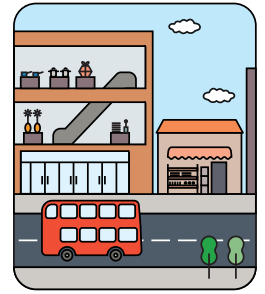


NLA Expert Panel Whitepaper:

Highstreets



Over the past year the panel has discussed various examples of good practice in the high street and discussions have been wide ranging.

Clearly high streets and in turn retail has experienced huge challenges following the Covid 19 pandemic, Brexit and online shopping.

What has been really encouraging is the opportunity and framework this has created for entrepreneurs and local authorities to come together, share ideas and hone this idea of 'stewardship'.

If the pandemic has offered anything positive, it is the rise of hybrid working and the ability for people to use their neighbourhood more. This has created a landscape for locals to enjoy their 'local' and get to know the people shaping the high streets. The 15 minute neighbourhood has been widely championed by boroughs such as Ealing.

There have been a number of initiatives to help entrepreneurs be more involved in their high streets. These range from offering reduced / or free rent for 6 months. Business rates, fragmented ownership can be real barriers to defining the right uses and the right places, creating a more holistic approach to our town centres and high streets.

Focusing on some key themes

- ① Plan for the future: High streets are the lifeblood of any town or village
 - ② Think beyond boundaries. We can't just focus on each specific site in a cycle. The focus should be on a more joined up approach. There have been a number of high street initiatives which aim to bring in local entrepreneurs, and the urban landscape should aim to provide a place for this to happen
 - ③ Work in partnership: Partnerships between Boroughs and developers. Our conversations suggest the best value for high streets is community, developer, and borough working together
- Good highstreets are ecosystems, a combination of economic, sustainable and community growth
 - Role of Local Authorities and Town Centre Managers—being present and visible on site. In Brent the Town Centre Manager in constant conversation with businesses—dedicated Town centre managers are key
 - Connectivity and footfall—knowing where the sense of place is
 - Flexible timelines for regeneration and providing long-term vision for the community—example of where Joint Ventures work well
 - The in-between spaces and understanding ownership—how can we engage landowners and landlords as stewards of place, long-term placemaking principles
 - Affordability, Amenity, Accessibility
 - How can we deliver social value and measure this? (Think Brent Cross Town, Flourishing Index)
 - The Civic Square and Civic Centre as an anchor

Good examples

Nunhead

- The public house and green space acting as an anchor for a new parade of shops
- Local residents involved in ideas to promote a better place, successfully working with the local authority
- Really good example of local entrepreneurs setting up independent shops and the long term success of this

Case Study: Stockton on Tees

- Redevelopment of Castlegate shopping centre
- Genuine community consultation—Castlegate Shopping Centre and Swallow Hotel
- Replaced with green space which interprets heritage of Stockton
- Historical anchor
- A land bridge over the river and green space leads into retail core and connects the place

Case Study: Rotterdam

- Post war demolished, new build, Bauhaus style
- Enforce planning—challenged use, threatened court action
- Long term planning corridor strategy for whole street
- Retailors take responsibility for own part of street - pavement, windows

Case Study: Brent Cross

- Joint Venture between Argent and Brent Cross
- Excellent connectivity, park, train station
- Patient tenant = long term thinking

Case Study: Ealing Council

- Highstreets task force, conversations with BIDS about reactivating spaces
- Ealing challenge role of public sector—is it an enabling empowering role or about providing capital and resources
- Retro-first principle. Ealing council were going to demolish but will now retain and retrofit building w/ office space—will meet needs of 97% micro-businesses in Ealing

How do we demonstrate value and measure this over time?

- Community engagement
- Brent Cross Town example: Flourishing Index focus on health and wellbeing
- Continuous symbiotic relationship between community, developer, and borough working together
- Good stewardship and management

About the High Streets Expert Panel

Change to 'High streets and retail have grappled with significant challenges stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, and the increasing prevalence of online shopping. Despite these obstacles, a positive outcome has emerged in the form of a newfound opportunity and framework for collaboration between entrepreneurs and local authorities. The High Streets Panel focuses on a collaborative approach this year, building upon discussions over the past year that delve into examples of good practice.

Chair: *James Mitchell, Axiom Architects*

Rumi Bose, Royal Borough of Greenwich

Mark Bruce, EPR Architects

Bev Churchill, Churchill & Partners

Dee Corsi, New West End Company

Jon Eaglesham, Barr Gazetas

Olivia Jackson, HLM Architects

Owain Lloyd-James, Historic England

Connor McDonagh, LB Ealing

Katya Samokhvalova, Nexus Planning

Giles Semper, Opportunity Kensington

Steve Tennant, Ballymore

Abigail Thomas, Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands

Jamie Webb, Benoy

Ciara Whelehan, LB Brent

Tariq Mukadam, LB Newham