

Repositioning your high street

June 2020

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**HIGH
STREETS
TASK
FORCE**

Hello

Welcome to this interactive e-learn from the High Streets Task Force.

This series of training programmes has been designed to give you an awareness of the different frameworks and approaches to renewing your high street, now even more important as places move to recovery and transformation as a result of COVID-19.

This is an interactive e-learn: simply follow the prompts and click on the green buttons to progress. The icons to the right will always be at the top of your screen.

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Contents

This training session consists of five key areas, designed to equip you with the knowledge and awareness of repositioning as a strategy for high street renewal.

To return to this page at any time throughout the session, simply press the  icon in the top right-hand corner of your screen.

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1 Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this Repositioning your High Street training session, you will have achieved the following learning objectives:

- 1 To develop an awareness of Repositioning as an approach to high street renewal;



Next



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- 1** To develop an awareness of Repositioning as an approach to high street renewal;
- 2** To appraise how it relates to the other strategic approaches;

▼
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1 Learning Objectives

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- 1** To develop an awareness of Repositioning as an approach to high street renewal;
- 2** To appraise how it relates to the other strategic approaches;
- 3** To evaluate the resource implications of Repositioning, and whether it's right for you.



Contents

You have now completed Section 1.

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2 What is 'repositioning'?

First – let's start by understanding what 'repositioning' actually means, and how it can be applied to high streets and local town centres. **Select each heading to find out more.**

We first need to understand the term 'place positioning'



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'Place positioning' refers to the identification of unique or special attributes possessed by a place. In this instance, 'place' can refer to a town centre or high street.

Places are often labelled - for example, labels such as 'a historic city', 'seaside resort' or 'market town' is useful in attempts to define and clearly articulate messages to both residents and external audiences. It can underpin a place's identity and belonging, and establish comparative or differential advantages in relation to other places.

Some places possess a strong market position, but this may not be the result of branding or marketing. Factors such as deep-rooted perceptions or globalisation could strengthen a place's reputation. Of course, reputations can also fade over time as preferences change.

So what does 'repositioning' mean?



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So what does 'repositioning' mean?



In marketing theory, 'positioning' refers to a strategy for adding value to a product/service. Towns are more complex than this – repositioning the high street involves more than rebranding.

Repositioning a place is a broader and proactive approach, where the following is considered:

- The identity, function and differentiators;
- What is happening elsewhere;
- Evidence and data to underpin strategic and operational decision-making.

A 'repositioning strategy' addresses the catchment, function, and market position of towns. This ensures that a place's identity and differentiators are fully understood, together with a need to anticipate change and an understanding of how to adapt – something that is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why reposition?



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Why reposition?



Strong place market positions are often accumulated over decades or centuries, and supported by long-held perceptions. Globalisation can also strengthen a town's position by becoming more external-facing.

However, reputations can fade due to a change of trends in mobility & tourism, or loss of key industries. Wider social and economic changes – such as a loss of employment anchors, the rise of out-of-town retailing, and the age of internet shopping – can also have an impact. Now, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the position of our town centres is subject to even greater change.

Therefore, town centres need to possess a clear and developed understanding of the current and future needs of their catchment to recover the vitality and viability of their place.



Contents

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3 What does repositioning involve?

Repositioning your high street involves more than simply rebranding. Understanding how people engage with town centres is essential to a centre's success, and this is likely to be effected significantly by COVID-19.

For smaller towns and regional centres, there is a need to question investment and marketing plans that focus on attracting new external audiences to their centres. Successful repositioning in many cases does not necessarily mean replacing existing markets or existing users of a place, but adapting local services to match their needs.

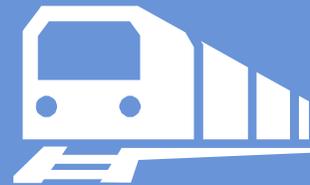
A strategy for repositioning therefore involves shifting **from external to internal objectives** to focus on the following key aspects. **Select each heading to find out more.**



1 Liveability



2 Town centre
activity



3 Connectivity



4 Demographic
change



3 What does repositioning involve?

1 Liveability



- The liveability of a town centre is a vitally important component of repositioning.
- By repositioning town centres as liveable places, and considering who uses the centre, the quality of life for residents can be maintained or improved, and viability can be ensured as we move through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

How liveable is your town centre?

1 Liv

activity

graphic
change

3 What does repositioning involve?

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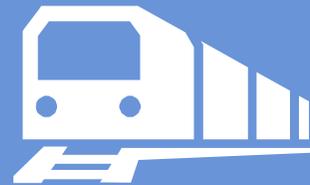
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3 What does repositioning involve?

2 Town centre activity



- The level of activity in town centres must be considered when pursuing a repositioning strategy. Offering relevant activities and initiatives to residents and visitors can help with this, and can encourage visitors back to the town during recovery and transformation as a result of COVID-19. This can include such things as:
 - Useful services and activities to attract residents & visitors
 - Anchors – for example, markets
 - A multi-functional town centre

1 Liveability
What attracts people to your centre?

activity

Graphic
change

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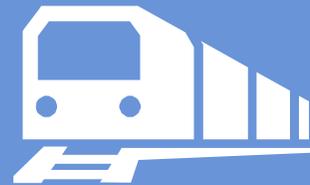
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4 Demographic
change

3 What does repositioning involve?

3 Connectivity



- Repositioning your town centre may prove challenging if there is insufficient connectivity and transport links to make your town centre thrive.
- Factors to consider for connectivity include: transport (stations, services); accessibility; integration of transport & place; infrastructure; cost; frequency; timetabling. With COVID-19 likely to mean more people turning to active transport (walking, cycling) as well as higher personal vehicle use, these are all considerations that should be taken into account.

Is your town centre sufficiently connected and linked?

1 Liv

activity

graphic
change

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1 Liveability



2 Town centre activity



3 Connectivity



4 Demographic change



3 What does repositioning involve?

4 Demographic change



- Demographics are constantly changing and affecting the needs of your catchment population.
- The ability to respond to these evolving needs – whether younger families or older generations – is critical to understanding your town centre, successfully repositioning, and planning and anticipating future demands.

Is your town centre aware of the changing demographics and able to respond?

1 Liv

activity

graphic
change



3 What does repositioning involve?

Summary



1 Liveability

- The liveability of a town centre is a vitally important component of repositioning.
- By repositioning town centres as places to live, and considering who uses the centre, the quality of life for residents can be maintained or improved.

Is your town centre liveable?



2 Town centre activity

- The level of activity in town centres must be considered when pursuing a repositioning strategy. Offering relevant activities and initiatives to your residents can help with this, such as:
 - Useful services and activities to attract residents & visitors
 - Anchors – for example, markets
 - A multi-functional town centre

Does your town centre offer enough activities?



3 Connectivity

- Repositioning your town centre may prove challenging if there is insufficient connectivity and transport links to make your town centre thrive.
- Factors to consider for connectivity include: transport (stations, services); accessibility; integration of transport & place; increased active transport/personal vehicle use; infrastructure.

Is your town centre sufficiently connected and linked?



4 Demographic change

- In today's society, demographics are subject to change which naturally affect the needs of your catchment population.
- The ability to respond to these evolving needs – whether younger families or older generations – is critical to understanding your town centre and successfully repositioning.

Is your town centre aware of the changing demographics and able to respond?



Contents

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4 How can you reposition your high street?

So how can you reposition your high street? Is repositioning even the right strategy for you?

Let's start with 3 questions to ask when considering whether repositioning is right for your town centre. **Click start below to see the questions.**



Start

4 How can you reposition your high street?

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Let's start with 3 questions to ask when considering whether repositioning is right for your town centre.

What do you know about
your centre?

>
Next

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How resilient is your
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Next

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What do you know about your centre?

How resilient is your town centre?

Is there a clear strategy for accommodating future trends?

Identifying **distinct capabilities** and developing **competitive advantages** are two critical components of Repositioning. By considering these questions above, we can start to understand the current state and future potential of your town centre.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

1. Understand your current situation with extensive data collection & analysis



There are three key elements to the design of a successful Repositioning strategy.

Click the heading above to find out more about the first element.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

1. Understand your current situation with extensive data collection & analysis



Stakeholder Agreement

It is vital to reach the agreement that repositioning is necessary for your town centre. In order to do this, a common ground needs to be reached between stakeholders. This covers:

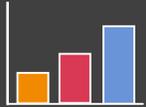
- **where your town is now, and**
- **where it needs to go.**

Of course, this may be challenging – people construct complex & multiple identities for their town, with different interpretations that ultimately can lead to diverging opinions regarding which repositioning strategy should be followed, if at all.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

1. Understand your current situation with extensive data collection & analysis



Understanding your town

In order to best understand your current situation, you will need a combination of:

- **Local knowledge, basic metrics** and “**soft**” data;
- More comprehensive **data collection** and **data analysis** approaches;
- **Data sharing between partners**, allowing you to form a **mutual understanding**.

For town centres with limited access to data, an understanding of your town centre can be formed from **basic data information**, including retail sales from a limited selection of shops or unrepresentative surveys.

Traditional town centre performance metrics however are more useful and easy to collect.

Click the **green arrow** to find out more on these metrics.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

1. Understand your current situation with extensive data collection & analysis



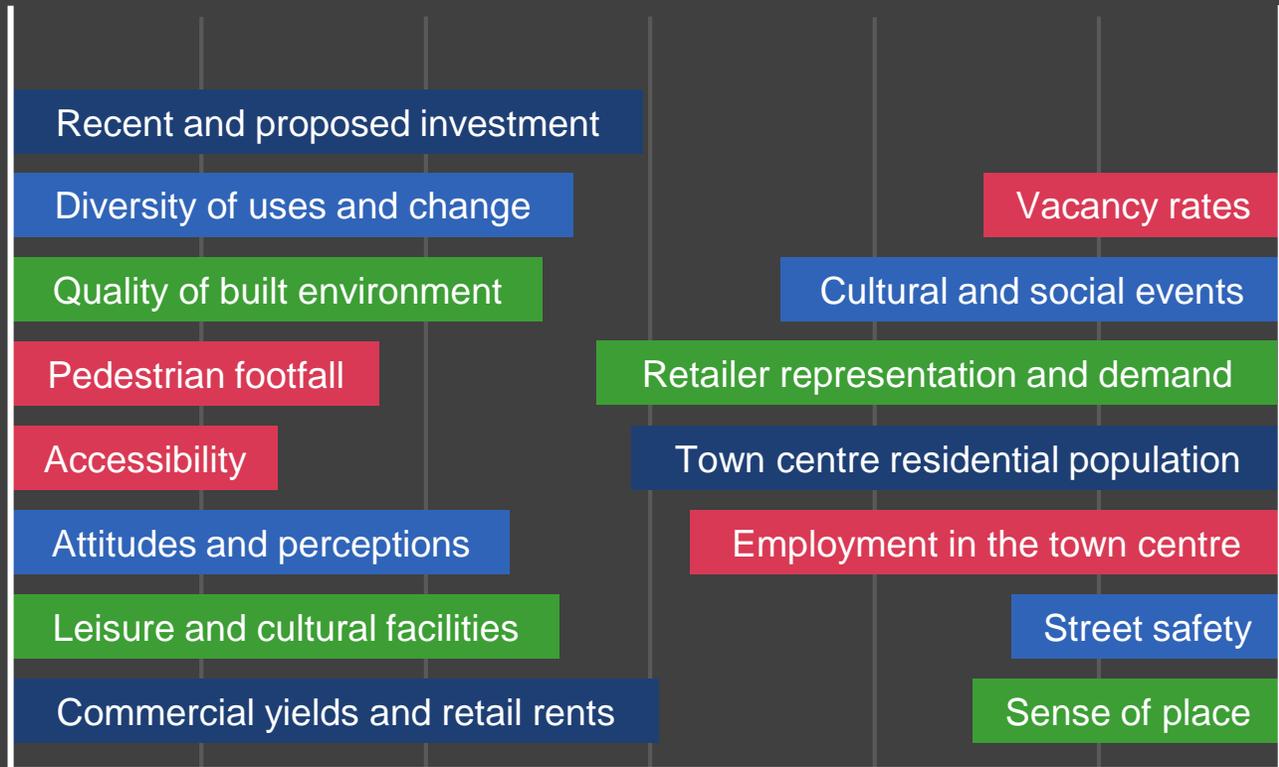
What metrics and data could be captured to further understanding of your town's current situation?

Starting to work towards collecting these data is an important step in planning the future of your town and repositioning.

These approaches will:

- generate metrics for town centre performance;
- lay the foundation for mutual understanding that everyone will benefit from the interventions that are effective in increasing footfall in town centres.

Traditional town centre performance metrics



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues



Click the heading above to find out more about the second element of a successful repositioning strategy.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues



Improvements in the tangible and material elements of a place need to be addressed – getting the basics right is the initial step of all place management interventions. This can be done through considering the Top 25 Priorities for high street vitality and viability. A focus on the operational side of place management that underpins the safety and overall appearance of a place will allow town centres to build upon this and develop other activities, from events & festivals to long-term solutions.



What do you need to achieve this?

This level of commitment obviously requires a range of stakeholders working mutually to achieve the holistic change within the centre. **Partnerships** can address all these points from the bottom-up, meaning that the actions need to be gradually developed and involve the community.

Towns need to develop organising capacity and fluid local governance networks that will generate new ideas and also reduce barriers to participation, but nevertheless, retain the qualities of leadership and the vision to implement action plans. As we move through COVID-19, this collaboration is even more crucial.

One example is the Market Rasen Business Improvement Group, part of the town's repositioning efforts. **Click the [green arrow](#) to find out more** about Market Rasen and other town centres.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues



Click on Market Rasen on the map to find out more on the town's repositioning efforts.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues

Market Rasen

What was going wrong?

- Market Rasen is a small town in Lincolnshire, with a population of ~4,000
- The town previously had a major selling point in its regular markets
- Now, however, the key challenge is attracting people to a town called Market Rasen without a functioning market
- Market Rasen was therefore experiencing issues with 'unkempt areas' and empty shops



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues

Market Rasen

The areas of improvement identified for the town centre were:

- Changing opening hours
- Attracting a number of shops in town
- More collective action
- Networking across all stakeholders



These areas are clearly linked to four key priorities in the Top 25 Priorities established for maintaining vitality and viability on the high street:

Link to Top 25 Priorities:

Activity hours

Networks and partnerships

Retailers

Merchandise



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues

Market Rasen

What happened?

- Market Rasen formed the Market Rasen Business Improvement Group that spearheaded repositioning attempts.
- They focused on the main shopping areas of the town, tidying up the high street and reinstating markets.
- They considered both the local catchment and potential visitors, due to their geographic position near the coast.
- The Group made improvements to the town - as captured by footfall statistics – but failed to change governance arrangements enough to ensure true long-term change in the town.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues



Click on Morley on the map to find out more on the town's repositioning efforts.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues

Morley

What was going wrong?

- Morley is a market town with a population of ~44,000
- Morley lies in West Yorkshire, south west of Leeds city centre and in close proximity to White Rose, a large retail centre
- The town has been through an important demographic change, with more young families and a growing young professional population
- The town centre, meanwhile, suffered from a weak retail mix, lethargic street activity and no night-time economy



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues

Morley

The areas of improvement identified for the town centre were:

- Changing opening hours
- Improving walkability
- Accessibility and street activity
- Lack of night-time economy
- Better marketing and promotion



These areas are clearly linked to four key priorities in the Top 25 Priorities established for maintaining vitality and viability on the high street:

Link to Top 25 Priorities:

Activity hours

Walkable

Place marketing

Accessible

Liveable



4 How can you reposition your high street?

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues



Morley

What happened?

- Morley partnered with nearby White Rose Shopping Centre to strengthen its reputation as a destination for shopping, leisure and culture with a focus on independent stores.
- This balance of the retail offer allows opportunity for both the high street and shopping centre, plus a good mix between national retail & independent stores.
- This was possible because of the knowledge exchange and data sharing on the catchment profile – proving essential for both Morley and White Rose.
- New train services, station improvements and parking boosts the town's connectivity, whilst an outdoor food market brought vibrancy to the town.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

3. Be dynamic, evidence-based and align with the structural changes in town centres and retailing



Click the heading above to find out more about the third element of a successful repositioning strategy.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

3. Be dynamic, evidence-based and align with the structural changes in town centres and retailing



Shifting consumer shopping behaviours, enhanced mobility, advent of e-commerce and demographic changes are challenging assumptions about how places are functioning, with COVID-19 only adding to this flux. A **dynamic repositioning approach** can reveal how and when places are actually used, which could lead to their effective repositioning to the right audiences and to the realignment of the town centre action plans.



How do you achieve a 'dynamic' approach?

Anticipating, preparing for, and managing change in your local town centre or high street is essential when repositioning. By adapting to this change, town centres can ensure they are serving the needs of their local catchment and not falling behind.

Some of the focus areas for change could include the existing urban form and structure of the towns, with an emphasis on more permanent and temporary uses other than retail, thereby making many of them multi-functional towns.

Click the green arrow to find out more on how you can dynamically address these changes.



4 How can you reposition your high street?

3. Be dynamic, evidence-based and align with the structural changes in town centres and retailing



How can you address the dynamic changes your town is facing?

Demographic change

- Developments could include an increase in younger families or a growing young professional population
- This could lead to a change in town centre performance – town centres therefore need to capture the **needs of a changing catchment population**.
- For example: boosting night-time economy for young professionals.

New developments

- Developments can help boost your town centre's connectivity and current constraints
- For example: active transport provision such as cycle lanes/racks, parking capacity, park & ride, increase in train services, station improvements etc. can help create more routes for the catchment and wider visitors.

Retail & leisure

- Developing the appropriate retail offer for your catchment is important to ensure you remain relevant
- Knowledge exchange and data sharing on local catchment are essential to better understand the retail needs of a town centre
- For example: Morley achieved complementarity by balancing national multiples with independent stores

Town centre activity

- Bringing new activities to town centres can also help to reposition your centre, and will be important during COVID-19 recovery/transformation.
- For example, Morley brought a new outdoor food market which served the needs of their catchment
- By introducing activities to town centres that are aligned to the right audiences, town centres can remain dynamic and in-sync with structural changes.

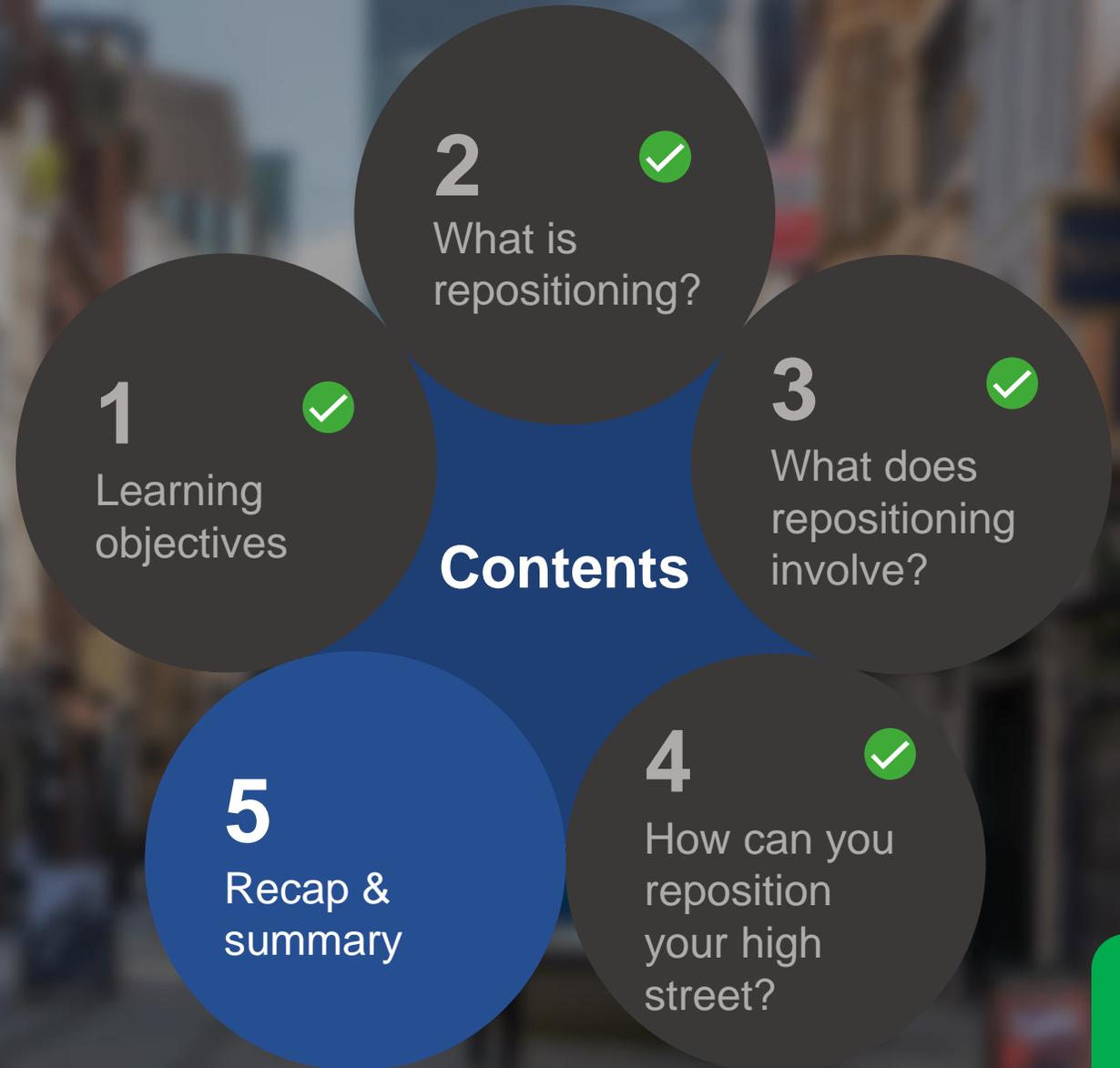


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5 Recap & summary

This section contains a summary of all the key learning points on Repositioning your High Street.

First, let's recap some of the key takeaways from this session.



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Q1

Which of the below is **not** one of the three key elements to the design of a successful repositioning strategy?

a

Be dynamic, evidence-based and align with the structural changes in town centres and retailing

b

Understand your current situation with extensive data collection & analysis

c

Put together a strategy based solely on the Local Authority Executive Board's views

5 Recap & summary

The missing element to the design of a successful repositioning strategy for your high street is:

2. Bring together relevant stakeholders to self-organise and address place management issues

Q1

Which of the below is **not** one of the three key elements to the design of a successful repositioning strategy?

- a** Be dynamic, evidence-based and align with the structural changes in town centres and retailing
- b** Understand your current situation with extensive data collection & analysis
- c** Put together a strategy based solely on the Local Authority Executive Board's views 



5 Recap & summary

This section contains a summary of all the key learning points on Repositioning your High Street.

First, let's recap some of the key takeaways from this session.

Q2

Which of the four focus areas for repositioning your high street is described below?

High streets and town centres need to consider whether there is enough transport, accessibility, infrastructure and integration to serve the community and allow the place to thrive.

a

Town centre activity

b

Connectivity

c

Liveability

d

Demographic change

5 Recap & summary

In order to reposition your high street, there are four key areas to focus on and consider whether your town centre is currently addressing this.



Liveability



Town centre activity



Connectivity



Demographic change

Q2

Which of the four focus areas for repositioning your high street is described below?

High streets and town centres need to consider whether there is enough transport, accessibility, infrastructure and integration to serve the community and allow the place to thrive.

- a Town centre activity
- b Connectivity**
- c Liveability
- d Demographic change



5 Recap & summary

Repositioning your High Street is one of the four key strategies for high street renewal identified by the High Streets Task Force. Here's a recap of what we've covered today and the significance of Repositioning.



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Repositioning, as a broader and proactive approach underpinning place adaptation and management, can enable the local stakeholders to:

- understand what is special about their place and what is happening elsewhere;
- help them to plan for future changes that are likely to have great impact on centres – such as repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Sustained transformational change can reposition your town – high streets must be able to keep up with trends and adapt to the requirements of your catchment.



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Sustained transformational change can reposition your town – high streets must be able to keep up with trends and adapt to the requirements of your catchment.

Poor understanding of a place's identity or how a place functions, and mismatches between functionality and visions and action plans, is the key challenge to effective repositioning and developing coherent strategies. Such challenges further demonstrate the practicability of the market research approach and the need for thorough market research at the beginning of every place management process.



5 Recap & summary

Repositioning your High Street is one of the four key strategies for high street renewal identified by the High Streets Task Force. Here's a recap of what we've covered today and the significance of Repositioning.

Repositioning is a proactive approach to adaptation and enable the local area to understand their place elsewhere and help them to find centres that are like theirs.

Repositioning is only one of

The 4Rs of renewal



strategic framework for high streets. To find out more about the other Rs, please visit our website or get in touch with us to see how we can help.



Reinventing



Restructuring



Repositioning



Rebranding

Sustained transformational change can reposition your town – and adapt to

place and visions and positioning and their approach beginning of



5 Recap & summary

Have you achieved the learning objectives for this Repositioning your High Street training session?

- 1 To develop an awareness of Repositioning as an approach to high street renewal;
- 2 To understand how it relates to the other strategic approaches;
- 3 To understand the resource implications of Repositioning, and whether it's right for you.





Course Complete

Thank you for taking part in this Repositioning your High Street training session.

We welcome your feedback – please get in touch with us to pass on your thoughts, comments, and suggestions.



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