HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

25 'Vital and Viable' Priorities

Vision and Strategy

What are the 25 vital and viable priorities?

Research from the Institute of Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University has identified the Top 25 priorities that can influence high street vitality and viability.

The framework was created by experts from a range of disciplines and other stakeholders to foster cross-disciplinary knowledge and broadening real-world understanding of the changing nature of the high street.

The 25 priorities are practically orientated and, given their ability to be controlled or influenced at a town level, are fairly internally focussed. For each of the priorities you will find an introduction to evidence that describes the priority, suggests what it covers, discusses how it might be implemented and the level of control associated with it.

Additionally, you will find suggestions of what the priority could mean for implementation during the COVID-19 recovery stage

Vision and Strategy

Factors included in Vision and Strategy

Leadership; Collaboration; Area development strategies

Ranking

Vision and Strategy	Rank	Score	Descriptor
Influence	4th out of 25	4.35 out of 5	Highly Influential
Control	13th out of 25	3.44 out of 4	Potentially controllable
25 Priorities	3rd out of 25	15.00	Very high priority

Description/Definition

The continuing economic and social challenges that are pertinent to the high street necessitate the development of a clear, shared and appreciated vision that highlights the long-term aspirations, aims and goals of all place stakeholders. Effectively, a vision sets out the blueprint towards future strategic development and regeneration of a place, as this is agreed by the wider community.

Why does it matter? (Influence)

A common vision has to be meaningful to every stakeholder by appreciating their local needs, goals, and priorities, and by highlighting what the place stands for and represents (Stubbs and Warnaby, 2015; Thompson et al., 2015). It is important to differentiate the notion of vision here as not an

idealised one that reflects the utopian thoughts of a particular elite, but as a shared vision that is constantly revisited and redefined by multiple stakeholders (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013). Furthermore, a town's vision and strategy need to be constantly revisited and redefined by all stakeholders involved (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013), highlighting the importance of continuous dialogue and cooperation during the process (Neal, 2013; Pasquinelli, 2014).

An important prerequisite for developing a vision and strategy for the high street is effective place leadership, which can be understood as a series of movements for developing a strong vision and strategy (Collinge and Gibney, 2010). As such, maintaining a shared vision and strategy for managing the high street entails strategic local 'politicking' - the [co-]creation of an appealing narrative about the place through dialogue and cooperation, which will drive forward further interactions among stakeholders (Neal, 2013; Ooi, 2004; Pasquinelli, 2014).

What can you do about it? (Control)

Coming up with visions and strategies can be quite straightforward. The crucial success factors are to what extent do stakeholders share this vision, and how can the vision or strategy be incorporated into local stakeholders' plans. Generating a shared vision that people buy into and adopt is not easy, and is something that has to be tackled early on (Stubbs and Warnaby, 2015). Getting people to sit down together and understand the evidence is a good starting point if visions and strategies need defining. This way, place stakeholders can maintain their own individual goals and objectives throughout the process and work collaboratively towards a strategic vision for the place. Extensive dialogues, discussions and consultations with local communities are required to refine the vision and strategy (Ntounis and Kavaratzis, 2017), which requires effective leadership and communication from place leaders and champions.

Vision and Strategy and COVID-19

Developing a post-COVID-19 vision and strategy that reflect each stage of high street recovery is essential. It is important to establish regular communication with place stakeholders and the wider community through social channels, as well as establishing working groups for specific aspects of recovery strategy.

Through effective leadership and communication, new strategic partnerships can be formed in order to manage delivery of the recovery strategy. The strategy should - if possible - be regularly reviewed and discussed with stakeholder groups and the wider community as successful delivery requires the involvement of the whole place, including volunteers and businesses.

A successful post-COVID-19 vision will meet local aspirations for an attractive and future-proofed town or city centre and should aim to foster successful collaboration. It will be led by a clear strategy with agreed aims and responsibilities for everyone involved.

See also

Place management; Networks and Partnerships with Council; Place Marketing

References

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