



## Designing Town Centres & High Streets

12/02/2020

- **Our town centres and high streets have suffered from major, unresolved structural weaknesses since the early 1990s.** Primarily a lack of investment and fragmented governance structures of high street assets.
- **As older commercial models fail, new opportunities arise.** While revolutions in newly digitised, consumer behaviour may signal the end for the 'A1' age of chain retailing, there is still an important role for town centres – providing experiences, health/leisure offers and opportunities for people to meet.
- **Connect the social with the physical.** Link online retail and social media interest with face-to-face town centre experiences; 'instagrammable' art-works, Christmas lights, etc. can raise the profile and footfall of centres.
- **Importance of place.** Initiatives such as the Teenage Market or retail events hosting online personalities reveal the eternal need for physical settings where emotional connections can flourish and product provenance established.
- **Ensure people can easily walk to your centre within well-networked 'pedsheds' for consistent day-to-day footfall.** If 80% of public realm is classed as highway land, highway teams need to be involved at a development's early stage; leave silos and cultivate knowledge-flows across jurisdiction.
- **Is a high street needed?** Town centre strategies must align with the wants/needs of the people who use these spaces *via data*. If footfall data conforms to a multi-functional signature i.e. a large, resident, working population, your centre's retail/service offering should adjust accordingly.

### Speakers:

Ojay McDonald, Chief Executive, Association of Town & City Management  
Dr Steve Millington, Senior Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Joe Barratt, Co-founder, The Teenage Market  
Tom Hardy, Town Centre Manager, Hitchin  
Cllr Shama Tatler, LB Brent  
Kaya Chatterji, LB Brent  
Annabel Keegan, Associate, PJA  
Andy Martin, Transformational Schemes Sponsor, TfL  
Jamie Dean, Regeneration Manager, GLA  
Pamela Snow, Architect, Gort Scott

Attendees: 107