



High Streets
Development
Conference

High Streets Development Conference

Conference Report

Wednesday, 30th October 2019
Kensington Town Hall, London

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Foreword



Keith Griffiths,
Managing Director,
Built Environment
Networking

The health of the UK's high streets is at the top of nearly every local authorities agenda with declining footfall, technological advancements and thousands of buildings in disrepair or empty leading to a cornucopia of regeneration and inclusive economic growth challenges across Britain. We hope to use our annual High Streets Development conference to act as a catalyst for action, investment and innovative schemes that revitalise towns and cities across the country.

This year we heard from 7 different councils who took to our stage alongside a host of developers who share their vision for change, to unveil exciting land and property development schemes totalling billions of pounds. The response from our audience was excellent as major investors, developers and the built environment supply chain packed into the conference hall with the sole purpose of engaging with our speakers and offering to lend their

services to deliver each town and city's ambition.

An interesting hallmark of this event was the sheer amount of public sector decision makers in the audience, primarily coming along to hear thought leadership and best practice suggestions. With over 400 attendees and such positive feedback during and since the event, careful consideration is already going into 2020's agenda and a collection of high profile partners are itching to get on board.

If you'd like to join the aforementioned in 2020, please get in touch with myself or one of my senior team so we can discuss further.

I look forward to seeing you at another one of our exemplary events in the near future.

Keith

keith.griffiths@built-environment-networking.com



From the Keynote



Andrew Carter

Chief Executive,
Centre for Cities
@CentreforCities

SUCCESSFUL CITIES 'ARE LESS RELIANT' ON RETAIL

Cities that are less reliant on the retail sector in terms of floor space, are more successful, said Andrew Carter, the Chief Executive at the Centre For Cities.

Delivering a keynote speech he told delegates of the structural issues in the economy that have impacted high streets development:

“WE’VE SEEN NO REAL WAGE GROWTH OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS AND THAT’S REALLY RELATED TO AN AWFUL PERFORMANCE OF GDP AND PRODUCTIVITY. THE JOBS MIRACLE THAT IS MUCH TALKED ABOUT IN TERMS OF LOW UNEMPLOYMENT DOESN’T APPLY TO RETAIL.”

The geographical inequalities within this are particularly stark, while in cities such as Doncaster, Newport and Mansfield wages are 10% lower in real terms than 10 years ago.



This shows that many of the country’s periphery towns have not recovered from the crash. The lower wages in those areas have been particularly damaging to retail, as lower disposable income reduces consumer spending.

Carter warned: “Geography of jobs has changed and is changing quite rapidly. Twenty-four cities - our bigger urban areas - have less jobs today in the city centre than they did 10-15 years ago. This has translated in areas like Barnsley and Sunderland having 30% less jobs in the city centre than there were 10-15 years ago. Yet in cities like Manchester, Milton Keynes and Bristol it has increased by 40%, demonstrating the extent of geographic division.”

The difference is even starker for higher productivity professions where wages are also much higher, meaning this inequality has not affected all areas equally, Carter explained:

“NOT EVERY HIGH STREET, NOT EVERY TOWN CENTRE AND NOT EVERY CITY CENTRE IS STRUGGLING.”

“If you look at places like Cambridge or Exeter less than 7% of their city centre stock is vacant, whereas if you go to Newport, Bradford or to Wigan, that number gets over 20%.”

Retail is feeling the pressure of online shopping, which is now where one in every five pounds is spent. This speaks to the need for cities to provide retail places that can still be attractive destinations for people, but also to reduce the reliance on the industry for the local economy.

From our Delegates

EXPERTS SAY RESIDENTIAL THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE UKS HIGH STREETS

Using our Slido software we polled a number of the UK experts in the property and construction sectors on the most pressing issues facing the UK high streets. Moving residential to into the high street can increase footfall to remaining retail and hospitality destinations. It also provides town centers with a sense of vibrancy and life.

A plurality (47%) said that residential was the key to revitalising high streets, compared to just 19% which thought that retail, typically a stalwart of the high street, would be most crucial to their revival. A quarter believed that commercial space instead would be the solution, and just 8% suggested that hotels and hospitality would be the form that would restore vitality to High Streets.

Moving residential back into town centers has become increasingly popular as a belief amongst urban planners since the birth of New Urbanism, the increasing pressure of e-commerce has only accelerated the desire to do this. The deindustrialisation of major cities has removed the raison d’être for mass suburbanisation, with green and pollution-mitigating technologies further diminishing the rationale for the dominance of the suburbs.

The UKs space use restrictions and strident green belt legislation also makes city centre residential development an increasing need, particularly with a growing population. The cities of the future seem likely to be ever more integrated.

A majority of delegates polled still claimed to prefer high street shopping, with a 56% majority favouring city centre retail. The relative enduring popularity of high streets makes it likely that whilst retail space will face a decrease, ultimately it will still play a role in the future composition of our high streets. Just 12% said they favoured either out-of-town or retail parks, which speaks to the perception of such areas to lack the character of high streets.

32% percent claimed to prefer online shopping, a particularly notable figure as many of those polls were themselves involved in high street development schemes. High street retail faces undoubtedly strong competition from this sector, and whether or not online retailers will form an equilibrium with their more traditional competitors, or grow to be the sole dominant force in retail is still an unknown.



The Health of our High Streets

Panel Members:



Chair: Steve Norris

Steve Norris, National Head of Planning, Development & Regeneration, Lambert Smith Hampton

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Amy Harhoff

Director - Regeneration and Growth, Sandwell Council

[@sandwellcouncil](#)



Michael Weedon

Chair of Retail and High Street Policy Unit, Federation of Small Business

[@fsb_policy](#)

BACK TO THE FUTURE- OPTIMISTIC FOR UK HIGH STREETS

Transforming the fortunes of struggling UK high streets “will involve thinking back to the future” according to one leading industry expert.

Michael Weedon, Chair of the Retail and High Street Policy Unit, explained to delegates that the future for high streets may involve looking back, to enable new development and regeneration in town and city centres to be future-proofed.

Weedon questioned perceptions that retail had been historically dominant, he said: “It’s never all been about retail. Retail has never made up more than 30% of the shops in our town centres. But net seven times as many large shops are closing than small shops, which may see the return to a predominance of smaller retail outlets.”

Director of Regeneration and Growth at Sandwell Council, Amy Harhoff spoke positively about changes in attitudes:

“IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS WE’VE REALLY MOVED ON IN TERMS OF ACCEPTING THAT THE HIGH STREET HAS CHANGED.”



She emphasised the key role the public sector can play in advancing high streets and that town centres are a holistic investment for the government.

The question of making high streets places to live was raised by Andrew Carter, Chief Executive of the Centre for Cities. He cited statistics that showed more successful cities tended to have population growth in the centre, adding:

“WE NEED TO THINK VERY CAREFULLY ABOUT MAKING OUR HIGH STREETS PLACES TO LIVE AGAIN.”

Harhoff suggested the smaller cities could make use of their transport links, such as West Bromwich’s seven-minute travel time to Birmingham which makes it a “genuine alternative to live due to some of the higher prices in Birmingham.”

However, Weedon warned about the danger of small towns losing their “critical mass” if they lost a significant portion of retail space.

Business rates reform was advocated by Weedon as a way of revitalising high streets: “Retail park rentals are 20% cheaper than the town centre and that translates directly into what you pay for rates.”

He decried reforms that were enacted in 1990 which led to annualised increases in rates.

Carter agreed that business rates needed reform but pointed out that, after 2-3 years, 75% of any rates relief went directly into rent increases:

“WHOEVER OWNS THAT PROPERTY IS GOING TO TAKE UP THAT RELIEF,



Andrew Carter

Chief Executive, Centre for Cities

[@CentreforCities](#)



Catherine Faulks

Lead Member for Enterprise and Skills, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

[@RBKC_CS](#)

SO IF YOU WANT TO SUBSIDIZE LANDLORDS, THEN OFFER BUSINESS RATE RELIEF.

Carter instead suggested the possibility of a move to a land value tax, to take the costs off businesses and instead move them directly onto landlords.

Harhoff said Government funding was key to transforming the high street, but she also raised concerns with the current system: “There is a £3.7bn pot but that itself has been spliced as part of the High Street Funding and Town Centre Funding initiatives.”

She praised the “absolutely great” Public Works Loans Board for being beneficial to cash flow and revenue. However, Harhoff suggested that grant funding could play a larger role within the funding eco-system for high streets and had untapped potential.

Accommodating the Carbon neutral agenda is also a key aspect of discussions over the future of high streets. Faulks praised the success of London’s Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) in making the high street a more attractive place. The Royal Borough of Chelsea and Kensington has also been heavily focused on greening and creating parklets to

increase air quality and encourage people back into town centres, said Catherine Faulks, Lead Member for Enterprise and Skills at the Council.

Harhoff suggested utilising town markets to provide a sense of place:

“ACTUALLY OUR MARKETS HAVE BEEN DECLINING FOR DECADES. LET’S REINVENT THEM. THERE MIGHT NOT BE THE SAME MARKET FOR HABERDASHERY, WHAT THERE IS A MARKETPLACE FOR IS THINGS LIKE STREET FOOD AND MIXED-USE.”

The panel concurred on their optimism over the future of high streets, but a general acknowledgement that fundamental shifts will need to occur. Weedon summarised the discussion saying high streets “need to change. They are changing whether we like it or not, and helping them change for the better is a good idea.”



Placemaking in the West of England

Panel Members:



Chair: Phil Laycock

Director, Built Environment
Networking

[@BENetworking](#)



Clare Elliott

Service Director – Economic
Growth & Skills, Wakefield
Council

[@MyWakefield](#)



Dave Codling

Wakefield Property Advisor,
Wakefield Council

[@MyWakefield](#)

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FUELING WAKEFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

City & Provincial Properties, The developers behind Europe's largest music cluster, Tileyard London in Islington are redeveloping the disused Rutland Mills in Wakefield into a new complex, Tileyard North.

The buildings are all Grade II listed properties, but will require significant restoration work as part of the new project after 20 years of unoccupancy.

Paul Kempe, Director of City & Provincial Properties, described the details of the project:

THERE ARE SEVEN BUILDINGS AND WE HAVE 3 YEARS TO COMPLETE THEM, WE THINK WE CAN ACTIVATE RUTLAND MILLS AS A DESTINATION, WELL BEFORE THEN, DURING THE BUILD PROCESS.



Kempe described how the project will provide new placemaking for the area: "The central space within the mill buildings are going to be very much Food and Beverage driven, they're going to host events."

The development will feature new office space, but will be limited to creative firms. The development's proximity to the Hepworth art gallery was a draw for City & Provincial. Kempe recognised the site being adjacent to Hepworth as a "major reason" for the firm's involvement.

WHAT MAKES WAKEFIELD UNIQUE IS THE ARTS AND CULTURE HERITAGE

said Olivia Colling, Director of Communications and Development at the Hepworth Wakefield. The Hepworth gallery is a project that was organised by the council back in 2003, intended to serve as a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider area.

The Hepworth opened in 2011, attracting over 1m visitors in its first year. "We now get about 250,000 a year," said Colling of that cohort, polling suggested the gallery brings in 80,000 to 90,000 people into the city annually.

Colling discussed the major obstacles to attracting more visitors and hence driving more footfall to Wakefield town centre, she said "Our biggest problems were firstly that, perceptions of Wakefield and secondly that potential visitors didn't feel like there was enough near us to sustain a whole day."

The gallery has recently finished the largest sculpture festival in the UK, in collaboration with the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds; Yorkshire Sculpture International, which had 1.4m million people engaging with the festival.

Claire Elliot, Service Director of Economic Growth and Skills



Paul Kempe

Director, City & Provincial
Properties



Olivia Colling

Director of Communications
& Development, The
Hepworth Wakefield

[@HepworthGallery](#)



at Wakefield Council described the council as having embraced this identity, she said the had:

RECENTLY COMPLETED A PLACE MARKETING PIECE THAT RIGHTLY CONCLUDED THAT OUR CULTURAL AND SCULPTURE OFFER GIVES US A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO POSITION OURSELVES ON A NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

Elliot described the challenges faced by Wakefield high street, she said: "The difficulty is the oversupply of retail space, disconnect between the old retail offer and the new retail offer." The council is utilizing government funding to revitalise its core, including investment from the Heritage Action Zone and Towns Fund, the Future High Streets Fund where the city's application is moving to the next stage.

They have also utilised their capital programme to put £20m of funds into the city centre, to match those Wakefield is receiving from the Transforming Cities Fund. Elliot revealed the council's intention to support more arts events in the town centre and build on their existing creative network.

David Codling, Wakefield Property Advisor at the City Council described details of the city's masterplan that it seeks to implement via the funding it has received. Chantry House is a project for 60-80 residential units opposite the train station that the council is currently seeking development partners for.

Describing the current state of the High Street as being a "a street to nowhere", Codling said the council intends to intervene to convert larger units to mixed-use. He also praised successful aspects of the council's current offering including the Trinity Walk shopping center built in 2011, which he dubbed "very successful."

Viability was seen as the primary challenge by Codling, who described difficulties with encouraging residential development:

IN WAKEFIELD, EVEN OUR TERTIARY RETAIL LAND VALUE OUTGUNS RESIDENTIAL, EVEN THE OFFICE MARKET WHICH IS GROWING MOMENTUM AGAIN.

The strong interventionist approach advocated by the council may enable Wakefield to overcome it's structural difficulties and instead be defined by its clear cultural success.



The Metamorphosis of Bolton

Panel Members:



Chair: Bláthnaid Duffy

Director of Planning, Development and Regeneration, Lambert Smith Hampton

[@LSHtweets](#)



Gerry Brough

Director of Place, Bolton Council

[@boltoncouncil](#)



Martin Ellerby

Head of New Business and Innovation, Placefirst

[@PlaceFirstLtd](#)

MASSIVE INVESTMENT IN BOLTON BRINGING THE CITY'S METAMORPHOSIS

The City of Bolton is receiving huge investments to enable the redevelopment of areas across the city.

Gerry Brough, Director of Place at the Bolton Council outlined their objectives:

“THE COUNCIL WANTS TO TURN BOLTON FROM A MUCH LOVED BUT RUNDOWN TOWN CENTRE INTO A VIBRANT PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE, WORK, STUDY AND SPEND THEIR LEISURE TIME.”

“Our current effort to regenerate Bolton started in 2011, when we adopted an ambitious masterplan.”

The council has outlined five major intervention areas as part of this masterplan. The masterplan is intended to generate a total of £1.2bn investment and create 7,400 new jobs.

The largest of these is the £100m Trinity Quarter project, a mixed-used area situated at a major transport interchange. Trinity Quarter is planned to include the £45m Trinity Gateway investment, which features a 20-story tower, 500 space multi-story car park and 30,000sq ft of offices.

Regional investment is also part of Bolton's strategy, Brough said: “In partnership with Wigan council we hope to attain a £186m housing infrastructure grant to pay for a new £150m link road between junction 6 on the M61 and Junction 5 on the M6.”

Other sites include the over 2000 homes planned for construction in the Croal valley development site. The council has also spend £11m in rebuilding the Octagon theatre, which has become a successful regional venue.



Bolton council has also purchased Crompton Place, a 288,000 sqft shopping centre for £14.8m in Autumn 2018 which the council plans to reinvent, having struck £250m deal with Midia Group.

Steven Turner, Managing Director of Midia Group, said that they will focus on alternative uses:

“CROMPTON PLACE IS 6000 SQFT DEVELOPMENT WITH ONLY 1300 SQFT OF RETAIL.”

This balanced mixed-use will enable the recovery of the shopping centre which is currently 59% vacant.

The shopping centre is proposed to incorporate office space, residential, hotel, leisure facilities, a car park and service sections.

Muse developments are another major development that is investing in Bolton, a national urban development company. Phil Mayall, Development Director urged delegates to rethink the idea of high streets being in crisis, instead arguing that:



Phil Mayall

Development Director, Muse Developments

[@Muse_Devs](#)



Steve Turner

Managing Director, Midia Group



“FRANKLY I'M GETTING ILL WITH HEARING FROM COUNCILS THAT THEY WANT A ALTRINCHAM MARKET.”

Placefirst is another developer working the area, an SME build to rent investor based in Manchester. Martin Ellerby, Head of New Business and Innovation for the firm outlined the strategy “It's really about using the long-term investment to unlock challenging projects without relying on public subsidy or grant.”

Placefirst are developing the Central Street development from a former council-owned car park. The development will bring a cluster of modern mid-rise flats, which will bring new housing to the town centre.

True to their name, placemaking is key to the companies plans for the development, Ellerby summarized: “We wanted to do something that was very about Bolton, concept design that was really about trying to create a series of spaces between buildings.”

Brough summarised the session by remarking on the incredible opportunities these investments can bring, he said “Bolton is on its way to achieving a metamorphosis which only a few years ago seemed highly improbable.”

“WHAT WE'RE SEEING NOW IS A MORE STRATEGIC CHANGE IN RETAIL, THEY'RE IN A STATE OF FLUX, ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, ALWAYS WILL BE.”

The developer is working on the Church Wharf development, a mixed-use waterfront destination which is part of the masterplan and is backed by £150m investment. The development will feature 320 new homes, commercial office buildings, a new hotel and a leisure and retail offering.

Mayall discussed how the developer was including public realm improvements, he said: “we'll build on what's there already, we'll put a new pedestrian bridge in, we'll put in parklands and then we'll connect it back into the town center.” This will also include improvements to the River Croal corridor to improve the visual and environment aspects of the river.

Mayall urged towns to find creative solutions to the changes in the retail sector, adapted to local needs, adding:



The Growth of Swansea Bay City Region

Panel Members:



Chair: Bláthnaid Duffy

Director of Planning, Development and Regeneration, Lambert Smith Hampton

[@LSHtweets](#)



Councillor Rob Stewart

Cabinet Member Economy and Strategy, Swansea Council

[@SwanseaCouncil](#)



Mark Williams

Executive Director & Co-Founder, RivingtonHark

REGENERATION SPECIALIST COMPARES SWANSEA TRANSFORMATION TO 'VICTORIAN' PROPORTIONS

Swansea is embracing the changing nature of Britain's high streets, Councillor Rob Stewart told delegates of the scale of the changes occurring around Swansea: "About 70% of our city centre is under redevelopment, regeneration or being refurbished at this time."

The council is utilising funding from the £1.3bn City Deal to fund the Swansea Central redevelopment scheme, Stewart detailed the masterplan: "Phase 1 sees the creation of a 3500 digital arena, as well as some new multi-story car parks, a new crossing across that road to get you to that beautiful bay without having to navigate traffic."

The planned arena will be the keystone of the new project, Stewart said:

VIGIL ARENA IS NOT AN ORDINARY BUILDING, WE'VE GONE VERY HIGH-END ON IT, IT IS CLAD IN NEARLY 100,000 LED LIGHTS AND IT'S A NEW LANDMARK FOR THE CITY.

Around £500m is being invested directly into Swansea High Street, which Stewart described as being "some private, mainly public." The new coastal park will connect the city to the sea to encourage tourists back to the city, which involves a £7m connecting structure.

Environmental concerns are also being incorporated into the development, following Swansea declaring a 2030 carbon-neutral target. A core part of the way the council is seeking to achieve this is the Tidal Lagoon proposal, a £1bn project to bring this world-first method of tidal power generation to life. The project could power 155,000 homes and replace gas-fired

stations given its predictable output.

Stewart said the proposal had: "Been picked up back by the Welsh Government and we now have a second Tidal lagoon proposal which includes a dragon energy island, floating housing, floating solar, which makes use of the tidal range in Swansea bay which is the second biggest in the world."

There is also a plan for phase 2 of Swansea central, which will be launching in early 2020. include the Kingsway Innovation District, also drawing funding from the City deal with a total of £150m public and private funding.

Phase two is planned to embrace the city's climate obligations, Stewart told delegates:

IT'S ABOUT REGREENING AND CREATING A GREEN LUNG THROUGH THE TOWN CENTRE, IT IS ALSO GOING TO BE HOME THE UK'S FIRST FULLY BIOPHILIC BUILDING, CREATED IN CONJUNCTION WITH SWANSEA UNIVERSITY.

The district is planned to solve a major difficulty in providing quality office space in the city, Stewart argued: "The case in Swansea is one of business failure, you can rent office space for £11 per sq ft."

The palace theatre is being taken back into public ownership, and is receiving £4.9m of funding from the Welsh European Funding Office. The council is planning to turn it into a mixed-use space.



The South-West Wales Metro is another major scheme proposed by the council, which will combine bus and rail-travel to allow increased connectivity throughout the region.

Other major projects include the £50m Mariner Street Development and £40m Oldway Centre Redevelopment, bringing over a 1000 new rooms of student accommodation. The £50m coastal phase three, which will bring new office, community and retail space on Orchard Street and King's Lane, is tipped for an early 2020 start.

There is also the planned upgrade of Swansea station, and the £10m Orchard House redevelopment, which will provide 52 affordable homes by the end of 2020.

Mark Williams the Executive Director and Co-Founder of RivingtonHark, a major regeneration firm with £700m projects under management, said of the transformation high streets are undergoing:

THE SCALE OF CHANGE IS PROBABLY GOING BACK TO THE VICTORIAN PERIOD WHEN WE SPOKE ABOUT REGENERATING OUR CITIES.

Williams brought attention to the Portas Review, a 2011 study undertaken by retail expert Mary Portas with a number of other experts into resolving the issues facing the high street. The review concluded with 20 unanimous suggestions, Williams

said: "The key recommendations I want to focus on, is that retail is not the solution, the UK has too much retail floor space, we estimated 25-30%, the reality is probably 50%."

The importance of public-private cooperation was highlighted by Williams who said that the change:

CAN'T BE DELIVERED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THAT'S WHY WE MADE THE RECOMMENDATION THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEED TO INTERVENE.

This theme was echoed by Stewart who said "we're lucky enough to have Rivoton and a number of other partners helping us."

Williams argued this made a sea change from the more combative relationship the sectors previously had on these matters, he said, "The days of the 1990s of companies coming in saying I'm going to build a shopping centre and take you to judicial appeal over this are gone, you have to work with local authorities."

The scale of change that needs to occur in our towns and cities to adapt to a shifting high street are clearly staggering. However, these challenges become far less insurmountable when all involved parties cooperate to resolve them.



Transforming Kirklees

Panel Members:



Chair: Phil Laycock

Director, Built Environment
Networking

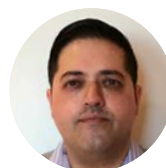
[@BENetworking](#)



Angela Blake

Service Director - Economy
& Skills, Kirklees Council

[@KirkleesCouncil](#)



Saj Pervaiz

Financial Director,
SKA Developments

KIRKLEES REDEVELOPMENT LEAD BY AMBITIOUS HUDDERSFIELD BLUEPRINT

Kirklees Council are launching their high streets redevelopment with the first projects of their 2019-2031 master plan. Huddersfield is the largest town in the Kirklees area which has avoided much of the national problem, according to Angela Blake, Service Director of Economy and Skills:

“THE RETAIL OFFERING IS STILL OPERATING FAIRLY SUCCESSFULLY, WE’VE SEEN AN INCREASE IN RETAIL FLOOR SPACE.”

Part of the masterplan of high streets improvements is Huddersfield’s markets, Blake said: “We’ve got an indoor market, and outdoor market, but we need to look at how we can consolidate these in a way that meets the demands of the town going forward.”



Despite acknowledging success in retail, the council is also future-proofing the town, having purchased the 1960s Piazza shopping centre for demolition and are planning to replace the centre with a new mixed-use development.

The council is also working on two new areas of the centre Southgate site, a currently vacant employment area and HD1, a stadium complex which is developing into a larger leisure complex.

SKA developments have invested £20m into the town centre of Huddersfield, having constructed 4 student accommodation blocks. They are currently working on the Renaissance Works development, a project to regenerate a vacant former Co-op building from the 1930s into a modern 138-bedroom student accommodation block.

Saj Pervaiz Financial and Property Director for the firm, discussed the project, he said:

“THIS IS THE FIRST PROJECT TO KICK START THE BLUEPRINT TOWN IN KIRKLEES, A GREAT EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP, WE ARE ON-SITE NOW, DUE TO COMPLETE IN 2021.”

SKA largest project is the Great Waterfront Project, a massive £150m regeneration of a brownfield site into a new riverside community. The firm is already on-site for phase 1 of the project, which is estimated to be completed by 2022.

Pervaiz described the company’s attitude to regeneration, which focuses on the preservation of the historic structures:

“WE KEEP THE EXISTING STRUCTURE AND THE HERITAGE



Karl Battersby

Job???



Simon Taylor

Job???

OF INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING AND BUILD THE FLOORS ON TOP.

This is of core importance in Kirklees which has the most listed buildings of any region in Yorkshire.

Karl Battersby, Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure at the council spoke of the regreening and appearance improvements being made to New Street and St Peter’s square as part of a “massive public realm scheme.”

Regreening and other similar initiatives have increasingly been emphasised by the town recently, Blake said:

“WE’VE DECLARED A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THAT’S HAD A BIG IMPACT ON OUR PLANS FOR THE TOWN.”

Battersby also revealed Huddersfield’s plans to improve its arts offer by creating a cultural heart, he said: “There’s a new cultural centre, a number of museums and art galleries we are



looking to consolidate.” A new sound venue is core to these proposals, and is planned to be completed by 2023.

Some areas of the plan are still being debated, such as what to do around Huddersfield railway station, which is one of the most architecturally acclaimed in all of the country. Blake told delegates: “We’re looking at a number of different options at the moment but I don’t think we’ve got the solution yet.”

Trying to create more residential and office space on the High Street is also an integral part of plans for the area. Simon Taylor, Head of Strategic Investment at the council said: “In Huddersfield we don’t have a huge residential offer, we don’t have a huge office offer either.”

Taylor acknowledged previously difficulties in establishing these markets, saying that past attempts had failed to gain a foothold, but the council was now “looking at how to use some of our assets to kickstart that development.”

The planned development of Huddersfield High Street is oriented around preserving its heritage while embracing a creative, cultural and green future. From creating new communities, to a cultural core, to bringing residents back into the city, these developments will inject new life into the Kirklees region.



Building Barnsley

Panel Members:



Chair: Phil Laycock

Director, Built Environment
Networking

[@BENetworking](#)



Sarah Norman

Chief Executive,
Barnsley Council

[@BarnsleyCouncil](#)



Paul Sargent

Chief Executive,
Queensberry

[@QberryRE](#)



Seamus Lennon

Studio Principal,
IBI Group

[@ibigroup](#)

THE GLASS WORKS LETTING NEW LIGHT INTO BARNSLEY TOWN CENTRE

The Glass Works is the centerpiece of a major transformation of Barnsley High Streets. The Glassworks is an £180m project of Barnsley council, funded by the Public Works Loan Board, to create a new home for the Barnsley markets and a new high street destination.

The name reflects Barnsley's heritage, which was previously a centre for the UK's glass producing industry.

Sarah Norman, the Chief Executive of Barnsley Council said of the progress of the project:

PHASE 1 IS NOW FULLY DELIVERED AND OPEN AND VERY SUCCESSFUL AND THE TOWN CENTRE IS HEAVING AND PHASE 2 IS NOW FULLY CONTRACTED AND UNDERWAY.



The Glass Works will feature mixed-used tenures, in addition to the markets, it will host restaurants, Cineworld cinema, a bowling alley, 25 retail units and a market kitchen which has already opened in October 2019.

The project will feature a £8m new public library, Seamus Lennon, Studio Principal at IBI described this as a:

GREAT THING FOR THE COUNCIL TO BE INVESTING IN THIS KIND OF FACILITY WHEN MANY HAVE BEEN CLOSED AROUND THE COUNTRY.

Around 90% of the town centre is being worked on with IBI Group which is one of the council's development partners, who have been attached to the project since 2014.

Paul Sargent, Chief Executive of Queensberry another development partner of the council, said "It's also a bit strange

talking about something that looks like a shopping centre when we're told shopping centres don't work."

Sargent noted that Barnsley "hadn't had an over proliferation of retail" and that they demolished the market and retail properties to build on the same site. In addition he noted demographic factors, he said that:

THE SCALE IS APPROPRIATE AS THE CATCHMENT IS ACTUALLY GROWING DUE TO POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL GROWTH.

A new landscaped public square will also be developed near the Glass Works, with a number of public realm improvements and serve as a potential events space.

The centre is opening in phases and is projected to be finished by 2021.

A new £5.6m pedestrian bridge is being planned for construction at Jumble Lane as the rail line at presents cuts

Barnsley in half. £2m of the project is being funded by Network Rail, and the rest is being funded from the general Glass Works funding. The tender for the bridge is out in January 2020.

Norman referred to some of the other developments planned for across the town: "Further work going on in what's called the historic high streets, some bids for future high streets funding and Historic High Streets money, and that will focus on Eldon Street and also includes redevelopment of the civic theatre."

Moving residential to the town centre is also part of the council's plans, but they are proceeding cautiously, Norman said "we are doing it slowly, we don't want to rush the market." Barnsley's strategic location is also beginning to change its character, Norman said:

I THINK WE ARE BECOMING MORE OF A COMMUTER TOWN, 63% OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYEES LIVE IN THE BOROUGH.

Solving anti-social behaviour was a key aspect of regeneration in Barnsley as it was seen as pushing people away from the centre, Norman said, "A lot of action around the small number of people who were carrying out anti-social behaviour, to really try to tackle some of their root causes."

Barnsley is now in the process of getting a purple flag accreditation, awarded to towns with safe and successful evening and nighttime offers.

The council has also been raising money for the voluntary sector through the Barnsley bond scheme.

Events have been another way in which Barnsley has drawn footfall, hosting the Tour De Yorkshire and Our Dancing Town, the subject of an eponymous BBC programme.

Barnsley is in many ways at a crossroads, where intelligent investment and community work has the real potential to light a way forward for the former bastion of industry.



Refocusing Town Centre's in Shropshire

Panel Members:



Chair: Phil Laycock

Director, Built Environment Networking

[@BENetworking](#)



Liz Lowe

Head of Estates, Morris Property



Mark Barrow

Director of Place, Shropshire Council

[@ShropCouncil](#)



Seb Slater

Executive Director, Shrewsbury BID

[@ShrewsburyBID](#)

HISTORIC SHREWSBURY READY FOR THE HIGH STREET OF THE FUTURE

Shrewsbury's Big Town Plan, created in consultation with over 5000 residents is leading the way forward for the medieval town centre, which is populated with over 600 listed buildings.

Liz Lowe of Morris Property, a firm with over £20m of retail assets commented on the relative resilience of Shrewsbury town centre at the recent Built Environment Networking High Streets Development Conference: "While national statistics show that footfall is down in main residential districts up to 10% over the last 7 years, Shrewsbury's actually seen an increase of 0.7%."

Mark Barrow, Director of Place discussed that the philosophy behind high streets had to change: "The transactional process of buying things is not what high streets are about anymore, they're about experience." He continued:

MOST PEOPLE LIKE PEOPLE WATCHING, WE'RE SOCIAL ANIMALS, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT JUST BEING IN A SPACE AND SHARING QUALITY ENVIRONMENT, WHERE YOU'VE GOT ACCESS TO QUALITY FOOD, QUALITY COFFEE SHOPS.

The council has recently spent £54m acquiring the three major shopping centres in the town, and are planning to demolish the 1960s Riverside shopping centre, and replacing it with a new waterfront community.

In some ways, Shrewsbury has been a victim of its own success, having been successful in High Streets funding bids due to the vibrant health of their high streets.

Morris Property are working on developing an area along the waterfront, Lowe said: "Morris and company have already



actually kick started the development along Victoria Quay, as that was our retail warehousing an effectively dead space, so we've created public housing, restaurants, gyms and office space."

Morris Property are also expanding student residential in the town, Lowe said: "Morris and company are working in partnership with the town council on a £7m student accommodation and medical hub which is currently being constructed in the town centre."

Seb Slater, Executive Director of Shrewsbury's Business Improvement District spoke the master plan's aim to bring commercial space back into the town:

A DIMINISHED OFFICE AND COMMERCIAL CENTRE, A LOT OF THAT HAS LEFT FOR BUSINESS PARKS, WE'RE HOPING TO REVERSE THAT.

Slater suggested the potential for the area by the train station, he said "we think we can turn that area into a central district."

Improving the transport infrastructure of Shrewsbury is key to the plans, Barrow said: "Earlier this year we had approval for the North-West Relief Road, it takes about 60% of the traffic out of our town centre." The North-West Relief Road is projected to cost £82.4m and is due for completion in 2023.

Smart city technology is being utilised by Shrewsbury council to design improvements to the town centre, Barrow commented:

WE'RE PUTTING IN GEOSPATIAL SENSORS AROUND SHREWSBURY.

The park and ride in Shrewsbury, whilst expressing growth year on year, is still far off its peak, Barrow said, "Our park and ride at the moment has a ridership of 650,000 it peaked just after the recession at 1.2m." The council is in discussions with Network Rail, to get a new parkway station, which would also reduce congestion in the town centre.

Tourism is a key aspect of the economy in Shrewsbury, Slater commented on health, he said "In terms of tourism, we've seen good growth in terms of driving visitor numbers, and to do that we need to improve the experience."

Lowe summarized the direction the area is taking, she said:

TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF OUR HIGH STREET, WE NEED A CREATIVE APPROACH, COLLABORATION AND CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IS REQUIRED IN WHAT IS ALREADY A HISTORIC TOWN, IN THE SPIRIT OF PRESERVING THE PAST, WE CAN EMBRACE THE FUTURE.

Shrewsbury is a town that is already performing incredibly successful, and it has the strong planning needed to preserve that status.



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