



Re-evaluating a Post Covid Commercial Strategy

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The impact of COVID on the events and hospitality Sector

- Hospitality sector disaffected
- BCC's Civic Catering unable to use buildings.
- No staff feeding as offices closed
- No Civic events or banqueting
- Some Local authorities chose not to furlough staff
- Reduced footfall in city centres as people work from home

Repurposing the public realm to accommodate commercial activity



What do we do, and what should we do. Should Local Authorities trade?



What is the future need? Need to know this to repurpose



Repurpose rather than rebuild. Better for environment



Can this help reduce homelessness. Convert property investment into residential. More supportive and better value.



Bring services and citizens together – address inequalities



What do we do, and what should we do. Should Local Authorities trade?

- Local Authorities have the power to trade but should they?
- Are Local Authorities gambling with public funds when commercial investment is a risk?
- Is commercial investment and activity used to finance statutory services?
- If commercial investment and activity fails how are those statutory services funded?
- Councils spent £6.6bn on retail and office assets between 2014 and 2019.
 - National Audit Office report



What is the future need – decanting city assets into communities?

- Safe spaces
- Community hubs
- Urban Villages - Longbridge
 - Business Park – office, shops, hospitality supporting 150+ businesses
 - Hotels
 - Hospitality
 - 1250+ homes
 - Retirement Village
 - Gym
 - Bournville College
 - 3,000 new jobs
 - Public space
- Improved wellbeing of citizens
- Boosting the local economy
- Increased footfall



Repurpose rather than rebuild?

- Convert property investment from commercial to residential via Council wholly-owned companies to generate income stream or disposal surplus
- Repurpose vacant commercial space for uses to support community resilience and environment sustainability.
- In UK retail is over spaced by approx. 40%
 - Savilles
- Community first
- Future High Street Fund

Reducing homelessness and creating better society?



Programmes to include:

- Convert old properties, empty retail and office space into residential living space
- “Restart” for homeless
 - Provide housing
 - Training and upskilling
 - Job opportunities in community
 - Provide a sense of belonging, self worth and contributing
- Employ residents in community hubs and urban villages
- Urban and local restart – all services joined together



Bringing services and citizens together –
Citizens listening posts

- Address inequalities exposed by Covid-19
- Provide a socially accessible citizen's hub which is non-threatening, accessible, warm, welcoming and stigma free
- Learn from the citizen's experience, the better the atmosphere, the more usage - increases data collection.
- Council and community groups work together
- Improved citizen involvement in community.
- Drives community's direction

How do we support high streets and town centre recovery?



Who needs the high street and who is asking?



The high street prior to Covid - 19



The post Covid-19 High Street



Who needs the high street?

- Need business to business dialogue – regional chambers of commerce
- What work is being done to understand citizen needs of the high street?
- Move to online shopping, Covid 19 has increased confidence in digitization of retail.
- Click an collect phenomenon - Will high street be showrooms for browsing with out-of-town collection hubs
- Mixed economy – retail, social, leisure, entertainment, office, residential.
- Thoroughfares for browsing or immediate use – food, cafes, restaurants
- Environmental impact – clean air zones, pedestrianization, parking. Good public transport links
- Track how the high street was used both pre Covid-19 and after lockdown measures relaxed



The Pre Covid-19 high street

What was the trend prior to Covid and do really want to replicate what was already there.

- Average 25% of commercial space in city centres was retail, 50% offices. 10-20% of high street commercial space was empty
 - Valuation Office Agency
- Out of town shopping centres increased the disaffection of the high street
- Retail employment fell in 75% of Local Authority areas between 2015-2018
- Rent and rates too high leaving void issues and loss of revenue.
- Catered for traditional shopping



The Post Covid 19 high street

- Increase of people working from home reduces footfall from office workers
- Larger cities affected more – Leeds and Birmingham 15% of workers returned after the first lockdown. Manchester and London 16%. In smaller cities and towns footfall is 27% of pre-lockdown
- High streets need to attract visitors
- Independent stores, more localised. Support start ups.
- Flexible usage - combine work with leisure, social environments such as offices in coffee shops
 - Local authorities provide flexible use agreements

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Big Questions

1. Where do Local Authorities recover their money
 - Rent and rate income – post Covid-19 will they repay assets?
 - Will the economy bounce back or will it bounce forward?
2. Has city centre retail and office requirements fallen off a cliff?
 - Act as facilitators not rent collectors
 - Repurpose
 - Use internal socio-economy to empower SME's and start ups offering space in areas they are needed most
3. Is the direction of travel in 2020 irreversible?
4. Will we go back to pre Covid life?
5. If not, where do we go?



Any questions?