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Annex:

A

town centre
'personality' test

successful town centres – developing effective strategies.

town centre 'personality' test: **questions**

This town centre 'personality' test has been developed to help you establish the current strategic positioning of your town centre.

To do this, just answer the questions shown below and make a note of your choice of answer (A, B, C or D) in each case.

Q.1 The sort of markets I tend to see on my high street generally tend to be:

- A. Occasional specialist markets (e.g. Christmas markets, French/German markets) but hardly any regular markets. Markets will be mainly aimed at visitors from overseas or other parts of the UK for whom where their products are sourced from does not seem a high priority.
- B. Relatively frequent specialist markets (e.g. farmers markets) and some regular markets aimed mainly at visitors, including those from overseas or other parts of the UK, who seek out local produce and products (incl. organically grown food).
- C. Mainly regular markets and the odd specialist one (e.g. farmers markets, Christmas markets, French/German markets) aimed primarily at local residents and people from neighbouring towns and villages who want to buy locally sourced produce and may sometimes be interested (though not always) in organically grown food.
- D. A frequent regular market (hardly any specialist markets ever) mainly for local residents and people from neighbouring towns and villages who favour good quality at approachable prices and do not mind so much where produce is sourced from.

Q.2 The shops I tend to see on my high street generally tend to be:

- A. Mainly large retail chains, department stores and well known retail brands with hardly any small independent retailers.
- B. Mainly large retail chains, department stores and well known retail brands but also a number of independent businesses able to serve the needs of consumers, with high as well as low expendable incomes.
- C. A considerable proportion of independent businesses catering primarily to higher spending local residents, with a few large retail chains, and the odd department store and well known retail brand.
- D. A large proportion of independent businesses catering primarily to lower earning local residents, with the odd large retail chain and well known retail brand including discounters.

Q.3 The people I see on my high street primarily tend to be:

- A. Visitors from overseas or other parts of the UK who come here mainly to shop and often buy souvenirs.
- B. Visitors from overseas or other parts of the UK who come here mainly to enjoy our culture, heritage and amenities but do not focus on shopping.
- C. Local residents and people from neighbouring towns and villages who come here mainly to shop and access services but are also likely to linger on in cafés and restaurants for a lunchtime bite or a leisurely coffee or cup of tea.
- D. Local residents and people from neighbouring districts who come here mainly to shop but tend to have very little money left to go to a café or restaurant in the town centre.

Q.4 My high street tends to host events that could be classed overall as:

- A. General events mainly for a global audience interested primarily in shopping.
- B. Often more specialist events (e.g. culture-led) for a global audience interested mainly in our culture, heritage and amenities, may stay overnight, and in some cases are mindful of sustainability issues related to these events.
- C. General leisure events (often family ones) mainly for local residents and people from neighbouring towns and villages, who normally come here mainly to shop but will also tend to linger on in cafés and restaurants for a leisurely lunch, coffee or afternoon tea.
- D. Events with a high degree of participation from the local community and aimed at local residents and people from neighbouring towns and villages who come here mainly to shop and access services but tend to have very little money left for paid for leisure activities such as using a café or restaurant in the town centre.

Q.5 When I look at my town centre, I tend to see:

- A. No vacant retail units at all unless the vacancy is due to refurbishment.
- B. The odd rare vacant retail unit but often away from the high street and often with signs of another business moving in.
- C. Some vacant retail units, though largely in secondary areas where smaller independent businesses tend to operate.
- D. A growing number of vacant retail units - some of which may be on the main high street - and in some cases corresponding to large retail chains that recently closed.



Q.6 Thinking about public spaces in my town centre, they could be best described as:

- A. Designed for a large throughput of people, clean, functional with good signage for visitors, but a bit soulless at times.
- B. Designed for a large throughput of people but with sustainability in mind with large pedestrianised areas and environmentally friendly transport options, waste reduction facilities, good signage for visitors with adequate green spaces (e.g. parks, gardens) to relax, attractive quality public art, and evidence of growing use of green energy.
- C. Designed for a more moderate throughput of people, clean, functional, with signage that could be improved, with some access to green spaces (e.g. gardens, parks) but progress to be made yet with regards to sustainability issues and public art.
- D. Designed for a moderate throughput of people but struggles to cope with flows of people at times, with rather deficient signage, some public art provided through community projects, largely lacking in green spaces (e.g. gardens, parks) and levels of street cleanliness that could be improved.

Q.7 If anyone wanted to find a charity shop in my town centre, they would:

- A. Not find any charity shops at all in the town centre.
- B. Find the odd charity shop able to serve the needs of global visitors as well as local consumers.
- C. Find some charity shops, often located away from the high street and primarily serving the needs of local consumers.
- D. Find quite a few charity shops, often on the high street and serving primarily the needs of local consumers, particularly those with little money to spend.



Q.8 Community spirit – The local community that lives in or near my town centre could be best described as:

- A. Nearly non-existent due to really high property prices. Neighbours keep themselves to themselves and tend to escape to the countryside at the weekends, though they may be often couples or families without dependent children.
- B. Growing sense of community spirit, though with a somewhat transient feel with high levels of energy and diversity provided by younger residents (often university students), a growing level of interest in environmental sustainability and the preservation of local heritage. Local residents will often enjoy green areas in or around the town centre at the weekends.
- C. Growing sense of community spirit with a distinctively local character, with higher-than-average income residents often opting to spend family days away from the town centre at the weekends but interested in local history and heritage.
- D. Generally high levels of community pride with some residents forming tightly-knit communities (e.g. some ethnic minorities) with a distinctively local feel, though not always evident to outsiders in the form of acclaimed local heritage. Local residents will often spend the weekends with family or relatives locally without venturing beyond urbanised areas.

town centre 'personality' test: **answers**



Mainly "A"s

Your town or city centre is likely to be a:

Global celebrities.

This type of town and city centre tends to include mainly globally known players with a higher level of equity emphasis on economic performance with big retail brands as their main pull factor to attract overseas and/or national visitors.



Mainly "B"s

Your town or city centre is likely to be already (or working towards becoming) a:

Sustainable destinations.

This type of town or city centre may be linked to a university with an established or growing international reputation. They will tend to attract visitors from all parts of the UK as well as overseas tourists. Independent retailers (sometimes iconic family businesses that have operated in the same area for several generations) often play an important role in these town and city centres, sometimes in a win-win relationship with global anchor retail brands. In many cases, these town and city centres will be growing increasingly mindful of strategic sustainability issues (e.g. waste recycling, noise and air pollution reduction, social capital, etc.) and somewhere on the path towards attracting more responsible culture-focused tourism.



Mainly "C"s

Your town centre may well be a:

Specialists.

This type of town centre tends to be known for its high degree of retail sophistication, often with an above average number of specialist independent retailers (e.g. delis, continental-style cafes, wine shops, fashion). They also tend to have above-average geographical catchment areas. Often they would not see themselves as global or major national tourism destinations, which may be due to competition from major cities, or limited geographical catchment areas (see definition of this term in Annex C, D, E, F (toolkit) document), though they will tend to have a strong local character of their own.



Mainly "D"s

Your town centre is likely to be a:

Community-focused entrepreneurs.

This type of town centre tends to have a clear focus on the needs of (sometimes ethnically diverse) local communities with modest expendable income levels that may be at or below the national average. These town centres often include a high level of independent (and sometimes ethnic) retailers providing a mix of products and services in conjunction with charity shops and discount stores.



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