Place Shaping in Towns and Cities
A Guide
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1. The Starting Place

This booklet has been written by David Geddes of Locum Consulting on behalf of the Tourism Team at the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA).

Its aim is to give ideas and techniques for how towns and cities can go about making their central business areas more attractive for locals and incomers alike to spend time and money in.

What is this to do with tourism? Everything. The most popular places to visit are those that mix a large variety of ingredients into great experiences.

Similar considerations influence choices that people make about where they go to university, where they make their careers, where they raise their families, where they start their businesses, and where they locate their company expansions.

In a world where people are easily able to move to a different city, a different region, a different country, or a different continent, every town or city is competing not just for visitors but for the talented people that can help them thrive.

"Place shaping" in towns and cities has been rising up the agenda, not least since Sir Michael Lyon's report on local government argued that it was a central role of local authorities, defining the task as "creatively using their powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a local community and its citizens". Ultimately, this recognises that people enjoy living in, working in and visiting towns and cities that are, in simple terms, "nice" places.

This changing attitude has been having an impact on the ground. Planners have, for example, been paying more attention to "place making" as they have prepared their local development frameworks and cities can go about making their central business areas more attractive for locals and incomers alike to spend time and money in.

The Tourism Team at the NWDA has been working on this issue for a number of years, particularly through their NW Visitor Economy Pilots project, which has been experimenting with how businesses and local authorities can work together to improve the visitor appeal of sections of towns and cities.

They have also invested in research which has given insights as to what motivates people to visit places.

The aim of this booklet is to put learning from this work in a form that can provide some inspiration and ideas to "place shapers" all over the region.

The booklet is accompanied by a checklist of the many elements, big and small, that make up the quality of life and their economies are stronger as a result.

Civic leaders need to realise, however, that they are competing in a world in which exceptional standards in place making are being achieved by other places, and that their citizens are enjoying a higher quality of life and their economies are stronger as a result.

As is soon evident from walking around any really attractive urban centre, a myriad of factors contribute to that attractiveness. No local authority could ever take responsibility for them all.

Civic leaders, and other place makers need, instead, to encourage and facilitate an attitude of mind that encourages imaginative and quality oriented interventions, small and large, that can help to make the town or city steadily become more enticing.

Dispersed through this booklet are 150 illustrations of "Funky Place Making" (FPMs), designs to give some ideas but, more importantly, encourage places to build into their mind set a "can do" attitude that welcomes imagination in place shaping. Several of the places frequently highlighted in this booklet, like Rotterdam and Zurich, are worth examination as a whole because they have got that mind set into their DNA and it is visibly paying dividends.

The core aim in place making in towns and cities is to give ideas and techniques for how towns and cities can go about making their central business areas more attractive for locals and incomers alike to spend time and money in.

One of the aims of the booklet is to raise aspirations, to make civic leaders and other stakeholders aware of the exemplary standards in place making - especially in terms of the built environment - that have been achieved in other countries, especially in northern Europe, and to encourage them to lift their aspirations accordingly. The booklet has many short examples from elsewhere to illustrate possibilities.

This is not to suggest that towns and cities in the North West should simply copy other places. They need to find their own distinctive solutions, should be bold in doing so, and should always keep their distinctive culture at the forefront. There are many examples of great work in the North West, some of which are shown in this booklet.

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2 Things to do after reading this booklet

10 possible quick wins

1. Go through the checklist that accompanies the booklet and see if there are any “bread and butter” gaps that can immediately be addressed.

2. Map the town or city centre on the “mosaic” framework at the back of the booklet and see whether you can identify “bite sized zones” where there are groups of property owners and/or operators that could work together to make quick progress in improving their zone. Get them together to discuss what might be done.

3. Look for any streets where a more vibrant ambience could be created by stopping traffic, perhaps initially at weekends.

4. Agree a brand name for any interesting zones where there is a business grouping of a certain type that does not currently have an identity.

5. Produce a leaflet map that promotes these different retail and leisure groupings in the city/town centre.

6. Plan a street event that is purposefully designed to help stimulate trade in one or more character zones.

7. Create a “shops as art” scheme to help enthusiastic independent shop or restaurant owners make a feature of the exterior and/or interior of their premises.

8. Identify somewhere in the centre where a substantial pavement restaurant offer can be created quickly. Remove any unnecessary regulations or charges that are holding back pavement cafés.

9. Get a prominent façade painted with a big mural of high quality.

10. Identify a major public realm or art project to mark the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 that can be funded through public subscription.

10 Possible longer term initiatives

1. Think about whether there are any “big picture” things which ought to be done in the medium-long term which are not currently on the agenda - perhaps removing cars from your finest street, restoring and getting public access to your most historic building, or revamping your market to make it fit for the 21st century.

2. Combine the place making mosaic approach explained in this booklet with retail, leisure and hotel capacity studies to develop an evidence based approach to which retail and leisure developments should be priorities, and where they are best located.

3. Develop a “jigsaw” showing how the public realm across the town/city centre will be methodically renewed and traffic free/shared space zones extended.

4. Identify the “flagship” streets that could do with a makeover and which key buildings on them should be redeveloped in order to attract fresh tenants.

5. Think about where the main heritage townscapes are and what could be done in them to make them great “oasis” areas.

6. Focus on creating a very vibrant street environment in at least one location.

7. Target a fivefold increase in the amount of outdoor eating space in three years and identify where that can take place.

8. List the things in your town or city that are truly unique. Think about whether enough is being done to make the most of them and what else - perhaps an event or a monument of some sort - would make more of a feature of them.

9. Create a strategy for adding “interesting” things to the public realm, by private and public sector alike, on an ongoing basis. Appoint a creative person to take the lead on this.

10. Make sure that there is at least one cultural development project in progress, and that is allied to nurturing a better destination offer in a section of the town/city centre.
Creating “Liveable” Towns and Cities

The towns and cities that are the most attractive to visit are invariably those that are most attractive to live in. They have attractive townscapes, a range of things to see and do, good shopping, good places to eat and drink, and a vibrant cultural scene.

It is for this reason that “tourism” development should always be a central part of regeneration and economic development.

The primary aim for all towns and cities should be to create environments that are highly attractive to a balanced mix of people for living, working and spending leisure time in. In other words, they should aim to be exceptionally “liveable”.

To achieve this, towns and city centres should be largely traffic free and pedestrian/cycle friendly, have residents and office workers in situ, offer many places for people to “hang out” and socialise, especially extensive areas for outdoor eating and drinking, and have a cultural and entertainment programme that is easy for locals and visitors alike to access.

All this, incidentally, is key to creating “sustainable” towns and cities: places where people do not have to, and do not want to, get in their cars to go to work, to do their shopping, or to hang out with their families and friends.

Groningen, Holland

Shared Space in the city centre

The Dutch are masters of the art of creating liveable towns and cities. Groningen, a small university city of about 200,000 people in the east of the country, is a good illustration.

As is normally the case in Holland, the public realm is immaculate. There is no asphalt in the entire central area - surfacing is entirely in brick or stone. All streets have designated cycle paths. Pedestrians and cycles are given priority in all areas of the city centre.

As a consequence, the entire city centre feels like an integrated whole, rather than the disjointed feel common to towns and cities in the UK. Cars are allowed into parts of the centre for access purposes, but they have to “share” the space with cyclists and pedestrians and they behave accordingly. It is a different mentality to the over-engineered highways that still destroy the quality of life in so many towns and cities in the UK.

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Old and new combined

Like most towns and cities, Groningen is not a place that has been lucky enough to be associated with famous architects in the past. It does not boast a profusion of stunning old buildings. Nevertheless, any visitor instantly knows that it is a place that cares about and treasures its heritage. It is also not scared to mix old and new. The city combines top quality modern architecture with reverence for its historic buildings. The beautiful old market hall in the city centre, no longer viable as a market, has been converted into a beautiful supermarket.

Equally, no visitor would doubt the commitment of the city to culture. There is a selection of museums, all in fine condition. The city has employed star designer Philippe Stark to build a landmark museum and art gallery that reflects its progressive approach. It is cleverly located on an island, on the main pedestrian route between the rail station and the town centre. Whether or not they ever enter the gallery, thousands of people who live and work in Groningen are treated, every day, to a visual feast as they make their way into the city centre.
Not far away from Groningen, the small industrial town of Drachten has made a name for itself by taking an extraordinarily progressive approach to putting people ahead of cars.

It does not take long for a visitor to realise that Drachten is different. It might not have natural or historic assets to set it apart, but that hasn’t stopped it from becoming something special. The first sight that is encountered driving into the town is an extraordinary bridge that carries cyclists gently over the access highway.

The bridge serves the dual purpose of making life easy for both cyclists and cars and creating a memorable gateway to the town. This is only a taster, however, of the delights on offer in the town centre. Drachten decided that there were too many traffic lights, too many barriers, too many warning signs, too many curbs. It decided to go further than anyone else in getting rid of them.

The results are great. Clutter is gone. People drive slower and more carefully but the traffic keeps moving because of the absence of signals. The town centre is, of course, fully pedestrianised, but also fully cycle enabled, with the result that people of all ages cycle to the shops rather than take the car.

Drachten, Holland

Not afraid to challenge shibboleths

Making the most of its circumstances

With the benefit of a warmer climate than either Holland or the UK, medium-sized Padua is another example of a city that is a great place to visit because it is a great place to live.

The central area is largely traffic free, unless a steady stream of cyclists is taken to mean traffic. Cafés and restaurants spill out onto the street. People promenade - it is a place to meet friends and socialise. It is safe and welcoming to all ages at all times of the day and night. A strong cultural programme is immediately apparent to any resident or visitor. Public art is plentiful and tasteful.

Padua, Italy

Civilised life

Socialising

Culturally vibrant

Diverse shopping

As all these examples illustrate, in the best towns and cities, and destinations generally, leisure is an important part of the experience and creates places that are special. It provides the opportunity for social interaction and, in so doing, makes for happier citizens because most people get great pleasure from talking with friends and relatives.

The best towns and cities provide opportunities for people to have this interaction in a pleasant environment. That is what gives places “vibrancy” that, in turn, attracts visitors. It is these kind of attributes that this booklet is trying to encourage towns and cities in the North West to aim for.
Basic Elements of the Visitor Economy in Town and City Centres

The visitor economy is a complicated matter. There are very many reasons why people visit places and very many factors that influence whether they enjoy visiting a place. The Checklist that accompanies this booklet has a list of about 250 elements of the visitor economy in town and city centres, divided into 9 categories and about 50 subcategories. This section has an overview of the main considerations in each of the 9 categories. Most of these aspects are, however, best considered on a “zone by zone” basis using the mosaic approach that is described later in this booklet.

Access

Being able to get to a destination relatively quickly and easily is an important consideration in choice of a destination, whether for a holiday or a day trip. The first priority for any town or city is the number and speed of services from main markets and, for land based services, the quality of the trains/ coaches that provide those services. The second priority is the quality of experience on arrival. The quality of the railway station, in particular, is an important part of the experience for many visitors and can have a disproportionate impact on perceptions of the whole town/city. Especially for people arriving by plane, being able to get quickly through the terminal and to their hotel is important, not least because they will normally be visiting on a short break and time is at a premium.

Things to do

- Run through the check list to see if the basic access services that your town or city provides is at least reasonable.
- Make sure that the “big picture” requirements for improvement - such as station and service improvements - are clearly identified and kept on the agenda.

Place Shaping in Towns and Cities
Accommodation

There are many different types of visitor accommodation in any city, from branded business-oriented hotels to hostels for backpackers.

As in other types of destination experience, there is a basic split between accommodation that is branded and that which is “unique”.

The situation is complicated, however, by the variety of parties typically involved in developing, owning, and managing hotels these days. The brand that appears over the door gives no clue as to the ownership.

Many of the biggest hotel companies have, in recent years, sold all or most of the freeholds of their hotels on a “sale and manage-back basis”. This typically means that an investment company will own the property, with the hotel company managing it on a management contract, often for 30 years.

Many other hotels are operated under a franchise agreement. This is where the owner of the hotel manages the property, but does so following the rules and under the brand of the franchisor. A franchisee company will often have a group of hotels and be of substantial size in its own right.

Accor, a global group based in France that operates many hotels in the North West, illustrates this mix of arrangements. The company now owns only about 13% of the 4,000+ properties that its brands (such as Sofitel, Novotel, Mercure, IBIS and Formule 1) appear on. 28% are held on a lease, and 24% are managed by franchisees. Accor manages the remaining 1,500 properties under management agreements.

The brand is important in two respects.

Firstly, it is important in marketing to consumers, especially now that so many people make bookings using the Internet. The brand tells them what they can expect and makes it easy for them to book.

Secondly, it is important to investors in giving confidence that a property that they invest in will be managed effectively and well.

There are three key parties involved in many hotel developments – a developer, a financier and an operator. The developer will typically take the lead. The larger regional cities in the UK all experienced a boom in hotel development in the past decade. They now have hotel infrastructure that would have been almost inconceivable 10 years ago.

TRI’s statistics for the composition of the business of UK hotels shows why there has been an emphasis on development in cities. About 50% of rooms sold in the UK is generated by corporate business. A further 10% is conference business. In total, therefore, about two thirds of hotel volume in the UK is accounted for by “business” tourism.

Whether the growth in city centre development continues is likely to depend on the depth and length of the recession. Previous bursts of city centre hotel development in the early 1970s and the late 1980s came to a halt when the economy went into recession and there was a hiatus for several years in each case.

One of the implications of the increasing dominance of hotel brands, and also the growth of Internet based customer review systems like Trip Advisor, is that the traditional hotel rating systems have become less relevant. People are more able now to make judgements on the nature of the hotel offer based on the brand and from the reviews of other guests.

Things to do

- Aim for a mix of hotels across the spectrum of the Place Making Mosaic. Work with developers in trying to achieve this.
- Try to achieve the right type of hotel for the right type of zone - a chic boutique hotel is normally better for an emerging cultural quarter, for example, than a budget hotel.
Attractions

Developing visitor attractions in towns and cities is not easy because it is, in the main, not a commercially viable sector.

Even when the economy was strong, there was very little new development in the commercial attractions sector, even in places, like London, where there are many tourists.

Nearly all attractions, therefore, have to be developed with capital funding from public sources (such as the National Lottery, local authority, the regional development agency) and from private donors. For about a decade from 1995-2005, there was lots of money available in the North West from Europe and from the National Lottery. There is much less now, but it is still possible to develop attractions.

Despite the challenges involved, cities worldwide that have emerged as destinations have typically been done by developing a variety of cultural attractions and continually adding to them so as to build critical mass.

Any progressive city or town should be constantly thinking about how it can add to the quality and range of its attractions, not so much for direct tourism purposes but as part of providing a balanced and attractive cultural and entertainment offer to the people who live and work there.

Cultural facilities often also have an important function in providing "anchors" to oasis areas of towns and cities, in the same way that department stores are used to anchor shopping centres. FACT does this in Liverpool Ropewalks area, for example. Most cultural investments should be considered in the context of the impact that they can have in improving neighbourhoods and stimulating commercial activity that is synergistic with it.

Things to do:

- Invest particularly in cultural facilities that have long term integrity and substance and fill gaps in the cultural offer of the local community e.g. museums and galleries that are based on collections of genuine quality. Have at least one major cultural development project in the spotlight at any one time.
- Avoid attractions which are low on content but try to use technology to present things in an “exciting” manner. The technology dates fast and they seldom succeed in the long term. Check whether there are any great collections in the city that are currently not adequately displayed.
- Use attractions as anchors, basing them in sections of the town/city where they can help to stimulate a commercial cluster.

Classical Cultural Oasis: Modern Art Museum, Ulm, Germany

This beautiful museum of modern art has been built in the most historic and sensitive part of the cathedral city of Ulm. It is based on the collection of a local industrialist, beautifully integrated via a glass passage over an adjoining street, with the city’s fine museum of classic art. Cultural use allows contemporary architecture to work in an historic environment in a way that a commercial building could not.

Things to avoid:

- Avoid attractions which are low on content but try to use technology to present things in an "exciting" manner. The technology dates fast and they seldom succeed in the long term. Check whether there are any great collections in the city that are currently not adequately displayed.

Classical Cultural Oasis: Modern Art Museum, Ulm, Germany

K42 describes itself as a “Media House by the Lake”. It is on a central site on the shores of Lake Constance, immediately adjoining the town centre. It contains a library, a 100 seat multi use venue (nicknamed "The Pebble") for performance and digital media, and a quality restaurant overlooking the lake. The back half of the building is divided into two retail units and let to a commercial bookstore and a fashion store. It is an excellent facility that makes a big difference to the quality and appeal of a small city.

POWERHOUSE CITY MUSEUM: City Museum, St Louis, Missouri

Possibly the funkiest and most child friendly museum in the world and a model that could be readily emulated in the NW. Located in an old warehouse, everything in it is recycled. There is none of the "high tech" of most modern museums, but everything is displayed with extraordinary panache and with fun in mind.

BIG CITY CULTURAL HUB: Museum Brandhorst, Munich

The latest addition to Munich’s world class museums quarter, the museum displays about 200 exhibits from the collection of modern art of the heirs of the Henkel Trust. It has been a major popular success, partly because of the quality of the collection and partly because of the shimmering effect of the multi-coloured façade (created by architects Sauerbruch Hutton) which is designed to resemble an abstract painting. The effect is created by 36,100 ceramic rods which have been fixed vertically. They are finished in 23 different coloured glazes and fall into three groups of shades and tonality. Walking past the building, the surface of the façade seems to alter, as a result of which people do walk around it and walk up to it to investigate what causes the effect. The total construction cost was 48 million euro.

SMALL TOWN CULTURAL HUB: De la Warr Pavilion, Bexhill

The de la Warr Pavilion is a 1930s classic of modernist architecture. It was derelict for many years. It has recently been restored as a contemporary arts and entertainment facility at a cost of £6 million. Funding came largely from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council. It has one of the largest contemporary art galleries in South East England, an auditorium with a capacity of 350 cabaret or 1250 theatre style, a large studio space, roof and ground floor terraces, a café, bar and restaurant, a shop specialising in books and merchandise on arts and culture, indoor and outdoor spaces to sit, relax and enjoy sea views. These facilities attracted over 500,000 visits in 2008 of which 172,000 attended exhibitions, 9,000 engaged in the education programme and 20,000 attended performances. The building is held on a 99 year lease from Rother District Council by the De la Warr Charitable Trust. They have total income of £2.5 million, with core funding of £429k and £353k from Arts Council England and Rother District Council respectively. The music programme is wide ranging covering classical, opera, big bands, Jazz, contemporary pop and musicals. The gallery programme typically involves up to 5 exhibitions per year.
FPM 22: Concert Hall, Minneapolis
Unattractive building given a colourful makeover

FPM 23: Horsebridge Arts Centre, Whitstable, Kent
Outstanding cultural facility fits perfectly into the heart of a small town

FPM 24: Duomo, Milan
Cleaning the cathedral exterior has transformed the city centre

FPM 25: Classy exterior banners add quality to the cityscape

FPM 26: Children's Park and Children's Museum, San Diego
Family facilities at the heart of major downtown development. Most US cities have "edutainment" facilities for young children.

FPM 27: Nursery Rhyme Fountain, Constance, Germany
A big attraction for kids, with quality appropriate to a focal location in the city

FPM 28: Liverpool Waterfront
Continuing investment has created one of the finest culture clusters in the country

FPM 29: Röda Sten, Gothenburg
Former power station turned into ultra hip workshops, gallery and performance venue

FPM 30: Delftse Poort, Rotterdam
Ensuring, imaginatively, that a glorious past is not forgotten

FPM 31: Paris, Texas
Making the most of unique attributes

FPM 32: Jardin Tuileries, Paris
Making the most of fountains
Built and Natural Environment

The quality and variety of the spaces in any town or city centre is perhaps the most important factor in determining its appeal. Recent research has reported that people in Holland and Denmark were the most “content” in Europe. Although there are probably many factors at play, the extent to which the quality of their urban centres is likely to be a contributor. Copenhagen city region came top of this “contentedness” league. It is perhaps no coincidence that Copenhagen was the first major city to fully pedestrianise its city centre, as long ago as 1963.

Almost without exception, towns and cities in the North West would benefit from the type of progressive mentality that town planners and civic leaders in Holland show in abundance. As mentioned previously in the Groningen and Drachten examples, Holland is a particular exemplar of how towns and cities can achieve a better balance between people and cars and achieve exceptional standards in the quality of the public realm. As a general principle, the aim is to achieve a consistency between the nature and quality of the public realm and the nature of the commercial and other activities that take place in that part of the town or city.

Quality of architecture plays a major role in the quality of the built environment. One of the reasons that Liverpool One has been lauded has been the quality and diversity of its architecture. Any town or city that wants to be seen at the leading edge must pay attention to the quality of the buildings and try to secure the services of architects of quality, preferably including “stars”. This can be done on both a large and small stage.

It is common practice, therefore, to lay cobbles in “oasis” areas. They are in keeping with heritage townscapes and have a calming effect. By contrast, more formal surfaces like setts are more commonly used in flagship areas.

Most towns and cities in northern Europe have better provision for cyclists than in Britain. As a result, people of all ages are more likely to use cycles to get to and around the city. Encouraging this is, of course, important in terms of reducing carbon emissions and reducing the impact of cars in town and city centres. Visitors also increasingly like to get around a place by bicycle. Many continental cities now have city cycle schemes, managed by outdoor advertising companies.

Things to do:

* Identify any atrocities in your town or city that really ought to be dealt with. Leaders of towns and cities sometimes need to be bold and take a stance on major improvements even though it will take a long time, be hard to raise the funds, involve tussles with conservative traffic engineers and the like, and fly in the face of local scepticism.

* Have a clear plan for upgrading the public realm in a systematic way across the town or city centre.

* If there is a somewhat conservative attitude towards the traffic-pedestrian balance, take a study tour to Holland.

1 Cambridge University Faculty of Economics, 2007. Funded by the European Community.

**POWERHOUSE CITY REGENERATION**: Heart of the City, Sheffield

Sheffield’s city centre was in a very poor shape in the early 1990s, devastated by the twin impact of decline in its industrial base and the impact of the out of town Meadowhall shopping mall. The city’s strategy was to develop a masterplan for a relatively small part of the city centre that would create a new “Heart of the City” of pristine quality. It included six major projects including the Peace Gardens, a Winter Garden, the Millennium Galleries, a hotel and an office quarter, all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented. The area is now branded the Heart of the City. A special team was set up to maintain all of which have now been successfully implemented.

**RESTORING CLASSIC TOWNSCAPES**: Cathedral Green & Queen Square, Bristol

Without enjoying the advantages of European funding that Sheffield has had, Bristol has also transformed the quality of key city centre spaces by bold initiatives. 10 years ago, photographs taken in the same position would have shown two-wide lanes of road, primary access route into the city, destroying the quality of possibly the finest Georgian Square in England. Despite objections about what would happen to the traffic, the Council decided that these urban insensitivities could not be allowed to continue.

The same was true of the space in front of the medieval cathedral. They are now two of the most popular recreational spaces in the city and Queen Square is the most prestigious office location in the city.

**WATER BASED CITY REGENERATION**: Riverwalk, San Antonio, Texas

Other than the likes of Venice and Amsterdam, this is perhaps the most imaginative and successful use of water in a city centre environment in the impact of the San Antonio River was prone to flooding. In the face of major public and political scepticism, the City Engineer, Robert Hugman, developed and pushed forward a scheme in the 1930s that would canalise the river and create a mile-long river loop through the city centre, one storey below the street level. It would be a car free recreational haven. His vision has triumphed. This loop has become one of the most successful destinations in the United States, thronging with restaurants and entertainments. Features that make it particularly attractive include many fountains that spill water into the canal, creating vibrancy and interest, variety in the treatment of the canal side, and many opportunities to eat and drink by the water. It is strongly branded and local businesses advertise as being on the River Walk. Work to extend the River Walk continues to this day. Several places in the North West can take inspiration from this, not least the Irwell in Manchester.
MAKING THE MOST OF WATER: H²O Park, Toronto

The basic principle of making best use of water is to make it possible for people to get close to it and look down upon it. This is illustrated by the excellent H²O Park in Toronto which uses the simple technique of grass mounds which people can lounge on and look down to the water. The waterside “apron” offers many different types of opportunity for people to relax by the water, including a beach.

GRUNGE BOHEMIAN ZONE: Rue St Catherine, Montreal

Street art of high quality is a feature of Montreal, especially in the trendy Quartier Latin and where the city’s main street, Rue St Catherine, passes through a few blocks where it becomes “Grunge Bohemian”, street culture mixing with an eclectic range of gothic clothing boutiques, sex shops and vinyl record stores. A DJ leads dance contests at weekends, as the artists do their work. Many people like this kind of thing and it gives a city character.

COMMITMENT TO PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE: Rotterdam

Rotterdam is perhaps the most interesting city in Europe for post-industrial towns and cities to examine. Its centre destroyed in World War 2, it has made a commitment to progressive city planning and architecture as a central part of its brand and identity. It has become increasingly successful as a destination. There is a visitor centre in the heart of the city that has a large scale model of the city and exhibitions about plans for the city’s future. The outstanding Netherlands Institute of Architecture is one of its standout public buildings and, in 2007, it declared itself “City of Architecture”. It features many interesting examples of innovative place shaping.

COMMITMENT TO PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE: Medienhafen, Düsseldorf

When its docks on the Rhine were no longer large enough for modern operational requirements, the regional government decided to plan an office-orientated development aimed at media-related businesses. They decided from the start to spread the area between different developers and encourage them to use world class architects. Architects like Frank Gehry, Will Alsop and David Chipperfield have designed buildings there. It has become a major hub of both media and fashion businesses. The combination of extraordinary architecture and hip bars and restaurants has made it a major destination by day and night, even though there are no formal “attractions”.

COMMITMENT TO PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE: Sharp Centre for Design, Toronto

Destination architecture by Alsop anchors a design cluster and increasingly trendy neighbourhood.

FPM 31: Sharp Centre for Design, Toronto

For once, “iconic” is an appropriate description.

FPM 34: Selfridges, Birmingham

Design and business development are integrated.

FPM 35: Kiosk for small traders, London

Getting people down to the water.

FPM 36: Lindholmen, Gothenburg

Design and business development are integrated.

FPM 37: Shared Space, Ulm

Old and new mixed with confidence.

FPM 38: Sharing city centre space, Uppsala, Sweden

FPM 39: Shared Space Junction, Winterthur, Switzerland

FPM 40: Street Art, Church Street, Blackburn

Old and new mixed with confidence.
SMALL TOWN EXEMPLAR - Bolsward, Holland

This is what a “sustainable” small town is like. It provides attractive spaces in the town centre where people of all ages enjoy hanging out, linked to outlying areas by a network of off road cycle and pedestrian paths so that people do not have to use cars. The extensive space for outdoor eating when the weather is nice sustains the bars, which in turn attract people that sustain the shops. This is standard for a Dutch town.

CYCLE FRIENDLY CITY: Gothenburg

Gothenburg is exceptionally cycle friendly for residents and visitors alike. The city is crisscrossed by a network of cycle paths that are segregated from both cars and pedestrians and have dedicated traffic signals. There are extensive tree lined boulevards with car free cycle paths running through the middle of the city. Off road cycle paths run right down both sides of the river, linking attractions in a “string of pearls” arrangement, and tourist trails are signposted. There are several companies offering cycle hire to visitors and there is a city bike scheme.

CITY CYCLE SCHEMES: Oslo

There are racks of bicycles at about 60 points around the city. Residents and tourists buy a smart card which releases a bicycle when they want one. They have to return the bicycle to another rack within 3 hours (they can simply swap it for a replacement if they need to continue cycling).

FPM 41: Fountain, Kракów, Poland
Small but tasteful and life enhancing

FPM 42: Bancroft Park, Blackpool
Cool climbing wall at town entrance

FPM 43: Bryant Park, New York
Pocket park that is a Business Improvement District i.e. businesses overlooking it pay extra rates for its upkeep

FPM 44: Millennium Park, Chicago
Enlightened % to the Arts scheme has given it works by many famous artists

FPM 45: Fred Dibnah, Bolton
Always remember local heroes

FPM 46: Abano Termé, Italy
Boldly imaginative water feature that runs through the middle of Italy’s most popular spa resort town

FPM 47: Play Zeppelin, Friedrichshafen
Heritage commemorated entertainingly

FPM 48: Montpellier, France
Adding character to pavement fountains

FPM 49: Fishing in Franeker, Holland
Dutch public art often shows humour

FPM 50: Skate Park, Rotterdam
With typical imagination, Rotterdam put Europe’s best skate park in its centre

FPM 51: Sculpture Park, Rotterdam
Bust is star of outstanding pocket park

FPM 52: More London, South Bank
Contemporary public realm in commercial development is a hit
Eating is the activity that people most like to do on a day out, and is the main reason for going out at night. The NW Day Visitor Survey in 2007 found that about a third of all expenditure on day trips in the region was on food and drink, most of it taken on the premises.

Just like shops, restaurants and bars of similar type tend to group together. Restaurant clusters, like Curry Mile and Chinatown in Manchester, can be amongst the most important attractors to a city. Individual restaurants can also be major attractors in their own right.

Restaurants are increasingly important venues for social interaction, and people particularly like to sit in them in the open air. This is no longer just a Mediterranean phenomenon. Many Northern European towns and cities now offer extensive outdoor eating and drinking areas all year round.

Fine food shops and markets have also become an increasing important part of the destination offer in many places.

Things to do:
- Examine whether the policies on pavement tables are too conservative or there are other barriers preventing them from flourishing.
- Look closely at opportunities on or immediately adjacent to the flagship streets for restaurants with pavement seating.
- Make outdoor eating a key feature of oasis areas.
- Look for opportunities to create a brand-orientated restaurant grouping, perhaps with the new generation of luxury cinemas as the anchor.
- Consider whether the town/city should be planning a modern food market that combines buying and eating.

BOLDLY AL FRESCO: Obergasse, Winterthur, Switzerland
The small industrial city of Winterthur has created an outstanding piazza, a block away from the main retail high street, which, when the weather is nice, is totally devoted to outdoor eating. In combination with imaginative public realm, it creates an exceptional centrepiece for the city centre.

NEW GENERATION FOOD MARKET: Borough Market, Southwark
In an unpromising location under railway tracks, Borough Market is perhaps the most successful visitor attraction in London, attracting crowds of locals and tourists alike. It specialises in food from around the world, especially organic. It is symptomatic of the increasingly cosmopolitan tastes of people and their increasing concern for the provenance of the food that they eat.

NEW GENERATION FOOD MARKET: Food Market, Uppsala, Sweden
This excellent food market in a small city, converted from a former tram shed, is indicative of the modern trend in food markets. It is as much about eating on site as it is about buying, with a fine dining restaurant at the upper floor level, mid market waiter service operation at ground floor and on the terrace, and opportunities inside to buy from the stalls and eat on the premises. It could be argued that every city or town of quality should have at least one good food market either in a market hall or outside (Gothenburg has four).

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Events

Events come in many shapes and sizes and play an important role in attracting people to places.

Conferences and exhibitions are a particularly important sub sector. Whether or not to build a purpose built conference and exhibition centre is often a difficult decision for cities. They normally require public funding to build, operate and to provide “subvention” in attracting events. They often deliver very substantial benefits, however, in terms of revenue attracted to the city.

There is also a need for organisational arrangements to assist event organisers with practical arrangements and to dress the city for major conventions and exhibitions.

A degree of care is needed with events that take place in town and city centres. Street events typically attract large crowds, but retailers often complain that their sales fall while the event is on. This is because visitors are in an “event” frame of mind as opposed to a “shopping” frame of mind.

The best types of city centre event have careful synergy with the part of the town or city that they take place in and either take place when the shops are closed or are structured to enable shops and other businesses to directly benefit.

Also important are the smaller events and activities that animate town/city centres. They are particularly important in “oasis” areas, adding to the vibrancy.

Probably the most significant city centre events of all are those that take place at Christmas. Most British towns and cities only manage rather dull and predictable high street lights. As Manchester has shown, however, people are on the lookout for something special at Christmas and any town and city can, with imagination, do things that are likely to attract the crowds.

Because almost all towns and cities have a range of events, perhaps the best, from a place making point of view, are those that are distinctive and unique to the place. It is also a major advantage if they help to animate the town/city centre while they are on.

Things to do:

■ If you have facilities for staging certain types of footloose events, make sure that you have organisational arrangements for attracting them.

■ Check that your town/city is set up for serving the needs of events organisers and for making any events that come feel welcome.

■ Check that each major “zone” of the centre has an events strategy, particularly focusing on those parts where there are independent shops, bars and restaurants. Make sure that there is at least one street festival annually.

■ In order to differentiate the town/city from others, try to establish events that accentuate the unique characteristics of the place.

■ Take a short break to the continent this Christmas to pick up ideas for what could be done to enhance your Christmas programme. Strasbourg - self proclaimed European Capital of Christmas - and the surrounding towns are a good choice.
An ideal market town has an attractive market square with a food market each year an artist is asked to put on an exhibition during the summer. It goes to a provincial city first.

Zurich Spring “Garden City” Festival
Zurich’s excellent annual “Garden City” festival in spring places hundreds of decorated pot plants around the city, each sponsored by a business (most shops have one outside their premises) or individual and each decorated by an artist. The nearby town of Baden (bottom right) has a more romantic version, using hearts rather than pots.
Retail is a core part of the visitor offer in any town and city. Even for those who are not visiting a place for the shopping, the shops do more than almost anything to influence the appeal of the place.

The NW Day Visitor Survey found that about 50% of all expenditure on leisure day trips in the NW was on shopping. For people making “special trips”, clothing and fashion shops are particularly important.

**Categories of expenditure on day trips**

- Clothing/ jewelry: 23%
- Music/ films/ games: 12%
- Household items (ornaments/ decorations, etc): 10%
- Books & Maps: 5%
- Smaller items (pens/postcards, etc): 3%
- Plants and garden items: 3%
- **Total Shopping:** 100%

Shops that are like-minded and serve like minded customers normally cluster in groups. Providing a balance of different types of shops is, therefore, largely a matter of providing a series of different environments in which different types of shops can flourish.

For any sizeable town, the first priority is likely to be to ensure that it has a mainstream high street offer that keeps pace with the competition in terms of quality and variety. Without that, the town is likely to start losing spend to the competition. This invariably is a matter of updating flagship streets and shopping malls, and building new ones.

It is increasingly important, however, to also ensure that the town or city has other types of retail offer, such as “bohemian” type areas dominated by character independents, and more “cosmopolitan” areas with a mix of independents and niche multiples. This is invariably best done in “oasis” areas. Conservation zones are often best.

Places like Brighton and Gothenburg have become successful as destinations largely because they have been able to nurture offers like this in different parts of the city centre. This is the foundation of the “mosaic approach”, which we discuss in more detail in the next section of this booklet.

**Things to do:**

- Put together a “shops as art” programme that helps independent retailers to make something special of their premises.
- Work with any dominant shops in the town/city that are looking tired to encourage them to refresh.

**SHOP AS ART:** Konstanz, Germany

Historic cathedral city Konstanz has many shops and pavement restaurants that are elegant and attractive, both in terms of their merchandise and the way in which they dress their exterior and their windows, in addition to a good high street offer. Many towns and cities in the North West might benefit from programmes which help independent traders to dress their stores – inside and out – in a more attractive and distinctive manner.

**COSMOPOLITAN SHOPPING:** Met Quarter, Liverpool

This up market shopping centre, which opened in March 2006, was developed by John Milligan within the facade of a derelict 19th Century post office building. The 150,000 sq ft scheme cost £70 million in total (i.e. over £5,000 per m²), high for a shopping centre. He aimed at high end designer fashion labels and was selective in the tenants that they would accept, at the outset choosing to have vacancies rather than compromise. Manchester’s Spinningfields will have a more ambitious mix.

**DESTINATION SHOPS:** Abercrombie & Fitch, Burlington Gardens, London

Abercrombie & Fitch’s European flagship follows an emerging trend in London for the “coolest” destination stores to choose locations away from the main drag. Despite being far from the normal haunts of its customers, it has queues to get in at weekends. Note also A&F’s signature lack of exterior signage (but signature fragrance, which staff spray onto all the clothing, very evident anywhere in the vicinity!). Comme des Garçon’s über cool Dover Market has been located in an obscure building in an even more obscure location, best located by following the young fashionistas that have appeared in the area. Reiss has also located all of its West End stores a block back from the flagship streets, relying on their customers to find them. These innovations add new depth and interest to the retail offer and create new footfall patterns. Persuading a destination store like this to locate in an area away from the main retail drag could have a transformational impact.

**REFRESHING THE HIGH STREET:** Kensington High Street, London

It is usually difficult to attract more desirable brands into a high street one at a time. They normally come in batches into developments that suit them, as this development shows. The developer has provided units designed for upper range fashion multiples, forming an instant high street fashion cluster.
Fun contemporary variations on tradition enhance the city

Imaginative decoration and exterior creates night feature

Funky store exterior adds character to the high street

Shops making the most of historic features in a World Heritage Site

A more contemporary approach to store design would enliven many parts of the North West in places where the built environment is not exceptionally sensitive, most obviously, of course, in "bohemian" type zones like the Northern Quarter in Manchester and Bold Street in Liverpool.
Nightlife

Like all other aspects of cities, nightlife tends to concentrate by type in different parts. There is also typically a divide between nightlife which is dominated by national multiples and that which is dominated by independents.

They both tend to concentrate in areas which are at the edge of the main retail core, often using buildings of character. Whereas the branded nightlife tends to favour high visibility locations however, such as on the edges of high streets, independents are more likely to concentrate in heritage townscape areas.

Partly because of the anti-social behaviour associated with the night economy, there is a tendency to marginalise it. The public realm in areas which have nightlife concentrations, for example, often has less attention than the public realm in other parts of the city centre. One of the consequences of this is that the night economy in many British towns and cities has become somewhat one-dimensional, concentrating largely on pubs and clubs that serve young people.

This misses an opportunity. The experience of cities in North America is interesting in this respect. Many of them have been able to attract people back to their largely abandoned centres using the night time economy as the lure.

Things to do:

- Develop an evening/night economy management and development plan, working in partnership with the businesses operating in the different night clusters and with the police.
- Identify the areas which are focused on different types of nightlife offer. Designate them as special “nightlife” zones where there will be special management measures such as night bus services, managed taxi ranks, and special street cleaning.
- Aim to make investments in cultural activity that has a night dimension in locations where it can help to nurture attractive night zones.
- Investigate applying for the Purple Flag scheme for nightlife areas (administered by the Association of Town Centre Management).

CITY REGENERATION THROUGH THE NIGHT ECONOMY: Sundance Square, Fort Worth

Sundance Square is the historic part of the centre of Fort Worth. It was a victim of “white flight” in the 1970s and 1980s. It has since been regenerated as an excellent nightlife district. There are many component parts of this: the art deco cinema and spectacular Bass Concert Hall were refurbished, with a night opening branch of Borders adjacent to them, as anchors. The public realm was improved, and historic buildings were converted into attractive bars and restaurants. Feature lighting was installed on all the major buildings. It is actively managed and marketed as a destination and the brand appears everywhere. Parking which is used by office workers by day is used by customers for the night offer in the evening. The end result is a safe environment that is frequented by a large proportion of the population of the city and creates a major destination.

Place Shaping In Towns and Cities
Visitor Services

There are some services that all towns and cities should provide for visitors:

- An “official” visitor web site of good quality.
  Research consistently shows that people often seek independent information from the “official” source—in other words, generally the local tourist board.
- Clear signposting, for motorists and pedestrians, to attractions and areas of the town/city which are most likely to be of interest to visitors.
- Free map/guide/events listing on offer at main visitor entry points, including airport, railway station(s) and car parks.
- Clear orientation maps at regular intervals as people walk around the city.
- Information about interesting buildings and places as people walk around.
- Face to face advice and information.

Growth in use of the internet has changed the demands made of tourist information centres. They get less telephone enquiries and bookings than in the past, but are still extensively used by visitors when they are at the destination. This often means that it is more sensible to look for ways of providing information desks dispersed around a city rather than have an expensive main information centre. Bristol, for example, has followed this policy.

There are also management alternatives. In the Lake District, some tourist information centres have been taken over by commercial operators and others have been taken over by non-profit community groups. Both models seem to work and could probably be adopted elsewhere.

Things to do:

- Go through the checklist to make sure that your town/city is doing the basics.
- Evaluate whether your current Tourist Information Centre is best given the changing usage patterns.

FPM 84: Wayfinding system in Liverpool
Liverpool’s way finding system is particularly user friendly for visitors. One side shows where they are—the immediate vicinity and the area. The other tells them about the history of the location and particular buildings and monuments.

FPM 85: London South Bank
This way finding and information system has the advantage that it can be continuously updated and refreshed.

FPM 86: Cultural Events Promotion
Like other European cities, Zurich feels like it has an exceptional cultural offer simply because it has poster sites all over the city centre which are used by the cultural organisations. This has a double benefit of promoting the cultural activity and animating the city centre.

FPM 87: Tourist Information Booth, Turin
Although people increasingly use the internet to get information in advance and make bookings, they prefer face to face information when they are at a destination. Units like this provide this service cost effectively and stylishly.

FPM 90: Walking Tours, Amsterdam
Making it easy for people to see interesting sights.

FPM 91: Information for the Blind, Milan
Information plaques of high quality that allow visitors and locals alike to easily understand the history and architecture of buildings they are looking at.

FPM 94: Cycles for hotel guests, Milan
Making it easy for people to see interesting sights.

Place Shaping In Towns and Cities
Different types of people like different types of experience

A truism that should always be taken into account when considering the visitor economy is that not everyone likes the same sort of thing.

It is seldom possible to satisfy everyone with a single type of offer. As a simple analogy, many people like Opera and many people don’t; many people like Hip Hop and many people don’t; many people like McDonalds and many people don’t; many people like Jamie Oliver’s restaurants and many people don’t.

Those are really too simple as analogies, however, because some people like both Opera and Hip Hop, and some people like both McDonalds and Jamie Oliver’s restaurants. There is a tendency, in fact, to pigeonhole people too much when thinking of their preferences as visitors, thinking of them as “heritage tourists” or “eco tourists” when, in fact, people normally like and seek a diversity of experiences when visiting places.

They don’t, however, normally want their diversity of experiences all mixed up at one time. They don’t normally want to enjoy Hip Hop in an Opera House, or expect to go out for an expensive meal at a posh restaurant that is located next to a McDonalds.

It therefore makes sense, within the context of a town or city, to provide a “mosaic” of different experiences, each of which has a consistency of character that appeals to people who like “that sort of thing”.

There are many different factors that influence what types of experiences people like.

Age, life-stage and household status all have a big effect. Naturally, people of different ages have different preferences. People do different things when they have a family than when they are single or simply part of a couple. They do different things as their family ages and when the kids leave home.

Although families are a primary market for certain destinations – no aquarium would exist without them for example – their importance can be overstated. Less than a third of UK households have children in them and it is generally not a good idea to think of families as the only target audience, children in them and it is generally not a good idea to think of families as the only target audience, thinking of them as “heritage tourists” or “eco tourists” when, in fact, people normally like and seek a diversity of experiences when visiting places.

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In crude terms, the proportion of the population represented by the “middle class” has been steadily growing and now represents a substantial majority in numerical terms, much more in terms of spending power. It is difficult for any destination to prosper if it does not appeal to middle class tastes. This has been one of the central problems for seaside resorts that have traditionally been “working class” destinations and have struggled to adapt to the changing socio-economic profile of the market.

It is also an endemic problem with many of the larger towns in the North West. Most of them have affluent catchment areas but the people who live in those catchment areas tend to go elsewhere for their shopping and leisure. This results in an unbalanced mix of people using the town/city centre, and also encourages greater than necessary traffic movement. The main challenge for most of the larger towns/small cities in the North West is to redress this. Their priority should not be so much to persuade people from far away to visit them but to persuade people who live nearby to use the town or city centre more often.

A psychographic model called ArkLeisure is another means for considering the different types of experiences that different people like.

It was developed by Arkenford Research on behalf of VisitBritain, the national tourism agency, to provide a more effective means of categorising people according to the type of leisure experiences that they prefer. It has been used extensively in the North West region and in other parts of the country.

It categorises people into eight segments. The ArkLeisure model has been used to map the types of people that use different parts of towns and cities. It has shown, unsurprisingly, that the different segments will use different sections of towns and cities to varying extents.

A balanced, sustainable, town or city will attract a broad cross section of the people in these segments. Many towns in the North West are not, however, doing so.

They are especially missing out on the high spend groups at the top half of the model. It should be a strategic objective for almost everywhere to develop a product that appeals to Cosmopolitans and Style Hounds. The offer of most towns and cities in the North West caters for the other segments reasonably well. In most cases, however, it is weak in its appeal to the biggest spenders, Cosmopolitans and Style Hounds.

The core product needed to attract the high spend people who live nearby is a range of high quality shops and restaurants, both branded and independent, in an attractive built environment. This can be assessed using segmentation models such as Acorn and Cameo, which use data from the census plus other information to categorise people.
Towards the right of the model are financial institutions. Larger property companies and property tends to be owned by largely branded chains and the experiences that are dominated by brands and independent-orientated experiences in red and mixed brand- and independent-orientated areas in purple. “Premium” areas are dark shaded and “Value” orientated areas are light shaded.

This model can be used to assess all forms of experience that places offer, from hotels to restaurants, high street shopping areas to up and coming trendy neighbourhoods.

The Place Making Mosaic

Models like ArkLeisure are about the preferences of people. The Place Making Mosaic is about the physical experiences that attract people to places.

Towards the left of the model are experiences that are dominated by corporations. The commercial offer - shops, restaurants etc. - is largely branded chains and the property tends to be owned by larger property companies and financial institutions.

Towards the right of the model are experiences that are dominated by independents - the commercial offer is largely locally owned businesses and the property tends to be in multiple ownership by relatively small companies, many of which are local.

Towards the bottom of the model are experiences dominated by value-orientated businesses. Price is a big factor in the way that they position themselves.

Assessing the experiences offered by town and city centres

The main reason for developing the Place Making Mosaic model, however, was to provide a means of assessing the range of experiences offered by different parts of towns and cities.

The nature of the experience in any part of a town or city is provided by the mix of the businesses and other organisations operating there and by the nature of the built realm. It often changes from one block to another.

There is also nearly always a clear demarcation between the streets and sections where the main multiples congregate as “flagship zones” and those where independents and branches of niche multiples congregate as “oasis zones”.

World Class Waterfronts plotted on the Place Making Mosaic

Waterfront cities across the world have been reclaiming dockland areas for public use, normally as dock activities move out of the city centre to bigger and more modern facilities downstream. Plotting some of the best of these developments on the Place Making Mosaic shows that they are very different in character. The visitor experience at the successful Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth, for example, is dominated by brands. It has a mixture of family outlet shopping and entertainment (in the form of cinema, bowls, casino and a large number of restaurants and bars). Almost all of the tenants are national multiples. At the other extreme, Granville Island, in Vancouver, discussed later in this book, is almost totally independent-orientated. It is the most visited attraction in Vancouver. Although there are some basic principles that underpin all of the waterfront developments shown on the diagram - such as providing access to the water, creating traffic free environments, and providing lots of things for people to do there is no standard template for creating a top class waterfront destination.
CLASSIC OASIS: Lancashire Court, Mayfair
This inaccessible courtyard and series of small lanes near Oxford Street has been developed to provide a mixture of smart restaurants, bars, boutiques, galleries and the beautifully refurbished Handel House Museum. It is not a place that people chance upon - it is a destination. Many NW cities have opportunities to create places with similar feel.

PEARL DISTRICT: Portland, Oregon, USA
Portland has perhaps the most "liveable" city centre in the US. The Pearl District is a former industrial district that is now one of the best regenerated mixed-use inner city areas in the world. The name is a recent creation. It came from an article by a travel writer who said that the industrial buildings reminded him of a pearl, unattractive on the outside but beautiful on the inside. The private sector Pearl District Business Association takes the lead in marketing the area. There is interesting detail on their web site: www.exploretpearl.com
The district’s name appears everywhere: on street signs (paid for by the Association), business names, events etc.

Experiences in Chester City Centre plotted on the Place Making Mosaic

Experiences in Chester City Centre plotted spatially using the Place Making Mosaic
1. Northgate Street North
2. Forum Shopping Centre
3. Market Hall
4. St Werburgh Row
5. Eastgate Street/Bridge Street/Grosvenor Arcade
6. St Michael's Row
7. Foregate St West
8. Foregate St East
9. Fordsham Street South
10. Fordsham Street North
11. Watergate Street East
12. Watergate Street West
13. Pepper Street
14. Commonhall/Whitefriars
15. Lower Bridge Street

Chester is like the West End in that the main streets in the city centre, and the shopping arcades that adjoin them, are dominated by national multiple brands. The extremities of each of the main streets have a different character. They are dominated either by value-orientated multiples or a mix of independents and national multiples that operate out of smaller units. There are also concentrations of bars and restaurants at the extremities of each of the flagship streets. They are mainly branded at Foregate Street (and adjoining St John's Streets), and mainly independent elsewhere. Chester also has some attractive "oasis" areas, Rufus Court and Godstall Lane being perhaps the best examples. Like the West End, it needs to focus on a mix of "polishing" and expanding the flagship zones and nurturing vibrant mixed use oases.
The Principles
Basic principles that can be used to nurture areas of greater quality and more distinctive character in town and city centres:

1. Focus on micro areas that have a distinctive character in terms of the nature of the built environment and the experiences that cluster there. This means breaking up the city centre into “bite sized” sections, working with stakeholders almost on a block by block basis.

2. Establish an appropriate partnership vehicle in each micro area for pushing through improvements. This might be a single developer, a development partnership, a partnership of property owners-tenants or a Business Improvement District.

3. Be clear as to the type of experience that is being created and the type of customer that is the primary target. Aim for consistency between the retail offer, the leisure offer, the public realm and animation activity in each zone.

4. Develop anchors that will attract the right type of person to each sub-destination.

5. Be selective in accepting tenants, aiming for only those that will enhance the experience that is being created.

6. Give each micro area a brand name and style. Create a presence for it on the ground (in signage etc) and in promotional material.

7. Invest in built realm that is consistent with the nature of the experience that is being created and provides signals as to the type of area that it is. This might be in the form of the paving and street furniture, outdoor eating areas, signage, gateways (the “Chinese Arch” technique) and art.

8. Encourage animation activity that is of a style and nature that fits the vision for the area.

**PLACE SHAPING BY DEVELOPERS: Shaftesbury plc**

The best UK examples of zonal development and management are in London and are private sector led. Shaftesbury plc started, in 1986, to acquire holdings in the West End “quarters” of Chinatown, Carnaby Street and Covent Garden. Their strategy is to buy property in areas where there are distinctive, emerging clusters, and to raise values by promoting and developing the clusters. They encourage new and unique businesses that are seen as too risky and unprofitable by traditional landlords. They develop a significant amount of residential in the mix, because of the return and because it generates a “village” atmosphere. Its anchor development in the Seven Dials area (north of Covent Garden) was the Thomas Neale shopping centre. That led to a grouping of youth fashion brands from glasses to new-occupy most of the units in Neal Street (e.g. Diesel, O’Neill, Urban Outfitters). The rentals are higher than in the rest of Covent Garden because of the appeal of the area to high spending young people.

They used a similar approach to regenerate Carnaby Street, where they bought a large number of properties in the 1990s. They invested in promotion and refurbishments, encouraging a better standard of occupier, and built an anchor development called Kingly Court, which is arranged on three floors around a central courtyard. Many of its 38 units are occupied by unique or flagship stores selling fashionable clothing and accessories. Most of the tenants on Carnaby Street itself and Newburgh Street are now fashion and health and beauty brands like Vans, American Apparel, and O’Neill. Although Shaftesbury work in areas of multiple ownership, they create brands for zonal destinations, market them, provide visual indications that demarcate the area and make interventions in the public realm that create sense of place, using service charges to pay for them. They ensure that even the Christmas lights are a good fit with the sense of place that they are trying to establish.
PLACE MAKING: Cedros Avenue Design District, Sonoma Beach, California

This district provides a graphic illustration of the application of Place Making Mosaic principles to nurture a “cosmopolitan zone”. Formerly an industrial area, a developer purchased a block of the streets which had some redundant sheds and populated them with design orientated businesses. This was successful - it was the anchor that attracted customers. The developer bought and developed other property for the same purpose and then other businesses moved in. There is now about half a mile of furniture shops, galleries, restaurants and a “hip” live music venue. It is actively managed by the businesses there, has a very strong sense of place and has become a major destination. Although in very different circumstances, there are many places in the North West that would benefit from the same sort of treatment – banners and signs used to create vibrancy and identity, high quality but individualistic shop fronts and interiors, quirky public art, street events and so on.

PLACE MAKING: Cedros Avenue Design District, Sonoma Beach, California

FPM 96: Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan

A clear vision has transformed a classic arcade. Stringent application of rules about shop exteriors allows Prada and McDonald’s to sit alongside each other with a degree of comfort.

FPM 97: Harbourfront Centre, Toronto

The waterfront area in Toronto has a mix of commercial and non-commercial attractions. They have been branded the Harbourfront Centre and the destination is actively managed by a non-profit partnership destination management organisation. The most successful waterfront destinations in the world are strongly branded and actively managed.

FPM 98: Cathedral Quarter Derby

The Urban Development Company in Derby has worked in partnership with private sector property owners to secure a combination of public and private sector investment to improve the public realm, brand the area, develop a town house hotel, create a distinctive retail offer and stage a festival. A Business Improvement Area has been established for the district.

FPM 99: Gaslamp, San Diego

Powerful and extensively used branding in a neighbourhood that has been vibrantly regenerated, with the night economy at the fore.

FPM 100: Granville Island, Vancouver

The last remaining industry in the area that has become Vancouver’s top destination does its bit for the brand.

FPM 101: Bonn Old Town

You know you are there.


Classic arcades that have both recently been transformed using “Mosaic” principles, with a clear identity and consistency of experience.

FPM 103: Yaletown, Vancouver

Information boards tell people where businesses are in this up and coming neighbourhood.

FPM 104: Costa Coffee, Bowness on Windermere

Sometimes a well known brand can give a place a big lift, providing an anchor that brings different people to the location.
7 “Flagship Areas” and “Oasis Areas”

It is often useful when thinking about how to divide up a town or city centre to differentiate between "flagship" areas, which tend to have the biggest shops and to be dominated by corporations, and "oasis" areas, which are typically of a one-off nature and there is the most potential to create experiences that are unique. Oasis areas also include open spaces - we call them “green oases” - where there is little or no commercial offer. Although leisure is increasingly an important part of flagship areas and that element could do with attention in the centres of most towns and cities in the North West, it dominates in oasis areas and should nearly always be a major consideration there.

Flagship Areas

The left half of the Place Making Mosaic consists of zones that are dominated by large companies, both in terms of the ownership of the property and the tenants. They are dominated by brands.

In most European cities, these zones are the main streets and shopping centres at the heart of the town or city centre. They have the highest footfall and the highest rents.

It is difficult for any large town or city to have a vibrant and successful centre if its flagship areas are not in good condition, both in terms of the quality of the shopping offer there and the quality of the whole experience.

It is increasingly rare now - except, ironically in the largest cities like London and Paris - for flagship streets not to be fully pedestrianised.

At the top of the Place Making Mosaic model are the most refined and exclusive areas where luxury brands have their flagship stores. Bond Street and Sloane Street are UK examples. They exist where brands have their flagship stores.roid Street and Sloane Street are UK examples. They exist where brands have their flagship stores. They are demonstrating how a major flagship street can be treated as a destination.

Do you have a flagship street that has some cachet? If so, what could be done to promote and polish its brand, in the way that Regent Street is doing?

Even given the propensity for it to rain in the North West, almost all flagship shopping streets in the region could do with much more by way of pavement cafes and places to watch the world go by. What could you do to open up opportunities for that?

If your town/city needs a substantial development to refresh the high street offer, but it is on hold because of the recession, now is the time to think about how it can be at the leading edge in terms of integrating with the rest of the town centre when the development cycle turns up again.

NEW GENERATION CITY CENTRE SHOPPING CENTRE: Whitefriars, Canterbury

The Whitefriars development in Canterbury has revitalised the city’s shopping offer. Like Liverpool One, it is fully integrated with the historic city centre so that people are not aware of when they move from public space to privately managed space. This is the model that the small cities and large towns in the North West should emulate.

NEW GENERATION CITY CENTRE SHOPPING CENTRE: Liverpool One

Grovenor Estates’ Liverpool One is a “smart high street” development of exceptional quality. It typifies the new generation of town centre shopping centres that integrates with the historic street pattern rather than simply being plonked into the city as a big white, inward looking box. One of the most positive effects that it has had on Liverpool is connecting the waterfront to the city centre, instantly in so doing giving the city real critical mass. Grovenor deliberately used a selection of architects in order to give variety and interest to the buildings and made features of the historic buildings. The development is, in itself, a mosaic with types of retailers and the leisure offer clustered together - Grovenor developed and marketed it that way.

CLASSIC FLAGSHIP STREET: Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich

Zurich is rated by Monocle Magazine, which specialises in lifestyle issues, as the most “livable” city in the world. It has the advantage of being exceptionally affluent but, nevertheless, illustrates the kind of thing that needs to be done by anywhere that wants to truly be a top rate town or city. Bahnhofstrasse is the heart of the city and is an outstanding example of a “flagship street”. It is an elegant shopping boulevard that leads from a mile from the railway station to the lake. The retail offer gets more up market as it moves towards the lake. Only trams are allowed on the street and, where roads cross, pedestrians have priority. There are many pavement restaurants and cafes, fountains and works of art of many styles. The adjoining streets of the old town are flamboyantly decorated with flags to provide contrast. The plant plots are part of the excellent annual Garden City festival. Each is sponsored by a business or individual and decorated by an artist. Hundreds of them are scattered around the city in the spring.

CLASSIC FLAGSHIP STREET: Regent Street, London

The Crown Estate owns most of Regent Street and has done a great job in recent years of transforming it into possibly the best shopping street in the world. A big factor in that has been achieving acceptance that it is acceptable to “muck about” with the interiors of listed buildings in order to provide modern retail space.

They have then gone on to attract a certain type of retail, in particular flagship shops of international fashion brands. They have rejected tenants who have not fitted their guidelines. They have upgraded the street furniture, and devoted much more attention to promotion of the street, including staging events that close the street entirely to traffic (working with the Business Improvement District that has been set up in the West End). They have also created excellent restaurant quarters or adjoining Heddon Street and Swallow Street that provide the “Oases”.

They are demonstrating how a major flagship street can be treated as a destination. Although it is more difficult where, as is normally the case, the property is in multiple ownership, this is exactly the approach that flagship streets around the North West should take. The public sector has an important role in encouraging it to happen.

CLASSIC FLAGSHIP STREET: Rodeo Drive, Los Angeles

Where the Hollywood glitterati go to buy their clothes. Although not pedestrianised, the street offers a quality of environment that is consistent with the quality of the shops on offer.

CLASSIC FLAGSHIP STREET: Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich

Zurich is rated by Monocle Magazine, which specialises in lifestyle issues, as the most “livable” city in the world. It has the advantage of being exceptionally affluent but, nevertheless, illustrates the kind of thing that needs to be done by anywhere that wants to truly be a top rate town or city. Bahnhofstrasse is the heart of the city and is an outstanding example of a “flagship street”. It is an elegant shopping boulevard that leads from a mile from the railway station to the lake. The retail offer gets more up market as it moves towards the lake. Only trams are allowed on the street and, where roads cross, pedestrians have priority. There are many pavement restaurants and cafes, fountains and works of art of many styles. The adjoining streets of the old town are flamboyantly decorated with flags to provide contrast. The plant plots are part of the excellent annual Garden City festival. Each is sponsored by a business or individual and decorated by an artist. Hundreds of them are scattered around the city in the spring.

The innovations made by fashionable places tend to filter down and there is a trend world-wide for groups of luxury fashion brands to locate in very smart places. The smarter high street fashion brands invariably also concentrate in certain areas and one of the things which a town can do to try and refresh its high street offer is to try a development that is aimed specifically at high street fashion houses.

Things to do:

1. Do you have a flagship street that has some cachet? If so, what could be done to promote and polish its brand, in the way that Regent Street is doing?

2. Even given the propensity for it to rain in the North West, almost all flagship shopping streets in the region could do with much more by way of pavement cafes and places to watch the world go by. What could you do to open up opportunities for that?

3. If your town/city needs a substantial development to refresh the high street offer, but it is on hold because of the recession, now is the time to think about how it can be at the leading edge in terms of integrating with the rest of the town centre when the development cycle turns up again.

The public sector has an important role in encouraging it to happen.
Place Shaping in Towns and Cities

CLASSIC HERITAGE TOWNSCAPE: Zurich Old Town
For most visitors to Zurich, its most attractive features are its extensive old town quarters, which are completely cobbled and car free, with numerous fountains and works of art that have been added over the years. This is where the quality orientated independent sector thrives in the small units and the relaxed heritage townscape. All towns and cities need to make the most of heritage townsapes to create places where people can relax. Arguably, no place in the North West uses its heritage with the panache of a Zurich and there is a real opportunity in this for the likes of Chester, Lancaster and Carlisle.

Oasis Areas
The best towns and cities offer experiences that are distinctive and unique, and offer attractive and distinctive places for people to spend leisure time and to hang out.

This is often best achieved in parts of the town and city where there is a concentration of interesting buildings, in other words, in heritage townsapes. 

People most like to spend time in environments where they have a sense of the past and where there is a human scale. Not surprisingly, therefore, cultural facilities, independent shops, bars and restaurants often feel most at home in parts of towns and cities where there are concentrations of older buildings.

The nature of the experience that can be created using heritage townsapes can vary considerably. Townsapes that have a pre-Victorian character often lend themselves to “classic” treatment. The starting point is often simply to lay cobbles. The best, however, also add a contemporary element, sometimes in the form of sculpture or fountain, sometimes in the form of contemporary style shops within ancient buildings.

It is just as possible, however, to create interesting and vibrant quarters where the heritage is less “refined”. This can, in fact, provide opportunities for more imagination and creativity.

Things to do:
- Look carefully at the town/ city centre to see where there are human scale groupings of historic buildings adjacent to the flagship streets where a “village” type of ambience can be created dominated by unique shops, restaurants and services.
- Investigate the possibilities for helping a single developer to get hold of most or all of the property, or see if it is possible to persuade a group of the property owners to work in partnership.
- Decide where in the right hand side of the mosaic the area is likely to be i.e. is it more “cosmopolitan” or “bohemian” in style? Consider what interventions could be made to stimulate that type of offer.

CASE STUDY - Liverpool
The red dots on the map represent listed buildings in the city centre. All six of the city’s main leisure and cultural hubs are located in areas where there is a distinctive townscape created by the presence of historic buildings. The same is true of cities worldwide. Culture is a major factor in all of these hub areas.

The message is simple - always look carefully to see what can be made of the heritage townsapes in the town/city centre.

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FPM 112: Brera District, Milan
The area around the Brera Art Museum in Milan has been transformed into one of the most stylish heritage townscapes in the world, mixing the best of old and new.

FPM 113: Arguërs, Düsseldorf Old Town
The kind of thing that gives character to oasis areas.

POWERHOUSE OASIS: Zurich West
The former industrial part of Zurich has become one of the trendiest quarters in Europe with the city's most fashionable nightlife, hotels and arts offer. It is a major mixed use development, combining old and new, with the outstanding Schiffbau performing arts centre, and an adjacent opera house converted from a cast iron shed, at its heart. The contrast between this and the other neighbourhoods which are more conventionally "Swiss" is what grabs the attention of travel writers and generates columns in travel supplements.

POWERHOUSE OASIS: Sulzer Areal, Winterthur, Switzerland
In the 19th Century, Switzerland's Manchester sent officials to study town planning in Lancashire. The buildings that resulted have now been converted into a trendy mixed use zone of the city centre, with interspersed modern buildings echoing the old. An enormous factory at the heart is used as an events and performing arts venue.

CREATIVE LED REGENERATION: Granville Island, Vancouver
Granville Island is a creative industries quarter on steroids and perhaps the most successful "make and sell" destination in the world. It was once an industrial area with sawmills and steel factories. Its revival was spearheaded by Ron Basford, a politician, in the 1970s. A federal government grant enabled the reclamation. The site is still owned and managed by the government through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation agency. The redevelopment originally cost the government $19 million and the site now generates about $35 million per year in taxes. It has a large food market, several theatres and entertainment venues, the Emily Carr University of Art and Design, a hotel and many galleries, shops and workshops. It also has a "Kids only Market" and Granville Island Brewery, a well-known micro-brewer. It is run as a co-operative. There are various similar, albeit smaller, developments in the UK such as the Biscuit Factory "arts factory" in Newcastle upon Tyne, Salts Mill in Bradford, and the Tobacco Factory in Bristol. It is an area where it is likely that there will be growing interest and demand.
CREATIVE LED REGENERATION: Distillery District, Toronto
Distillery, on the edge of Toronto city centre, is a private sector mixed use development. The old distillery buildings have been used to create a large and attractive entertainment and creative industries attraction, anchored by the Young Centre for Performing Arts.
It is overlooked by new high rise apartments and is, in effect, the “village centre” for that community.

BOHEMIAN DISTRICT: North Laine, Brighton
Brighton has probably the best examples in the country of distinctive “zones”, each with a powerful sense of place. The North Laine has an intense cluster of “character independents”. There are several reasons why it has thrived. It is a conservation zone with small shops that are not suited to most multiples. The area has an intimate feel that creates atmosphere. The city has a large student population that provides the core customer base. The Komedia Contemporary Arts Centre provides an anchor that has synergy with the rest of the offer. The trick in a situation like this is to get rid of traffic and to allow a degree of anarchy.

COSMOPOLITAN DISTRICT: The Lanes, Brighton
The Lanes has a more refined air than the North Laine. It is a little smarter, the audience is slightly older, and the shops are a little more mainstream. The Lanes consists of a maze of narrow passageways and alleys following the street pattern of the medieval fishing village that predates Brighton. The area is dominated by independents, niche multiples and prestige brands. As in the North Laine, small floorplates and a protected street pattern have to a degree insulated independent traders because the small alleyways or “twittens” at the heart of the Lanes do not attract chain retailers looking for larger premises. Mid to upmarket clothing chains like Jigsaw, French Connection, Reiss and Coast have, however, been provided with stores on East Street. Culture and creative arts is an important part of the mix. The Post Office Building was, for example, converted into an arts and crafts market. Restaurants and bars are also a major presence, their tables spilling out profusely when the weather is reasonable.

COSMOPOLITAN DISTRICT: Haga Gothenburg
This district illustrates how the circumstances can determine the nature of the experience that can be developed. A former working class area with a web of artisan’s homes known as “governor’s homes”, it came close to demolition in the 980s. It is adjacent to the main university buildings and, as the North Laine in Brighton, the main through street, Haga Nygatan, is long and forms a convenient artery. High quality pedestrianisation , the entire area is cobbled - provided ambience and encouraged people to walk and cycle through it and enabled pavement cafes to flourish. The ground floor units were of ideal size for small shops. The houses on the adjoining streets became popular with young middle class professionals.

FPM 114: Düsseldorf, Germany
Advertising pays for art

FPM 116: 5 Congress Ave, Austin, Texas
Flambayard, very trendy, Bohemian style area

FPM 117: Harrods, Carlisle
Niche department store is a great anchor for the Cathedral Quarter.

FPM 118: Dubrovnik, Croatia
Innovative means of supplying traders allows totally traffic free environment.

FPM 119: La Scala, Milan
Beautifully landscaped pocket square makes the most of a cultural icon and has had a transformational impact on the city centre by linking and integrating different sections of it

FPM 120: Gärtnerplatzviertel, Munich
Landscaping a traffic roundabout has helped turn this into one of the chioest areas of the city.

FPM 121: Oslo
Gardens in the very centre of the city make shopping a much nicer experience

FPM 122: St Andrews Sq, Edinburgh
Beautiful landscaping of historic square provides perfect complement to the city’s smartest stores

FPM 123: Millennium Park, Chicago
Funds were raised by getting corporations to buy naming rights for sections of the park.

FPM 124: Oslo
Pocket park forms beautiful oasis in the old town area of the city.
# Places to get Assistance

## Places for Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Type Of Project</th>
<th>Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND</strong></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.hlf.org.uk">www.hlf.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>Your Heritage</td>
<td>£3k - £50k</td>
<td>Capital or revenue</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&gt; £50,000</td>
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<td>Townscape Heritage Initiative</td>
<td>£500k - £2m</td>
<td>Regeneration of conservation areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks for People</td>
<td>£250k - £5m</td>
<td>Parks with heritage value</td>
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<td>Young Roots</td>
<td>£3k - £25k</td>
<td>Projects for 13-25’s</td>
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<td><strong>ENGLISH HERITAGE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Repair Grants: Places of Worship, Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes</td>
<td>£10k - £250k</td>
<td>Urgent structural repairs</td>
<td><a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk">www.english-heritage.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND Grants for the Arts</td>
<td>Up to £200k</td>
<td>Limited time activities by individuals &amp; organisations</td>
<td><a href="http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding">www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding</a></td>
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<td><strong>SPORT ENGLAND</strong></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.sportengland.org/funding">www.sportengland.org/funding</a></td>
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<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Sportsmatch</td>
<td>Up to £100k</td>
<td>Matches committed sponsorship funding</td>
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<td><strong>GRANT GIVING TRUSTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerwood Charitable Foundation</td>
<td>Up to £50K</td>
<td>All forms of visual and performing arts.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org">www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Hamlyn Foundation: Open Grants</td>
<td>£10k - £450k</td>
<td>For specific projects that involve people in the arts</td>
<td><a href="http://www.phf.org.uk">www.phf.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Foyle Foundation</td>
<td>£10k - £50K</td>
<td>UK charities in learning &amp; the arts.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk">www.foylefoundation.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Landfill Communities Fund</td>
<td>£5k - £1m</td>
<td>Capital funding for organisations e.g. museums, galleries and heritage sites</td>
<td><a href="http://www.entrust.org.uk">www.entrust.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>Clare Duffield Foundation</td>
<td>£29 million per year in total</td>
<td>Revenue funding to charities operating in culture, education, heritage, natural environment and assisting disadvantaged</td>
<td><a href="http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk">www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>Esmée Fairbairn Foundation</td>
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<td>Garfield Weston Foundation</td>
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<td>Supports charitable activity in a variety of spheres, including the Arts and Environment</td>
<td><a href="http://www.garfieldweston.org">www.garfieldweston.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation</td>
<td>Innovation Fund - £10k - £25k</td>
<td>Innovating and unusual ideas across cultural, educational and social.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk">www.gulbenkian.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Places for Guidance

- **Art-Public**
  European portal on the latest in public art
  [www.art-public.com](http://www.art-public.com)

- **Arts Council England**
  [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

- **Association of Town Centre Managers**
  advice on improving and managing city centres, including how to establish Business Improvement Districts and evaluate the night offer
  [www.atcm.org](http://www.atcm.org)


- **Design Initiative**
  NW agency promoting good design
  [www.designinit.org.uk](http://www.designinit.org.uk)

- **Funds for Historic Buildings**
  [www.ffhb.org.uk](http://www.ffhb.org.uk)

- **Heritage Link Funding Directory**
  a searchable database of funding for heritage projects
  [www.heritagelink.org.uk](http://www.heritagelink.org.uk)

- **Lifting People, Lifting Places**
  publication from Department of Media, Culture and Sport

- **Northwest Regional Development Agency**
  [www.nwda.co.uk](http://www.nwda.co.uk)

- **Places Matter**
  NW agency promoting quality spaces
  [www.placesmatter.co.uk](http://www.placesmatter.co.uk)

- **Project for Public Spaces**
  United States experiences
  [www.pps.com](http://www.pps.com)

- **Transforming Places; Changing Lives: a framework for regeneration**
  publication by Dept of Communities and Local Government

- **Urban Land Institute**
  international perspectives on improving cities
  [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)

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Some ideas are best not emulated in the North West!