**Key Aspects of Good Practice.** It is important that the TCM partnership establishes a number of benchmarks (key performance indicators) to determine how the town centre changes over time.

- Key performance indicators (KPIs) should be designed to do two things:
  - measure the performance of the town centre over time.
  - measure the success or failure of TCM.
- The purpose of KPIs is to inform decision making and strategic planning and to monitor the impact of TCM projects.
- ATCM's Good Practice Guide 'Key Performance Indicators,' sets out town centre KPIs under the following headings:
  - i. **Regional Health.**
    - Population demographics.
    - Employment.
    - Industrial structure.
  - ii. **Town Centre Health.**
    - Retail vacancy.
    - Retail performance.
    - Retail sales.
  - iii. **Town Centre Progress.**
    - Visits to the town centre.
    - Car parking.
    - Public transport.
    - Crime, safety and security.
    - Variety of offer.
    - Public facilities.
    - Street maintenance and cleanliness.
    - Facilities for special needs.
    - Town centre management activity.
  - iv. **Optional Town Specific Indicators.**
    - Tourism.
    - Evening economy.



**Set Up Checklist.** Setting up the effective use of KPIs involves four main areas of activity.

**Establish KPIs**

- For the Town Centre.
- For the TCM Initiative.
- For the Town Centre Manager.

**Seek help with delivery.**

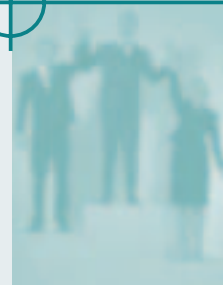
- Establish who collects local data, e.g. shopping centre managers, local authority and the police.
- Involve others in collecting performance data such as footfall, parking and crime figures.

**Make use of KPI data.**

- Ensure that performance indicators become a useful measure of the town's health.
- Consider how the information can be used to attract investment.
- Demonstrate the benefits of TCM projects by promoting performance data.

**Incorporate into the business plan.**

- The business plan should include performance indicators for each project to set targets and certain levels of achievement.
- Do not overlook the 'feel good' factor when identifying indicators.



**Validation Checklist.** The KPI validation should assess how TCM is communicating with stakeholders and measuring progress.

**The documentation review should include:**

- Minutes and agendas of meetings.
- Business Plan.
- Action Plan.
- KPIs that are in place.
- Promotional literature.
- Media releases.
- Annual reports.
- Progress reports.
- The town centre manager's progress report.
- Monitoring reviews.
- Membership Services.

**The validation should ask the following questions of stakeholders:**

- Is there a comprehensive set of indicators and measures to assess the effectiveness of TCM, the town centre manager and the initiatives that influence the town centre?
- Would additional indicators improve monitoring of the partnership, the town centre manager and the town centre?
- Should other partners be involved in the collection of performance data?
- Can a non-specific method be developed to collect retail performance data?
- Are performance indicators used to attract funding?
- Are KPIs fed into the business planning process?
- Are key stakeholders kept informed of performance data?
- Are KPIs publicised to a wider group?
- Are KPIs used to set targets?
- Is the town centre manager assessed regularly?
- Is the initiative subject to Best Value assessment? (See Appendix B for a description of Best Value principles).
- How important is the role of KPIs in developing:
  - i. TCM?
  - ii. The town centre?
  - iii. Town centre projects undertaken by other bodies?
  - iv. The town centre manager?

## Appendix A – **Glossary of Terms**

<b>Action Plan</b>	A short-term practical plan for implementing the agreed objectives of the business plan that it time and resource focused.
<b>Business Plan</b>	The working document for the TCM partnership, defining the objectives arising from its strategy and vision, and identifying sources of funding and participants.
<b>Best Value</b>	A system of review defined by Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 that requires local authorities to continuously improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.
<b>Community Sector</b>	Residents, interest groups and religious bodies that contribute to the social infrastructure.
<b>Consultation</b>	The process of gathering views to take account of all opinions. A good consultation process shows evidence of its scope.
<b>Core Funding</b>	Income secured to cover the initiative's revenue expenditure.
<b>Delivery Body</b>	An organisation with ultimate responsibility for delivering a project.
<b>Early Wins</b>	Short-term, often high profile, achievements and successes designed to increase confidence in the initiative and secure its future.
<b>Funding</b>	The total resources provided in the form of cash, in-kind contributions and expertise.
<b>Health Check</b>	The audit of a variety of town centre elements to gauge its general viability and vitality.
<b>In-Kind Funding</b>	Contributions other than cash to which a monetary value can be assigned.
<b>Inward Investment</b>	New and additional investment in the town centre and the targeted process of attracting it.

<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	Benchmarks to measure how the town centre changes over time and in response to specific inputs.
<b>Local Plan</b>	A statutory document that guides the local authority's planning decisions.
<b>Outputs</b>	The measurable results of achieving business plan objectives and delivering action plan projects.
<b>Section 106 Funding</b>	An agreement between a local authority and a planning applicant to fund or contribute to specific local authority projects.
<b>Sponsors</b>	All those investing in the TCM initiative.
<b>SRB</b>	Single Regeneration Budget.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<p>Those with a statutory, pecuniary or social interest in the town centre. In the context of the TCM initiative, they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Executive/Steering Group. Key partners involved in decision making.</li> <li>ii. Partnership. Representatives of interests within the town centre.</li> <li>iii. Working/Sub Groups. Specific project groups.</li> <li>iv. Forum. A formal or informal consultation group.</li> </ul>
<b>SWOT</b>	The process of identifying and analysing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
<b>Vision</b>	A clear statement of what the partnership wants the town centre to become in a specified time period.



## Appendix B – **An Overview of Best Value**

**An outline of the underlying objectives of Best Value legislation, the use of reviews, performance plans and performance indicators for achieving Best Value and synergies with town centre management.**

### *Essential Principles*

Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires local authorities and others to make formal arrangements to continuously improve the way they work, in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Known as Best Value, the requirement came into force in England on 1 April 2000, along with a mandatory five-year review of progress. It applies to councils with an annual income of £500,000 or more. The idea behind Best Value is to develop a new way of thinking about every one of an organisation's functions, the principal focus of which is always to improve their outcomes. As part of the government's policy of modernising local democracy, Best Value also changes the rules for monitoring and reporting on service delivery, requiring performance plans and local targets to be measured for publication by national performance indicators.

**Objectives.** In order to accord with guidelines published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), cost and efficiency targets will have to be consistent with the performance of the top 25% of local authorities over a 5 year period and consistent with achieving an overall efficiency improvement of 2 per cent per annum set for local government as a whole. Best Value is inextricably linked to the government's vision for modernising public services. Its principles include ensuring that:

- 1 public services are responsive to the needs of citizens, rather than the convenience of the service provider
- 2 public services are efficient and of a high quality
- 3 policy making reflects forward-looking and coordinated strategic action, specifically avoiding reaction to short-term pressures
- 4 information technology is used to tailor services to the needs of users
- 5 public services are valued, particularly in relation to addressing under-utilisation by minority groups.

Best Value is designed to deliver these results at local level by developing strategies which view service provision not as an end in itself, but which set it in the context of objectives and vision for the quality of community life in a particular area. The aim is to provide local services that respond quickly and imaginatively to people's needs, which calls for genuine flexibility.

**Partnership.** Government guidance emphasises the importance of partnerships between local government and the private and voluntary sectors in delivering Best Value. In this respect, it is important to remember that Best Value is as much a management philosophy as a statutory framework. It is intended to be applied flexibly to fulfil its potential for delivering change. Partnership, for example, demands clarity about the contribution expected from each of the partners at different stages of policy development and implementation, as well as new management structures that recognise the challenges and opportunities that arise from working with others. Almost by definition, any temptation to view Best Value as a purely technical device will inhibit such insights. One way to avoid this narrow, technical view is to ensure input from elected members as well as council officers, to the degree that local politicians assume ownership of the outcomes, and, thus, that the outcomes respond to the popular mandate, rather than simply constituting the result of a mechanical process.

**Outcomes.** The issue of outcomes is central to the concept of Best Value. It should not be confused with measuring performance per se. Performance indicators, for example, are usually geared to measuring how effectively a service is provided, whereas the interests of Best Value extend to challenging the very rationale for the service. In other words, Best Value defines outcomes in terms of communal benefit and questions the belief that an efficient service is necessarily a valuable service. Looking at performance indicators alone runs the risk of providing information on inputs and outputs, but not on the outcomes.

Town Centre Management offers clear potential for enhancing the ability to measure outcomes at local level, using the partnership approach favoured by government. It exists both as a good example of how partnerships of key stakeholders are brought together to deliver outcomes for the success of that town centre and as an established structure for monitoring achievement and analysing problems through consultation. It follows that these existing networks for consultation are well placed to develop Best Value, ensuring that key stakeholders are involved in the process and have ownership of the performance plan.

Lincoln and a number of other Town Centre Management Initiatives are currently working together to establish a common format to develop a way of monitoring and reviewing the performance of their various initiatives. They have developed a format which seeks to measure an initiative by its impact on three distinct outcomes: city centre growth, sustaining viability and position, and, finally, providing a forum. The main areas of work necessary to provide these outcomes have been highlighted under each of these main headings:

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Grow City Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify New Opportunities</li> <li>- Promote Investment</li> </ul> |
|------------------|--|

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Sustain the Viability and Position | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safety and Security</li> <li>- Improve Environment</li> <li>- Events</li> <li>- Welcome Visitors</li> <li>- Promotion</li> <li>- Accessibility</li> <li>- Support Business</li> <li>- Develop Evening Economy</li> </ul> |
| Provide a Forum                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication</li> <li>- Research</li> <li>- Mediate</li> <li>- Raise Issues and Awareness</li> <li>- Publish Strategy Document</li> <li>- Partnership Activity</li> <li>- Administration</li> </ul>                     |

The towns chose some key performance indicators that they could each measure, in order to enable effective comparisons; namely, vacancy rates, car parking figures, trading figures, crime statistics and footfall trends. To develop the system in the most effective way a formula is being developed that takes account of the time put into the project, the cost of the project and the income that the initiative receives. The formula works by calculating cost on the basis of the percentage of overall time and overheads devoted to a particular project and deducting this figure from income to give a project value. The relevant local authority's commitment is worked out simply by dividing its contribution by the project value.

From this simple formula the value of each individual job can be calculated, which helps when reviewing best value in deciding whether a particular project is viable or not. The information will be used as the basis for benchmarking the best value review, together with public consultation and a qualitative report to explain the issues and challenges in more detail.

**Variations.** Early pilots of Best Value schemes have shown very different experiences in different parts of the UK. Scotland, for example, places greater emphasis on evolving and learning about what actually works than on statutory regulation. Networks of local authorities and COSLA are very active in supporting this approach. Wales has some good examples of Best Value, with 23 Unitary authorities already having carried out pilots. In future, the National Assembly will be taking an increasing role in setting performance indicators.

## Best Value Reviews

Section 5 of the Act requires authorities to conduct Best Value Reviews of their various functions. This means they will need to consider:

- 1 whether they should be doing the function at all
- 2 at what level and in which way they should be doing the function
- 3 how their objectives are served by the function.

This fundamental level of assessment relates the function back to the crucial element of outcomes and it is at this stage that performance indicators assume central importance. The authority must then assess their delivery of the function, consult other authorities, commercial businesses and the voluntary sector on how they undertake the same or comparable functions, compare their performance of the function with that of those other organisations, and assess the function's effectiveness in meeting its performance targets.

**Method.** In conducting the Best Value Review the authority must, then:

- 1 challenge the rationale for the service under review
- 2 compare performance with other authorities, using a range of relevant performance targets
- 3 consult local taxpayers, service users, partners, elected members and the wider business community in the setting of new performance targets
- 4 consider how services are provided and whether, using fair and open competition, they could be done more effectively by another party.

**Implementation.** Local authorities will not be expected to implement Best Value Reviews for all services immediately. The DETR guidance shows how different types of service might become subject to review on an incremental basis, in order of priority. It gives an example in which services chosen for the first year of reviews are defined as those which are:

- relatively important to the public
- suffering an accurate public perception of poor performance
- relatively high cost
- comprising of a relatively large proportion of all spending
- central to delivering the council's objectives and priorities, and, lastly
- openness to delivery by alternative providers in the marketplace.

One authority developed a scoring matrix to prioritise services for the first year of reviews, each service being scored on a 1-5 scale against the following criteria:

- 1 public satisfaction
- 2 importance to the public

- 3 user satisfaction
- 4 size of budget
- 5 performance, as measured by national indicators and other benchmarks
- 6 cost
- 7 potential for market delivery
- 8 strategic fit with council objectives
- 9 quality accreditation.

All council services have to be reviewed over a five-year period. Local authorities must publish the outcome of Best Value Reviews, as well as their plans for future reviews. How they do so will have to be learnt by experience. It may be that two versions will be needed, so that the information can be communicated effectively to a technical audience and to the general public. Public opinion is a central focus of Best Value. The need for feedback on service provision will require surveys and focus groups and special attention to the views of less vocal elements of the community.

## *Performance Plans*

The achievement of performance plans is the principal means by which an authority will be held to account for the efficiency and effectiveness of its services in delivering its vision for the future. Performance plans aim to add real value by consolidating information on authorities' performance and budgeting across all services. They will also help Best Value authorities to engage with the private sector and others by demonstrating their abilities and intentions as service providers.

Performance plans will show which services the authority will deliver to local people, how it will deliver them, the current level of service delivery, the intended future levels of service, and how and when services will be delivered. The plans will set these intentions in the context of their practical impact on outcomes by including:

- 1 a description of the authority's objectives
- 2 a summary of current performance and a comparison with performance in the previous financial year
- 3 a statement of the authority's approach to efficiency improvement
- 4 a description of the review programme and the key results of completed reviews
- 5 the performance targets set for future years and a plan of action to achieve them
- 6 a statement of how the authority has exercised its duty to consult with local people and other interested parties in drawing up its plans
- 7 a response to audit and inspection reports and a financial statement.

**Structure.** The government does not intend to specify a precise format for performance plans, but it is working with the Audit Commission, the LGA and the I&DeA to identify good practice in adopting styles amenable to audit. The aim is for published performance plans to balance statutory audit requirements against a general requirement for transparency and accessibility, consistent with government's view of greater accountability to local people. Performance plans clearly offer opportunities for elected members to develop better policy making and reviewing, which itself may tend to accelerate modernisation by challenging received wisdom about service provision and targets.

A particular issue here is whether plans are structured by service or by 'cross-cutting' themes such as social inclusion, racial harassment, domestic violence and regenerating communities. On the whole, public consultation may increase demand for the cross-cutting approach, as people do not generally categorise services on a departmental basis. Such plans are harder to achieve, however, as most data is concentrated in individual services or departments. In the future, Best Value is likely to generate more demand for joined-up service delivery and the need for inter-agency solutions will inevitably force more attention on identifying, monitoring, and reporting on cross-cutting themes, an example of how the legislation might drive, rather than simply enable, modernisation.

## *Performance Indicators*

A number of people have described Best Value as, 'nothing revolutionary – just good management,' and, indeed, the whole concept of providing services that people want at the right price is the essence of good business. The key to good management is good management systems and councils need new methods to respond to the new challenges of Best Value. Performance indicators are becoming powerful tools for making judgements about achievements, priorities and what to scrutinise next. There are four different types of indicators:

- 1 Local indicators, based on internal data such as budgets, audit figures gathered for annual reports or reviews, statistics used for internal monitoring, quality management systems and one-off analyses.
- 2 Comparisons with others, useful for suggesting areas of better or worse performance, subject to the need for qualification with the individual situation.
- 3 Comparisons over time to assess progress and learn from experience.
- 4 Benchmarking. A key tool, capable of operation at a number of different levels, including looking at input and output ratios, processes and functional issue of structure, operations and resources.

Authorities can also set their own local indicators in consultation with service users and others. One local council's draft performance plan, for example, identified eight corporate performance indicators:

- 1 Net cost of all council services per head per annum.
- 2 Percentage of respondents to a questionnaire indicating satisfaction with council services, with a year one target of 60 per cent.

- 3 Percentage of staff working days lost to sickness absence.
- 4 Number of council buildings suitable for the disabled, year one target 2 out of 3.
- 5 Number of rooms in council buildings suitable for the disabled, year one target 12 out of 16.
- 6 Percentage of incoming correspondence answered within 10 working days, year one target 85 per cent.
- 7 Percentage turnout for council elections.
- 7 Number of partnership arrangements involving the council.

Arrangements are being made all over the country to exchange information and experience on benchmarking systems. The audit commission will play an important role in developing guidance and good practice in this area. It has already done considerable work in identifying national performance indicators. In addition, the DETR has commissioned Warwick University Business School and Cardiff University to study the operation of Best Value to identify a specific number of effective performance indicators capable of national application: 124 for London Boroughs and Metropolitan Councils, 105 for County Councils and 64 for District Councils.

A development framework also needs to be put in place to align effective performance indicators to performance plans. Accurate data is a fundamental requirement if council committees are ever to advance beyond their traditional function of debating proposals towards a meaningful role in the development process, in line with the government's aim for elected members to play a part in the Best Value process from an early stage. This is an area where town centre management has an established reputation, employing national service specific performance indicators set by the government and the Audit Commission. Local Authority members are already key stakeholders in town centre partnership arrangements, with an important development role.

**Purpose.** Although most local authorities have been working with performance indicators in one form or another for a decade or more, many could learn from the town centre management experience of identifying issues, monitoring performance, interpreting results and designing appropriate actions. At present, the use of performance indicators by local government is often an ad hoc process, limited by locally available expertise, which may or may not involve an ability to set standards and targets for the outcomes of services. There is a clear need for local authorities to ask whether they have looked in detail at national performance indicators and how to use them most effectively.

In this respect, the questions that performance indicators need to answer are:

- 1 What is the service really trying to achieve and what do particular figures tell us about what it achieves in practice?
- 2 Are the figures collected in a consistent way over time?
- 3 Do different people use different methods to collect data and is the information Accurate?
- 4 Do other factors affect performance and are comparisons fair?
- 5 Are the figures measuring outcomes, or just inputs and outputs?

Used correctly and consistently, performance indicators can produce several categories of information. They can identify the cost, level and quality of services, help to select and prioritise services for fundamental review, contribute to judgements about performance, and identify possible benchmarking partners. Taken together, they can assist auditors and others to judge whether Best Value is being achieved. Section 15 of the Act gives the Secretary of State wide-ranging powers to intervene if authorities are failing to achieve Best Value.

**Further Information.** For detailed information about all aspects of Best Value, including performance indicators for all aspects of local authority services, see the DETR's Best Value web pages at:

**[www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/bestvalue/bvindex.htm](http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/bestvalue/bvindex.htm)**

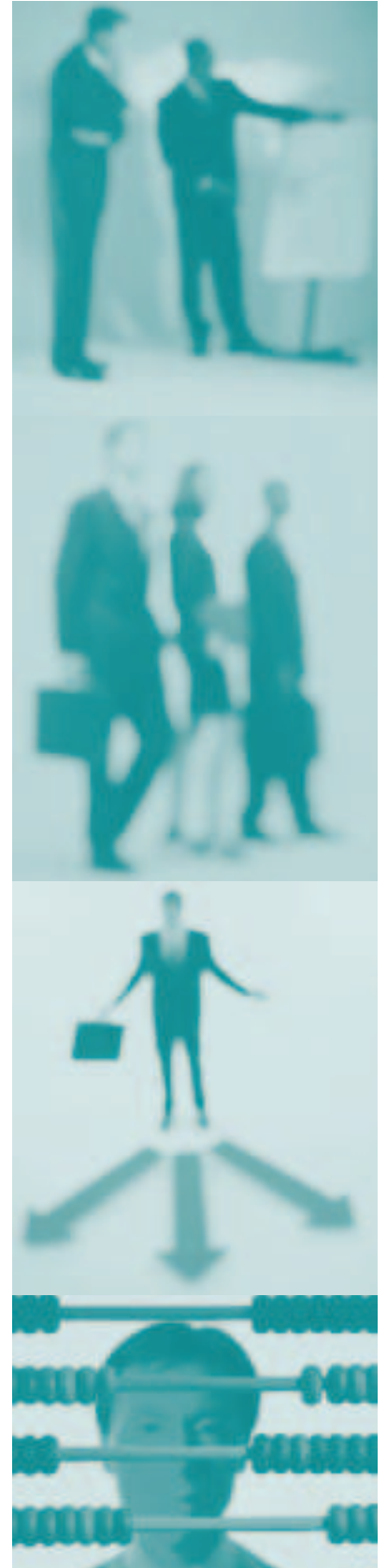


## Appendix C – **Contributors to the Research**

ATCM is grateful to the following towns, cities, districts and boroughs that contributed to the research for this guide.

Alton	Malton and Norton
Angel, Islington	Norwich
Balham	Peterborough
Basingstoke	Putney
Blackpool	Reigate and Banstead
Bolton	Rotherham
Bradford	Scarborough
Brentwood	Shrewsbury
Bromley	Shirley
Camberley	Solihull
Cambridge	Southampton
Clapham Junction	St Anne's
Finchley Road and Swiss Cottage	Stoke on Trent
Fleetwood	Taunton
Godalming	Tooting
Great Yarmouth	Twickenham
Huddersfield	Walsall
Hull	Wandsworth
Kilburn	Warrington
Kingsbury	Wallington
Leyland	Wisbech
Hammersmith and Fulham	Wolverhampton





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## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience**

#### **Questions to the Police**

##### **Do you think crime has an affect on footfall to the town centre?**

Unfortunately, without specific details regarding footfall to the town centre it is not possible to ascertain whether crime has an effect.

It is however thought that crime does not affect footfall, with the possible exception of any high profile cases of crime which may cause short term concerns.

The environment in which someone is looking to shop is more likely to affect footfall. The places to park, the cleanliness, the availability of a selection of shops will affect whether someone decides to visit the town centre or to shop elsewhere.

Antisocial behaviour, perceived or otherwise, such as young people 'hanging about', incivilities, drinking in the street and environmental crime provide for an unwelcoming environment.

##### **What do you think the Council could do, in terms of safety, to make the town centre more appealing to visitors?**

Resources should be invested in ensuring the cleanliness of the town; reducing the signs of spiral of decline and broken window syndrome.

By ensuring general cleanliness is maintained, broken pavements mended, streets cleaned of rubbish and graffiti, chewing gum removed, soft landscaping maintained visitors will be presented with a positive impression of Northampton town, and shown an environment where they will want to visit and shop. When left unaddressed all those maintenance tasks collectively present an uncared for town, and can create an environment for misuse and anti-social behaviour to flourish.

An increase uniformed presence should be encouraged by partners, alongside the use of powers of partners in seizure of alcohol.

Continue with partnership campaigns such as the 'kill with kindness campaign' promoting the support of charities to help break the cycle of homelessness.

Retailers need to be encouraged into the town, potentially through grants or reduced rates. For those empty retail outlets to be presented in a manor which look occupied / cared for.

**Do you think anti social behaviour caused by drinking and begging has an affect on footfall and how many prosecutions have there been in the past 12 months?**

Again without specific details relating to footfall to the town centre it is not possible to answer as no correlation between ASB and footfall can be drawn.

However, in the absence of any data it is felt that ASB may have an impact on whether persons will visit the town centre. It is believed that street drinking and begging may impact on visitors who would rather shop in what they consider to be a safe environment. What is important to note however, ASB is not solely due to drinking or begging and may be shown in other forms which could equally impact on whether a person chooses to visit the town.

In terms of the data requested, the information provided relates to arrests for Drunk and Disorderly and arrests for Begging/Vagrancy. Unfortunately arrest data is recorded against the custody station to which the arrested person is taken and not where the arrest was made.

In 2011 there were 497 arrests countywide for Drunk and Disorderly (207 of whom were taken to Campbell Square or Weston Favell) and 19 arrests for Begging/Vagrancy (11 of who were taken to Campbell Square or Weston Favell). This compares to 438 arrests for Drunk and Disorderly (164 of whom were taken to Campbell Square or Weston Favell and a further 6 to the Criminal Justice Centre, Brackmills) and 34 arrests for Begging/Vagrancy in 2012 (10 of whom were taken to Campbell Square or Weston Favell and a further 6 to the Criminal Justice Centre, Brackmills).

The levels of ASB for the Northampton Central Area shows the number of recorded ASB incidents for begging/ vagrancy has risen from 52 in 2011 to 61 in 2012. In 2011 there were 37 incidents of street drinking, however these figures cannot be compared as street drinking ceased to be a specific type of ASB in 2011.

In addition between July and November 2012 there were 447 seizures of alcohol undertaken within the Central Sector (relating to police data only).



## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

#### SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – RETAIL EXPERIENCE

14 February 2013

#### BRIEFING NOTE: SITE VISIT TO THE GROSVENOR CENTRE, NORTHAMPTON

##### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Panel on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012, it was agreed that site visits take place so that a comparison could be made with other town centres against that of Northampton.
- 1.2 Recently, it was suggested by a member of the Panel, and agreed by the Chair, that it would be useful for a site visit to the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton, to take place on a similar basis to the visits to:

Peterborough  
Norwich  
Market Harborough  
Milton Keynes

- 1.3 Councillor Tony Ansell visited the Grosvenor Centre on Monday 11 February 2013 and was accompanied by the Corporate Asset Manager and Scrutiny Officer. Discussions were held with the Grosvenor Centre Manager, Russell Hall.

##### **2 Information**

- 2.1 The Grosvenor Centre is generally clean, open and airy with a nice ambiance. Although a little dated a pleasant shopping experience was created. Seating areas are in situ in both the upper and lower malls. The Centre Manager advised that he was in discussions regarding a possible refresh of the malls to make the Centre more contemporary and sustainable.
- 2.2 There were a number of rubbish bins available for shoppers' use. Mats are available at each entrance but it was noticed that the tiled flooring did become slippery.
- 2.3 Upon arrival there were not many shoppers around but this was expected as it was a snowy Monday morning. Towards the end of the site visit there were a lot more people present.

- 2.4 Security staff, wearing smart uniforms, are visible with the Centre. The site visit observed cleaning of the centre being carried out, both on the upper and lower malls. The Grosvenor Centre Manager advised that he encourages staff to extend cleaning outside the centre, under the canopy area onto Abington Street (that is not owned by the Centre).
- 2.5 Children's rides were available on the lower mall and these were being used.
- 2.6 Detailed at Appendix A are various photographs of the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton.
- 2.7 The Grosvenor Centre has its own [webpage](#) , which includes details of:
- Shops
  - Location map
  - Events
  - News

### 3 **Retail Units**

- 3.1 A number of vacant retail units were seen within the Grosvenor Centre, but the Centre Manager advised that some new lettings were likely to be completed shortly.

#### **Range of Retail Units**

- 3.2 The range of retail units within the Grosvenor Centre include:

- Boots
- HMV
- Disney Store
- Sainsbury's
- New Look
- WH Smith
- I Store
- Pandora
- Body Shop
- Nationwide Building Society
- Superdrug
- Monsoon
- House of Frazer
- BHS
- H Samuel
- Superdry
- Millie's Cookies
- Michael Jones Jewellers
- Warren James
- Diechmann Shoes
- Vision Express
- Costa Coffee
- McDonalds

- Ernest Jones
- Card Factory
- Burton's
- Poundworld
- Kiss Cards
- Costa Coffee
- Claire's Accessories
- Mr Simms Sweet Shop
- The Perfume Shop

3.3 The Centre Manager advised that organisations have to adhere to strict criteria should they want to promote their services within the Grosvenor Centre.

#### **4 Toilet Facilities**

4.1 The toilet area is clean and easily accessible.

#### **5 Signage**

5.1 Clear signage was in place in the Grosvenor Centre, examples within Appendix A.

#### **6 Events**

6.1 The Centre Manager liaises with Northampton Borough Council regarding events and potential events to ensure there is no duplication and whether work can be done together on certain events. Staff at the Grosvenor Centre have a dialogue with the University of Northampton regarding fashion presence.

6.2 Initiatives to enhance the retail experience take place, for example a local jeweller took part in a recent "red rose" promotion.

6.3 Prior to the festive season, space is made available in the Grosvenor Centre for the Christmas present wrapping charity event.

#### **7 Footfall**

7.1 The Grosvenor Centre Manager confirmed that annual footfall is 11.5 million. Footfall on Sundays had increased with the offer of free parking on Sundays. The street fair that took place in October 2012 had a positive impact on footfall, but not all retailers outside the Centre had co-ordinated opening times to take advantage of that.

#### **8 Grosvenor Centre – car parking**

8.1 The car park is owned and maintained by the Council. Major renewal work to the car park, including re-waterproofing and resurfacing was carried out approximately 18 months ago. More recently there have been lighting upgrade works.

8.2 During the visit to the car park area, some lights were not working. A boarded up window was observed, as was an out of date maintenance



sign. Councillor Ansell felt that the area around the lift could benefit from a deep clean. The advertising boards inside the lifts were empty.

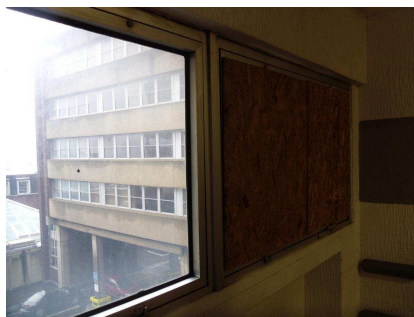
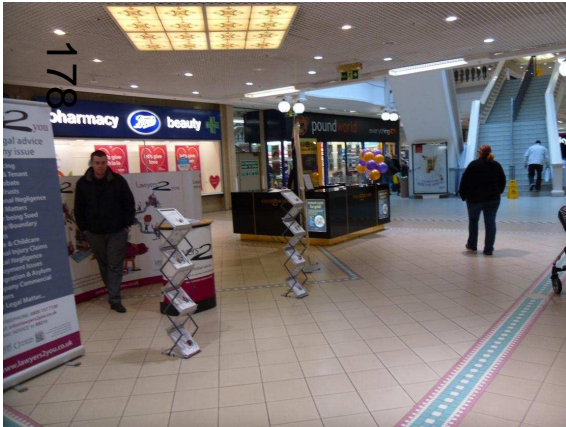
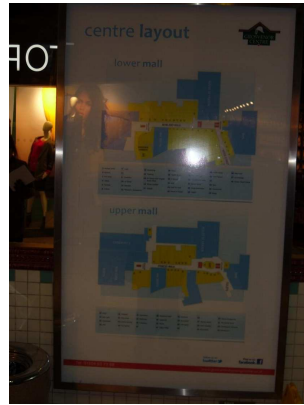
## **9 Recommendations**

- 9.1 That the information gathered from the site visit to the Grosvenor Centre be used to inform the Panel's evidence base.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Tony Ansell, member of Scrutiny Panel 2

Date: 11 February 2013

A sample of photographs taken within the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton – 11 February 2013





**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

#### **SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – RETAIL EXPERIENCE**

**14<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2013**

#### **BRIEFING NOTE: RESPONSES TO THE PANEL'S CORE QUESTIONS FROM NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY FORUMS**

##### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Panel on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012, it was agreed that Members of the Panel would attend meetings of the Northampton Community Forums and ask attendees for their responses to the Panel's core questions.

##### **Information**

##### **2 Disabled People's Forum**

- 2.1 Councillor Danielle Stone attended the Disabled People's Forum on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012. Responses from attendees at the meeting are detailed below.
- 2.2 The Forum was concerned about the number of empty shops and one suggestion was that it would be useful to have dialogue with landlords to discuss negotiating a lower rental of properties. The Forum noted that the Business Improvement District (BID) was developing ways forward by looking at a variety of options to improve and attract new business to the area.
- 2.3 One Forum member voiced their concerns that there were too many eateries, pubs and clubs in the town and that any further development or expansion of these should be halted.
- 2.4 A further concern was expressed about the lack of gardening and electrical stores within the town centre. The Forum commented on the lack of public toilets in the town centre.
- 2.5 A suggestion was proposed that parking facilities could be improved to increase footfall in the town centre. The Forum was informed that there were three car parks within the town centre where charges were not applicable for the first hour, which was of great benefit for people coming in to the town to shop.
- 2.6 The Forum felt that the bus interchange would also increase the amount of foot fall in the town centre, which in turn would increase the use of the

market. Work was being undertaken with market traders in order to work towards improving trade for the market holders.

- 2.7 Other comments put forward by the Forum included making signage more visible to ensure that motorists and pedestrians are given instructions on how to access the town centre, making sure that the gateway into Northampton is clear and clean and well maintained. Some signage could be erected to reflect the modernisation and developments within the town centre.

### **3 Pensioners' Forum**

- 3.1 Councillor Danielle Stone attended the Pensioners' Forum on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012. A precis of the responses from attendees at the meeting is detailed below.

**Respondent 1** - The town centre deteriorated when the insurance agents and solicitors moved out of town into retail parks, taking away the workers who had used the town centre in the lunchtimes/ after work. He bought clothes in town and shopped for groceries at a nearby supermarket. He feels that grocery shops won't return to the town centre unless they are smaller specialist retailers such as those on St Giles Street. The respondent uses the market and feels that traders should form a cooperative and run the market.

**Respondent 2** - The number of empty shops dragged the town centre area down. The respondent uses the local supermarket and sometimes shops for groceries on line as it means that she does not have to carry it. The respondent shops for clothes in the town centre as she likes to see and feel items. She uses shops such as Wilkos and the Pound Shop. The respondent also likes to look in charity shops for bric a brac and household items. She would like to see a reasonably priced antiques/collectibles shop in the town centre.

**Respondent 3** uses the town centre for a variety of services as well as shopping. He shops at the local supermarkets, charity shops, buys clothes at Marks and Spencer's. He also shops at Wilkos and the Pound Shop and the market. The respondent uses the local barber, local coffee shop and the library. The respondent feels that the market was more vibrant when the shops that surround it were more attractive and regular music events were held. He would like to see fewer betting shops and low value eating places.

**Respondent 4** had been taxi driver for many years. He advised that feedback he had received was the areas around town were well served with local shopping parades but that the town centre had lost key shops. The respondent felt that, in his opinion, car parking changes had been detrimental to the town.

**Respondent 5** comes into town several times a week. He feels that the approaches to the town centre, such as along the Kettering Road are a disgrace with boarded up shops, graffiti etc. The respondent considered that the market no longer offered variety and he was disappointed that the Sunday Art Markets no longer took place.

**Respondent 6** does not shop if possible. He uses his allotment to grow his own produce and felt that these and community gardens should be promoted. He shops at Wilkos and uses the library. He considered that the role of Northampton as a market town has changed and that losing the cattle market had reduced the numbers of people coming into the town.

**Respondent 7** feels that the rise of the supermarkets has led to the deterioration of the town centre by providing a wide range of goods out of the town centre. St Giles Street is the only attractive street because of the mix of independent shops. There are no longer any fruit and veg shops outside of the supermarkets or any butchers or fishmongers in the town centre. The respondent shops out of town at John Lewis at Milton Keynes.

**Respondent 8** uses Marks and Spencer's, town centre coffee shops and supermarkets. He shops at local mini supermarkets and uses the market.

#### **Additional comments**

Some members of the Forum felt that the change in retail habits was, in part, a generation change. Younger working people did not have the time to shop in a variety of places but used supermarkets as they were able to shop in one place. The Forum felt that at its height the market may have been very successful.

#### **4 LGBT and Q Forum**

4.1 Councillor Matt Lynch, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2, attended the meeting of the LGBT and Q Forum on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2012 posing the Panel's core questions to members.

4.2 Responses from attendees:

#### **Please supply details of your shopping experience in Northampton**

- Some shops are hard to locate. It would help to have more maps or audio-visual devices
- Parking in Northampton is hard to find and is expensive
- There is lots of traffic in Northampton, making it difficult to drive in the town, and motorists frequently park on double yellow lines, thus contributing to the congestion. There should be better "no parking" signage, and this should be enforced more rigorously
- In view of competition with Milton Keynes and Leicester, a park-and-ride scheme would help attract shoppers into Northampton

**What do you feel would enhance the retail experience to attract new visitors / shoppers and increase the number of return visits to the town centre?**

- Not enough is made of Northampton's older buildings. The town's heritage needs to be enhanced
- Northampton lacks "personality", compared to towns like Milton Keynes and Leicester
- The town centre needs a lick of paint; currently, many buildings in the town are very grey
- Local artists could create artwork on display boards outside buildings

**Do you feel communication levels from the Borough Council regarding new town centre developments are effective and why?**

- Communication via Forums is good
- Communication with visitors needs to be improved
- Many of the Forum members were aware of the Love Northampton website and felt that this was a good way of communicating

**What would you like town centre to look like in 5 years' time?**

- It is fine to preserve buildings, but the town does need a focal point
- The Market Square is dated, and needs rejuvenating. The Square would benefit from a focal point, such as a fountain
- Some members of the Forum said that they used the market; one member said that they used it for buying vegetables

**Has there been any occasion where you have used the Internet to buy any item and why?**

- Most members of the forum said that they had bought on the Internet and over the telephone. It is much easier and more convenient to use these methods. However, for more expensive products, it is good to see them before purchasing
- Internet shopping and retail shopping are two different activities.
- There are lots of specialist shops in St Giles Street; would always buy such items in person
- There needs to be a specific Northampton identity or theme for signs, perhaps with a unified colour or design

## General comments:

- Communication within the Grosvenor centre is difficult. Mobile phones do not work there. It would be good to have Wi-Fi in the shopping centre
- Northampton would benefit from a major shopping centre such as the Westfield centres in London
- More people should be celebrating Northampton's heritage (examples include the double helix and Charles Bradlaugh). Public art could make Northampton more attractive to visitors and shoppers
- The recent Pride of Lions display was attractive

## 5 Diverse Communities Equalities Forum

- 5.1 Councillor Suresh Patel, Co-Chair, Diverse Communities Forum, took the Panel's core questions to the meeting held on 22nd November 2012. As there was limited attendance it was agreed that the questions would not be discussed.

## 6 Youth Forum

- 6.1 The Youth Forum put the Panel's core questions to its members and various connections over the summer period but unfortunately received no responses. Therefore the survey was re submitted in September 2012, ending on 31 October 2012 and it was also listed on the consultation page of the Council's website. There were six respondents to the survey who provided responses to the core questions as detailed below.

### **What do you feel would enhance the retail experience to attract new visitors / shoppers and increase the number of return visits to the town centre?**

Incentivise the shop owner by lowering the rents of the units even for a temporary period of time

The Grosvenor, Peacock Place, Abington Street and Derngate are blighted by empty shops

Why the talk of new shops when there are units already there that are empty?

Keep the town centre clean

We cannot turn the clock back but we can learn from the past

We encouraged labour intensive businesses (Solicitors, Insurance, Accountants etc.) to move out of town centres, the employees of these concerns were the ones that shopped in town at lunchtimes and at the end of the day, can we not encourage business back?

The market traders could be encouraged to form a co-operative (say Northampton Market Ltd.) to run the operation, NBC to lay out all the ground rules and police it and then take a nominal site rent from the business

Either make a proper job of the fountain or scrap it

Try and reduce parking charges with more free periods

A wider range of quality shops and reduction in the budget/"pound" shops  
 in the main retail centres. Larger circulatory areas between shops  
 Free parking for longer than 1 hour, or a reduction in the overall prices  
 (recently went to the opticians, went straight back to the car afterwards else  
 would have gone over hour and had to pay a 2hr fee)  
 Clean Streets (regular litter picking and jet washing of footpaths)  
 More incentives to come into town e.g. cheap parking, discounts across  
 town such as 20% off once a month across all stores?  
 Could the Cobblers or Saints set up a clothing/merchandise shop in one  
 of the empty shops in Abington Street to remind the community of our  
 rich sporting history?  
 More independent small retailers. Less cheap Pound shops  
 A larger M&S  
 Making the town more easily accessible by car - reduce congestion  
 to make journey times into and out of the town quicker  
 More on-street parking  
 Opening the central area of Abington Street between Wellington Street and St Giles  
 Terrace to vehicles with significant parking  
 Open Bridge Street, Gold Street and Marefare to vehicles  
 More planting - trees. Hanging baskets etc. all the year round  
 A better Market offer  
 A zero tolerance policy towards beggars, drunks, and those drinking  
 on the streets  
 A shuttle bus linking the railway station, hospital, St James Retail Park  
 and Morrison's on Victoria Promenade with the town Centre  
 A much better cleansing regime with chewing gum  
 removed from pavements and all gullies free of debris so they work.  
 Pavements should be washed daily like in France  
 Better Christmas Lights like there was back in the 60s  
 Lower car parking charges  
 Car parking closer to the shops  
 Cleaner streets  
 Fewer tatty cheapo shops  
 Shop facades to be more in keeping with the original architecture  
 of the buildings  
 No seasonal "Here today, gone tomorrow" shops selling "tacky cheapo  
 Rubbish"  
 Better customer services instead of the "take it or lump it" attitude that  
 pervades most shops but especially banks  
 Sort out the Bridge Street blockage so that customers can actually  
 access the town centre  
 Ban delivery lorries & vans in shopping hours - deliveries and street  
 cleansing to be done at night

**Do you feel communication levels from the Borough Council regarding new town centre developments are effective and why?**

No they are effective and often contradictory in nature  
 Yes, there has been a big improvement of late  
 Poor. Difficult to know quite what is happening with Grosvenor centre –  
 is it going ahead or not?  
 Fountain switched off - did bacterial infection not come into the design?  
 Community use of open area in market square seems hard - how does one go  
 about getting access?  
 As a member of the public I feel that the town has lost momentum with regards



to the Grosvenor centre redevelopment plans  
Perhaps more of an interface between a local success such as  
Weston Favell Centre could be worthwhile  
The council seem to take two steps forward and one step back.  
The people of Northampton deserve nice shops that appeal to all ages and  
also a pleasant night life  
Good information available on line, but not for the majority who are not on line.  
There is a need to connect more with those not on line so that they can  
be informed.  
The Borough Council is the most secretive and uncommunicative organisation  
unless a person is able to access the web or buy the "Chron"  
It never listens anyway, as it is driven either by party political dogma  
on one hand, and by bureaucratic intransigence on the other

### **What would you like the town centre to look like in five year's time?**

Full of busy and various shops  
More vibrant with an active market  
better range of quality shops, continue street art projects  
(e.g. safari & pride of Northampton  
- preferably with smartphone apps), improved access by roads  
(inner ring road is hopeless)  
more open air car parks - not gloomy multi-stories  
I would like it to look to other historic but forward thinking towns  
and cities such as Lincoln  
and Norwich classic examples of cities who have over the past decade grown their  
University around the town while improving job prospects, the sky line and  
the economy of the city  
No empty shops. More small independent retailers.  
The Grosvenor Centre extended.  
A better Market offer.  
Abington Street open to vehicles attracting more people to that  
area of town and providing more on street parking.  
A much cleaner town free of chewing gum etc.  
No beggars, drunks or people drinking on the streets.  
A fountain / water feature worthy of a large town that works  
- if London and towns in European Countries can have so many water  
features without presenting health problems, why can't Northampton?  
Quicker journey times by car into and out of the town centre  
No increase in parking charges. A shuttle bus around the town  
Greyfriars bus station demolished and the site re-developed  
Premises above shops occupied  
Alive and vibrant, giving a worthwhile shopping experience that would  
encourage me to return

### **If you shop on the Internet to buy please explain why?**

Its cheaper and convenient especially if the shops don't exist in town  
Because we do not have the variety in the shops and the cost of transport/parking  
easier, cheaper, better range, quality delivered to door, don't need to worry  
about parking cost / distance to car from shop, lack of town centre offer,  
no car congestion (hate going near Gas street roundabout on a Saturday).  
You have closed St John's open car park - multi storeys are gloomy and  
too tight  
Easy to do

Saves wandering around shops to get what you want then when you find it your specification / colour / size is not in stock  
No parking / travelling costs. Better prices / value for money  
A much more vibrant town that is attractive and makes people want to visit it  
I don't shop on the Internet

**Do you have any other comments about shopping in Northampton town centre?**

Fill up the empty Office Spaces, Sol House, The offices opposite Sol Central, Sheep Street. By offering competitive rates businesses or start-ups could use the office space this would have a potential two fold impact:

1. Increased use of public transport Trains\Buses
2. Increased footfall in the town centre for shops, cafes etc

No

Have lived in the town 8 years, been continual promises of regeneration of town centre but little action

Grosvenor is too small and out dated, the design of what is there is poor, elements are gloomy and uninviting (e.g. outside Sainsbury's / passage to current bus station). Yet due to openness / balcony upstairs actually feels better than down, but no clear signage or suggestion of quality up there to get us there in the first place. The kiosks at market end are no better than the chuggers of Abington street: SKY, cash 4 gold type, etc lower tone and use up floor area that would make centre look and feel bigger. Width of "street" just isn't big enough for kiosks and circulation leaving me feeling claustrophobic and inclined not to return.

Would rather go to MK where the centre is bigger, brighter, has quality shops & restaurants (John Lewis, Apple, Wagamama, etc. etc.)

I do not shop in town as much as I would like to due to the shop selection and the state of the streets.

Retail shopping centres have had their day.

As more and more people take to shopping on line fewer and fewer people are going to shop in retail - town / city - centres.

People need to wake up to this and adopt a mind-set appropriate to changing retail habits, recognising that town / city centres have had their day in the age of the internet. Town / city centres should be developed to compliment the internet, providing an experience that will attract people in this modern internet age.

The out of town retail parks and supermarkets with free parking offer cost-effective and time-effective shopping - the Town Centre needs to become a place that I would want to visit, rather than have to visit

## **7 Conclusions**

7.1 One Forum felt that the bus interchange would increase the amount of footfall in the town centre which in turn would increase the use of the market.

7.2 It was noted that the Business Improvement District (BID) was developing ways forward by looking at a variety of options to improve and attract new business to the area.

- 7.3 Improved signage was suggested as was the introduction of more maps or audio-visual devices to assist shoppers.
- 7.4 A number of Forum members used the town centre for clothes shopping and buying goods from the independent stores. Buying from the Internet was also popular.
- 7.5 A number of respondents supported the independent stores, particularly those located in St Giles Street.
- 7.6 A number of Forum members use the market.
- 7.7 The LGBT and Q Forum suggested that local artists could create artwork on display boards outside buildings
- 7.8 The rise of the supermarkets had led to the deterioration of town centres. It is convenient to be able to buy goods from the same shop.
- 7.9 Parking facilities was referred to and the suggestion of a park and ride scheme was proposed. There are three car parks within the town centre where charges are not applicable for the first hour, which is of great benefit for people coming in to the town to shop.
- 7.10 In general, communication with the Borough Council via the Forums was felt to be good but communication with visitors could be improved.
- 7.11 The Love Northampton website was supported as was the recent Pride of Lions display.
- 7.12 Northampton's heritage should be celebrated.
- 7.13 Six individuals responded to the Youth Forum's survey and their comments included celebrating the rich sporting suggestions for the introduction of more free periods of parking and more on street parking facilities, support for the independent stores was given. The respondents suggested regular litter picking and jet washing of the footpaths would be useful. The streets art projects were supported. Comments advised that good information was available on line but it would be useful for there to be other communication methods. A number of respondents shopped on line mainly due to the cost and convenience.

## **8 Recommendations**

- 8.1 That the responses to the Panel's core questions from the Northampton Community Forums be used to inform the Panel's evidence base.

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Date: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012