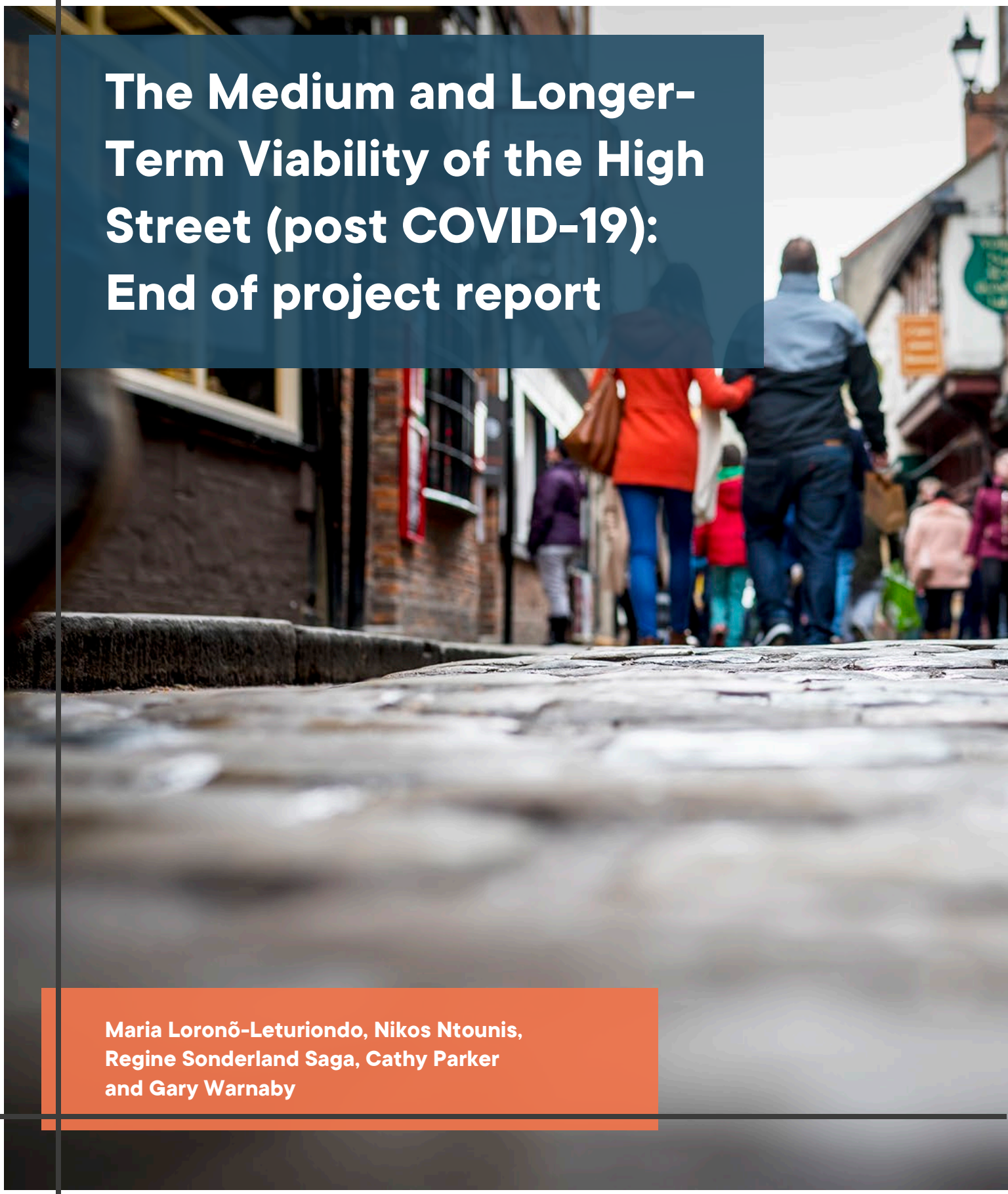
HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE

The Medium and Longer-Term Viability of the High Street (post COVID-19): End of project report



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Terms of reference

This report summarises the results and outcomes of the 2021 annual research study, produced by the Institute of Place Management for the High Streets Task Force (HSTF), which investigates the concept of town centre viability, especially in the context of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Traditional definitions of viability focus on the ability of a location to generate sustained income and investment and as such high street viability is usually measured using indicators such as retail or commercial property prices and their yields. However, the impact of the pandemic and large-scale vacancies caused by the collapse of major retail chains, combined with the increasing dominance of online shopping, pose important questions regarding how high streets will adapt and subsequently meet the changing needs of residents, workers, consumers, investors, tourists and other place stakeholders. The existing economic and property-oriented interpretation and measurement of viability may well hamper the future reinvention of high streets and as such makes it a worthy topic of investigation for the High Streets Task Force.

Understanding the medium and longer-term viability of high streets from a multifunctional perspective (not merely focusing on retail and property), arguably requires an updated - and more nuanced - understanding of economic indicators that will enable high streets to adapt, as well as social (e.g. working/commuting patterns, consumer patterns, health, education) and environmental (e.g. air quality, pollution, modal use) indicators that will inevitably shape the future high street.

The original scope of this annual research project had three proposed objectives:

1. To conduct a critical review of the concept of viability, and its relationship to vitality, in order to establish how conceptualisation and measurement may need updating, to reflect the changing nature of the high street.
2. To establish, through consultation with research users, including those that represent current and future place users. a useful means of operationalising the concept of high street viability and a corresponding set of universal indicators (i.e. those useful to a diverse set of stakeholders across a diverse set of places).
3. To explore a range of medium and longer-term scenarios, using the new the viability indicator set, across different types of high streets. These scenarios will be based on the consensus views of property owners, agents, major retailers, banks and other investors, place users (including young people) and place leaders (from local government, business and wider community), place managers, policy makers, academics, comprising the broadest range of HSTF stakeholders. Participants will be drawn from the SLG, the Board and PDRG and HSTF experts and mentors and their networks.

The research study is overseen by the Professional, Research and Data Group (PRDG) of the HSTF.

At PRDG there was widespread support for the initial findings (conceptualisation and measurement) but uncertainty regarding objective 3. Rather than scenarios, the Group preferred that the research study aim to produce a simple tool which could track the viability of a high street (based on the new conceptualisation) as a more practical and useful tool which may be adopted by place leaders.

The suggestion of a simple, free-to-use, tool to measure/track viability was popular amongst the Task Force and external stakeholders, such as town partnerships, which saw the potential for the tool to enable them to 'push the boundaries' of the work they are doing and justify why they should be concerned about some of

the wider issues their immediate stakeholders are sometimes reticent to get involved in (e.g. affordable housing for town centre workers). The HSTF Experts saw the potential to quickly get local place leaders onto the 'same page' – back to the old adage of 'what gets measured gets managed'.

Therefore we revised the final objective (to replace 3, above):

- To develop a simple indicator tool for place managers and leaders wishing to develop a more adaptable and resilient high street.

Outputs of this research study are contained in:

1. A critical literature review of the concept of town centre viability.
2. A practitioner report which defines high street viability, explains the concepts and presents the HSTF viability indicators
3. A simple tool that enables place managers and leaders to measure and monitor high street viability.

Defining vitality and viability

As a starting point, it is important to define town centre viability in this context and distinguish it from the related concept of vitality.

To contextualise this discussion, the development of off-centre retailing since the 1970s resulted in increased concern for the competitive position of traditional urban retail destinations, which was articulated in terms of town centre '*vitality* and *viability*'. These two terms are, according to an influential report funded by the Department of the Environment and directed by URBED (*Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge*), "both concerned with, and derive from, words meaning life":

> *"Vitality is reflected in how busy a centre is at different times and in different parts whilst viability refers to the ability of the centre to attract continuing investment, not only to maintain the fabric, but also to allow for improvement and adaptation to changing needs".* [1]

These two concepts of vitality and viability are interrelated:

> *"... with the relative level of 'busyness' (vitality) seen as a significant component in new investment decisions (viability) and, concurrently, the continued development of new facilities (viability) generating an enhanced attraction for visitors (vitality)".* [2]

Vitality and viability are perhaps best distinguished in terms of their associated temporal dimensions. Vitality focuses on the immediate 'health' of the town centre, whereas viability takes a longer-term perspective, focusing on maintaining - and hopefully improving - the town's future position and performance.

From the 1990s onwards, the growing concern with town centre vitality and viability triggered policy responses at national and local levels. At national level, there were various policy initiatives to protect the High Street, beginning with Planning Policy Guidance (PPG6). At local level, there were place management initiatives to make town centres more competitive, initially via the concept of town centre management (TCM), and more recently via Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

At both national and local level, there was emphasis on measuring town centre performance through the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to provide an indication of the quality and 'health' of town centres, and the concept of the town centre 'health check' was introduced as a diagnostic tool, used to underpin and inform place management decisions in response to this issue of retail decentralisation.

Various planning policy guidance documents have subsequently listed a range of different vitality and viability indicators. However, over the period from 1996-2016, only four indicators have featured in all policy directives issued by UK governments:

1. *Commercial yield on non-domestic property* – relating to investment return, and indicative of investor confidence in the long-term profitability of the centre.

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[1] *Urban and Economic Development Group [URBED] (1994) Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge. London: HMSO. Page 55.*

[2] *Ravenscroft, N. (2000) "The Vitality and Viability of Town Centres." Urban Studies 37 (13): 2533 - 2549. doi:10.1080/00420980020080681. Page 2534.*

2. *Pedestrian flow* – measuring the number of people on the streets at different locations at different times of the day and evening.

3. *Diversity of use* – indicative of usage of town centre space between offices, retail, cultural, entertainment, restaurants, education and housing, based on the premise that a more diverse town will attract more consumers, and subsequently more investors.

4. *Proportion of vacant street-level property in the primary retail area* – an indicator of a lack of demand for goods and services from consumers, and intrinsically linked to a lack of demand for property by retailers. [3]

These most commonly-used KPIs are economically oriented; perhaps a function of their relative ease of measurement, and perceived 'objectivity'. However, there have been attempts to consider other more 'intangible' measures (other than economic), such as improved social interaction and equality, or town centre identity and perception.[4] These measures, however, are more difficult to quantify as they often involve qualitative data and indicators, and the need to justify expenditure on such health checks may arguably lead to a preference and tendency to employ more 'objective' and economically oriented quantitative criteria.

However, as new, more community-led functions of high streets are emerging, this accelerates the need to redefine what contributes to the viability of high streets and ensure that concept reflects the aims and aspirations of a wide range of stakeholders, not just property owners and retailers. Out of town shopping centres, online shopping, and the recent impacts of COVID-19 have all posed significant challenges to the survival of the high street. As such, these challenges are transforming cities and urban centres and are forcing a rethink of the future of high streets, focusing on the social, environmental, and cultural viability of town centres, in addition to their economic viability, as discussed in the next section of this report.

[3] *See Guimarães, P. P. C. 2017. "An evaluation of urban regeneration: the effectiveness of a retail-led project in Lisbon." Urban Research and Practice 10 (3): 350 - 366. doi:10.1080/17535069.2016.122437.*

[4] *See Ravenscroft, N. (2000) "The Vitality and Viability of Town Centres."*

Components of viability

Relating to objective 1 of this study, our critical review of the academic literature suggests that the term 'viability' is often used interchangeably with the terms, 'resilience' and 'sustainability', and specifically in relation to aspects of town centres and High Streets transcends mere economic conceptualizations and indicators. Therefore, broadening the scope of viability - to include the interconnected social (and cultural), technological, environmental, and political aspects - appears a logical course of action. Figure 1 illustrates and classifies these multiple aspects associated with the concept of viability, which are discussed in more detail below.

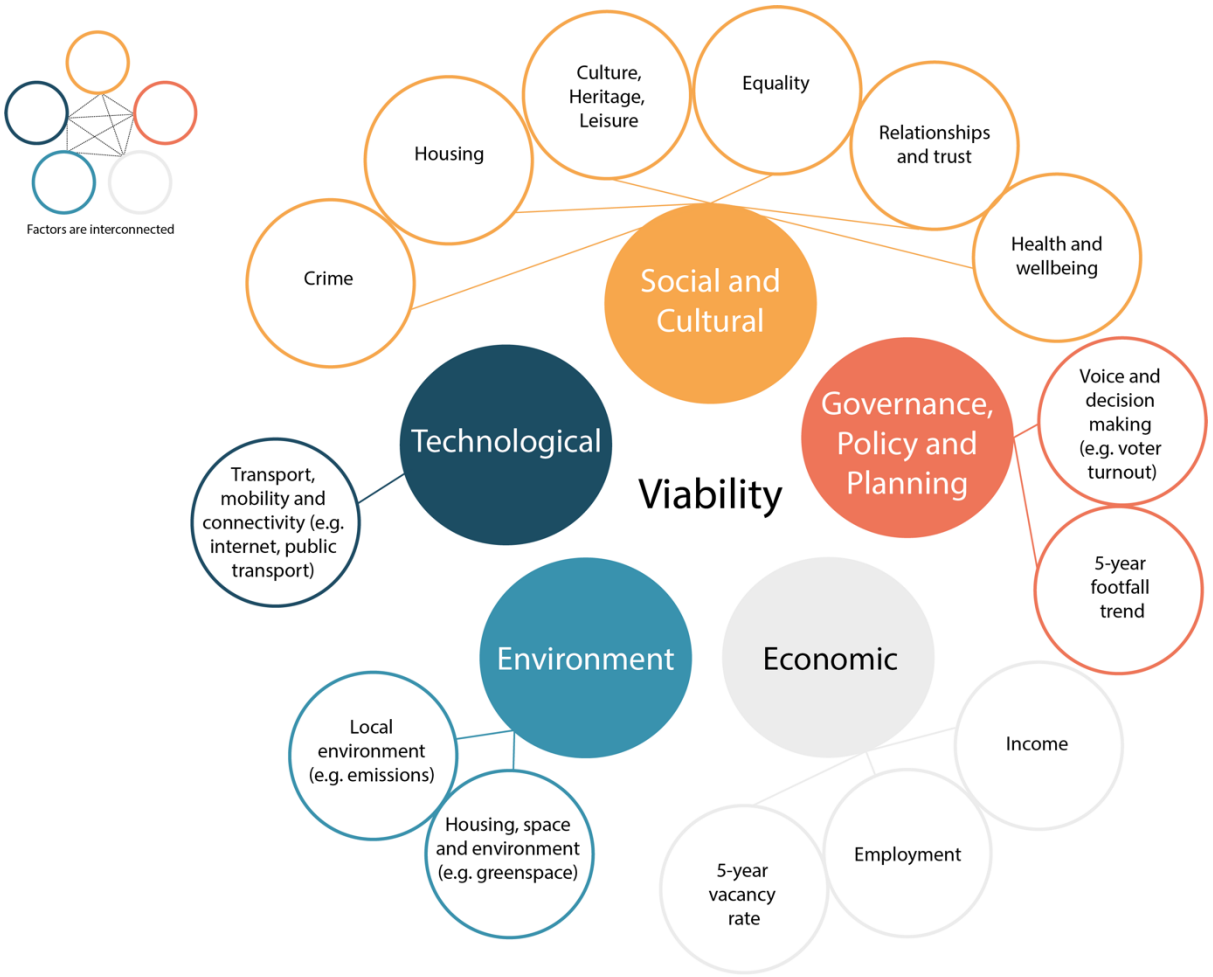

Figure 1: Aspects of town centre viability

Social and Cultural Viability

Social and cultural viability refers to social participation in urban life. Facilities such as museums, educational institutions, health services, etc. can create vibrancy in town centres through providing a non-retail offer; and by attracting people to use and visit these facilities contribute to the long-term viability of a place. Similarly, physical and financial accessibility to housing contributes to creating enclaves of residents, and a strong catchment population contributes to long term viability. Furthermore, participation in urban life also requires safe environments that promote equality, as well as an active and healthy population. Thus, viability through the lens of the 'social' involves: the engagement of the community, between its members, and with these facilities; the existence of - and participation in - local collective institutions, both formal and informal; levels of trust across the community, including issues of security from threats and crime; a healthy population; and a positive sense of identification with, and pride in, the community.

Similarly, viability from a social perspective should also encompass measures to assist long-term inclusivity of all socio-demographic groups in society. Thus, social viability can be compromised if there is social exclusion, which can go beyond poverty or deprivation, although they share similar characteristics. A specific socio-demographic group in society can be socially excluded without access to education or a job; or by a lack of resources at their disposal. But social exclusion goes beyond distributional issues, to include relational issues: for example, inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power. Social exclusion is therefore a broader concept than poverty and deprivation encompassing not only low material means but also the inability to participate effectively in the economic, social, political and cultural life of a place. [5]

Factors that influence social viability thus include:

- Participating in the community and engaging with other citizens and institutions.
- A sense of place attachment and pride.
- Having stability in relation to housing and social protection.
- Feeling included and safe.
- Being healthy.
- Having opportunities for cultural and professional enrichment (i.e. access to culture, leisure, employment, education, etc.).
- Family, social and community relationships and social spaces for people
- Equal and fair opportunities for everyone, regardless of ethnicity, religion, colour, age, ability, sexuality, gender, income etc. as well as infrastructure in place to promote equality, equity and fairness.

[5] *See: Agarwal, S. and P. Brunt. 2006. "Social exclusion and English seaside resorts." Tourism Management 27 (4): 654 - 670. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2005.02.011.*

Technological Viability

The technological aspect of viability is associated with the accelerated digitalisation of global society. This is a trend which has accelerated significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic as people adapted to prolonged lockdowns, thereby fuelling existing trends and blurring the boundaries between the physical and the digital and expanding connectivity. Access to technology is, inevitably, uneven; with internet connection being unavailable for some and with older and lower income groups often struggling to cope online. This can create digital divides and as such, more work is required to connect the unconnected.

Arguably, a cross-over therefore exists between technology and environmental, economic and social viability in that if a given technology compromises any of these other pillars of sustainable development, it is not viable. As such, connectivity needs to offer a contribution to counteract obstacles to sustainable urban development more broadly. This is particularly salient in transport connectivity and efficiency. Distance and access to bus stops, railway stations and other essential modes of transport is fundamental to high street viability[6] as these will not only aid in driving footfall to the place but making it an attractive place to work and live too. Additionally, the availability of affordable and sustainable transport options, and optimal and communication networks accessible to all citizens is imperative to achieve viability. Especially important to note is that these options should be easily accessible for those with disabilities.

Therefore, linking back to social sustainability, urban social technology, through the critical lens of viability, suggests that a technology contributes to viability if it is a social innovation - in other words, leading to new and inclusive social practices. There is, thus, a crucial need for technological acceptance, and if technological solutions are (locally) co-created, this might indeed increase public acceptance and adoption, leading to successful implementation of the technology that can contribute to tackling underlying urban problems, such as connectivity and accessibility, and thereby improving viability.

Therefore, factors impacting on technological viability include:

- Smart technologies and ICT systems, including internet connectivity in terms of both speed and access
- Transport connectivity contributing to greater accessibility and urban sustainability.
- Connectivity contributing to efficiency and effective platform urbanism.
- Social innovation and co-creational solutions to underlying urban problems.
- Technology adoption and public acceptance of digital solutions in order for successful implementation.

[6] *See: Parker, C., N. Ntounis, S. Millington, S. Quin and F. R. Castillo-Villar. 2017. "Improving the vitality and viability of the UK high street by 2020". Journal of Place Management and Development10 (4): 310 -348. doi:10.1108/JPMD-03-2017-0032.*

Environmental Viability

Environmental sustainability also impacts on the viability of towns and cities, as high levels of air pollution, flooding events, heat waves, etc. have severe consequences for human health and the economy.[7] Planning for urban resilience has therefore become increasingly important from an ecological perspective, but tackling these (and other) environmental hazards requires cooperation from stakeholders at all levels. Thus, citizen engagement (in line with that involved in achieving social viability) becomes essential: accommodating the perspectives of different groups of citizens is necessary when creating effective place transformation initiatives, so that they meet their needs and aspirations. The generation of both 'blue' and 'green' elements in cities - incorporating for example, well maintained and attractive canals and riverbanks (i.e. 'blue'), and parks and trees (i.e. 'green') - can contribute to reducing air pollution, controlling flooding, providing shade, etc. while simultaneously providing spaces for communities to meet and bond contributing to social cohesion, contributing to wellbeing and public health. Additionally, the increased focus on local shopping and living with solutions such as the emergent 15-minute city[8], facilitating for pedestrianisation and cycling, along with maintaining clean and safe public, green and recreational spaces have become important in efforts to increase convenience and inclusiveness.

Underlying urban environmental issues also include overcrowding, social and private homes experiencing fuel poverty and their inability to meet Decent Homes standard, as well as the lack of affordable, secure and good quality housing. A viable high street should also aim to report on the events such as road traffic accidents, accidents that involve death or personal injury to a pedestrian or cyclist as these are all elements indicating how the local living environment is faring. As such, local living environment both indoor and outdoor is therefore contributing to how environmental aspects should be understood as a central element of an all-encompassing concept of viability.

Factors that influence environmental viability include:

- Resilience to environmental hazards such as flooding, air pollution, heatwaves, etc.
- Controlling emissions and overcrowding that have a negative impact for people, the environment, and the economy.
- Maintaining safety of public space by monitoring and reporting accidents.
- Constructing and retrofitting buildings, transport systems, etc. that are energy efficient and provide affordable housing.
- Creating and maintaining greenspace and improve access to public and recreational space such as playgrounds and community centres.
- Protecting biodiversity in towns and cities.

7 Resosudarmo, B. P. and L. Napitupulu. 2004. "Health and economic impact of air pollution in Jakarta." Economic Record 80 (1): S65 - S75. doi:10.1111/j.1475-4932.2004.00184.x.

8 Pozoukidou, G. and Chatziyiannaki, Z. "15-Minute City: Decomposing the New Urban Planning Eutopia." Sustainability 13 (928): 1 – 25. doi:10.3390/su13020928.

Governance, Policy and Planning Viability

Governance mechanisms and new models of leadership can help build cross-sectoral partnerships, improving synergies and resulting in shared visions that overcome challenges and contribute to viability.[9] This can in turn contribute to recognition of place characteristics in order to adopt place specific strategies that can lead to the achievement of long-term benefits and sustained viability. Therefore, in terms of dealing with and adapting to change, partnerships have come to play a crucial role, with cross-sectoral collaboration through organisations such as BIDs and civic societies being invaluable to potentially increase a place's capacity for transformation.

In exploring what these shared goals and visions may be, it has been suggested that resilience includes mixed land use, so there is a need to innovatively plan for more multifunctional town centres where retail plays a lesser role and recreation and (temporary) activation of place plays a greater one.[10] Collectively, this makes for more resilient - and thus more viable – places.

As evidenced during the COVID-19 crisis, smaller neighbourhoods and district centres have fared better than the bigger cities, as local shopping and activities has become more important to people.[11] This, therefore, casts new light on the development of out-of-town retailing that started growing in the 1970s, and since then has (along with the rise of online retailing) significantly impacted town centre viability. There has been a low growth in High Street expenditure since 2015 [12] and these trends have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. One consequence has been rising High Street vacancy rates, frequently contributing to the rundown appearance of many places. These and other issues, such as redevelopment of larger retail units formerly occupied by national chains such as Debenhams and John Lewis, require solutions that need to be tackled with citizens' needs and aspirations for future town centres in mind. However, 'rethinking' places in this way requires careful consideration in order to avoid adverse effects of, for example, issues such as gentrification.

Factors to implicate High Street viability in the aspect of policy and planning include:

- Increased urban density along with centralisation of services and necessities.
- (Mixed) land use, which includes redevelopment of empty units and in centre occupancy.
- Partnerships in town centres that are crucial to build capacity for transformation into viable places (ones that maintain footfall levels)

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[9] *Peel, D. and C. Parker. 2017. "Planning and governance issues in the restructuring of the high street." Journal of Place Management and Development 10 (4): 404 - 418. doi:10.1108/JPMD-01-2017-0008.*

[10] *See Millington, S. and N. Ntounis. 2017. "Repositioning the high street: evidence and reflection from the UK." Journal of Place Management and Development, 10 (4): 364 - 379. doi:10.1108/JPMD-08-2017-0077*

[11] *HSTF. 2020. "Review of High Street Footfall: July 2019 - June 2020." High Streets Task Force. Accessed on 28th June 2021. https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/media/b5dnkp4z/hstf-footfall-report-2020-for-publication.pdf*

[12] *CRR. 2021. "The Crisis in Retailing: Closures and Job Losses". Centre for Retail Research. https://www.retailresearch.org/retail-crisis.html*

Conceptualising viability

As highlighted in the previous section, town centre viability can be regarded as a more nuanced concept, going far beyond limited economic aspects, which has indeed been highlighted by the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. People value their high streets and town centres as more than just places to shop. However, viability remains an ambiguous concept, with no uniform consensus definition. Consequently, there is arguably a pressing need to establish an understanding of viability that reflects the aspirations of a multitude of stakeholders – local businesses, property owners, communities and Government, and thus, an understanding that can potentially inform the future of High Streets. Our conceptualisation of viability is not only based on the multiple conditions that affect the overall viability of the High Street (described above), but one which also takes into account how viable high streets are produced (or emerge).

Here, the role of temporality is crucially important. There is an important time dimension to the practices and acts that produce the high street. There are the everyday practices, repeated regularly – the daily opening and closing of shops, the nightly rubbish collection, the weekly market, the annual Christmas light switch-on for example. These are acts that are concerned with the vitality of the high street. Each individual act is performed and managed with little or no coordination between them. Then there are the practices and acts that are not so frequent but depend on much more coordination – for example developing a high street vision for a bustling community-hub that leads to funding and investment and successful regeneration scheme which brings in new traders as well as increased footfall for existing businesses.

Therefore, a key distinguishing factor between viability and its associated concept of vitality is the existence of a longer-term temporal perspective with viability. Thus, temporality in the context of the High Street can be regarded as a key factor that can distinguish the spatial practices of the present, which provide us with a short and immediate snapshot of activity and action (i.e. vitality), with the temporal dimension of the long-term future of a High Street (i.e. viability). This can provide opportunities for improved evaluation of the impact of unprecedented events such as the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of the High Street and how to boost adaptability, resilience and liveability, and thus, viability. Consequently, we need to disentangle the terms 'vitality' and 'viability' to uncover their temporal and spatial distinctions. The following working conceptualisation (shown in Figure 2) attempts to present how this could be feasible, by using a triadic relationship that stems from:

- The challenge to identify relevant factors and indicators within the aspects identified in Figure 1 that can lead towards viable High Streets through a holistic understanding of the economic, social, political, technological, social, environmental, and cultural frameworks, strategies and institutional arrangements, as well as the challenge to assess their influence and importance based on place-specific characteristics.
- The need to adopt policies, strategies, and models that emerge in varied spatiotemporal contexts and have relevance in different scales and territories, as well as multiple networks and mobilities, keeping in mind the contentious nature and tensions in their implementations that might exist.
- The necessity to create appropriate timescales and feasible targets that correspond to the variegated spatiotemporal characteristics of the High Street, ranging from addressing the immediate challenges that happen in the here-and-now (implied by the notion of vitality) to setting up long-term goals that reflect High Street viability, and by appreciating how global policies and strategies are shaping individual places.

Taking into account these conditions, we suggest that High Street viability can be thought of as:

the combined outcome of a range of successful specific initiatives and practices that meet the ongoing needs of the communities and other stakeholders, which results in a sustainable, resilient, adaptable and liveable place

The conditions which contextualise and might potentially influence High Street viability are Conceptualised in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A conceptual framework of viability

The next section of this report examines how to measure the concept of viability set out in Figure 2, accepting that this conceptualisation is complex, often encompassing qualitative and subjective data.

Measuring viability

Moving to consider Objectives 2 and 3 of this study, to assist place managers and leaders in their efforts to establish viable high streets, there is a need to understand how a given place is performing against indicators contributing to the five aspects of viability outlined previously. For this purpose, introduced below is an index of viability, which takes into account the multiple conditions that affect the overall viability of the High Street, and the interconnectedness between aspects of viability - as well as its relationship to vitality (short-term indicators of success, such as occupancy and footfall).

This index - or tool to measure viability - has been shaped by academics and practitioners with an interest in the health of high streets and has been piloted with a series of towns in England. In order for this tool to be widely operationalised across high streets in England it uses data that is (1) pertinent to the conceptualisation of viability, (2) is easily available, and (3) enables a fine geographical granularity. The following indices and datasets are included in the tool:

1. Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 scores for the seven domains of deprivation (explained in Appendix 1).
2. Community Wellbeing Index (Co-op) for nine main areas that matter for community wellbeing (explained in Appendix 2).
3. Locally available indicators (5-year trends for footfall and vacancy rates).

Table 1 outlines how these relevant indices may be used to measure viability across the five aspects of vitality - social and cultural, technological, environmental, governance, planning and policy, and economic – that are identified above.

Indices	**Viability**				
	Social and cultural	**Environmental**	**Technological**	**Political**	**Economic**
CDRC Geodem (IMD 2019)	IMD Crime IMD Health IMD Housing IMD Education	IMD Living Environment			IMD Income IMD Employment
Wellbeing Index People	Education and learning Health				Economy, Work and Employment
Wellbeing Index Place	Culture, heritage and leisure	Housing, space and environment	Transport, mobility and connectivity		
Wellbeing Index Relationships	Relationships and trust Equality			Voice and decision-making	
Local data (Optional)				5-year footfall trend	5-year vacancy rate

Table 1: Indices of viability. (Note: All five viability constructs are weighted equally - 20% each).

A template for completing this viability measuring tool for a specific location and detailed information about how to use it is available in an HSTF resource 'A Tool to Measure High Street Viability'. The outcome of the analysis described in this working paper can be represented diagrammatically, as shown in figure 3 below, which refers to Didsbury in Manchester. The format of this visual representation facilities comparison between different places, by virtue of contrasting profiles.

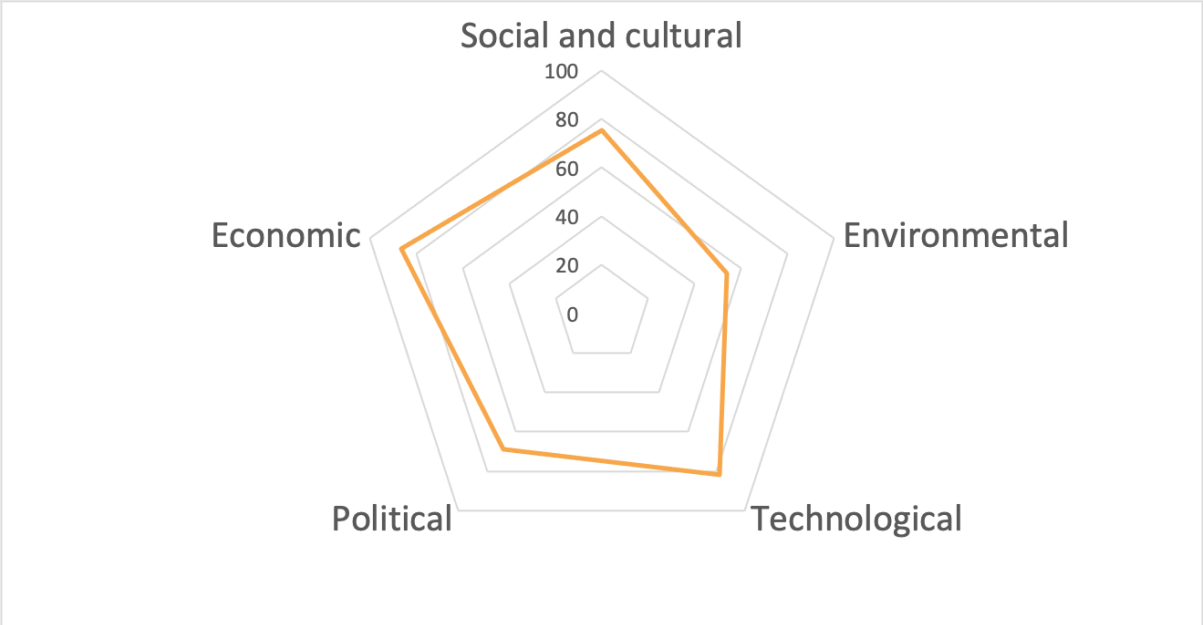

Figure 3: Indices of viability for Didsbury (Manchester). Note: 100 is best performing (most viable) and 0 is worst performing (least viable).

Appendix 1: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 explained

Income Deprivation	
Description	Measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
Indicators	Adults and children in: Income Support families, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance families; income-based Employment and Support Allowance families; Pension Credit (Guarantee) families; Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit families not already counted, and whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefit) is below 60 per cent of the median before housing costs; Universal Credit families where no adult is classed within the 'Working - no requirements' conditionality regime; and asylum seekers in England in receipt of subsistence support, accommodation support, or both.
Employment Deprivation	
Description	Measures the proportion of the working age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
Indicators	Claimants of: Jobseeker's Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64; Employment and Support Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64; Incapacity Benefit, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64; Severe Disablement Allowance, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64; Carer's Allowance, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64; and Universal Credit in the 'Searching for work' and 'No work requirements' conditionality groups.
Education, Skills and Training Deprivation	
Description	Measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
Indicators	Proportion of young people not staying on in school or non-advanced education above age 16; proportion of young people aged under 21 not entering higher

	education; proportion of working-age adults (women aged 25 to 59 and men aged 25 to 64) with no or low qualifications; and proportion of the working-age population who cannot speak English or cannot speak English 'well'.
Health Deprivation and Disability	
Description	Measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health.
Indicators	Premature death, defined as death before the age of 75 from any cause; work limiting morbidity and disability, based on those receiving benefits due to inability to work through ill health; level of emergency admissions to hospital, based on administrative records of inpatient admissions; and mental ill health in the local population: including mood (affective), neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders.
Crime	
Description	Measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
Indicators	Reported violence, burglary, theft, and criminal damage.
Barriers to Housing and Services	
Description	Measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.
Indicators	Road distance to a: post office, primary school, general store or supermarket, GP surgery; household overcrowding; homelessness, expressed as the rate of acceptances for housing assistance under the homelessness provisions of housing legislation; and inability to afford to enter owner-occupation or the private rental market.

Living Environment Deprivation	
Description	Measures the quality of both the 'indoor' and 'outdoor' local environment.
Indicators	Proportion of social and private homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes standard; housing without central heating or which is expensive to heat; air pollution, that is, concentration of the four pollutants nitrogen dioxide, benzene, sulphur dioxide and particulates; and road traffic accidents, reported accidents that involve death or personal injury to a pedestrian or cyclist.

Appendix 2: The Community Wellbeing Index - nine areas explained

Education and Learning	
Description	The availability of good, accessible, affordable services to help all ages make the most of education and learning opportunities.
Indicators	Access to educational services (Number of schools, Distance to nearest non-independent and special educational needs (SEN); Distance to nearest non-independent and SEN and rated good (1,2 Ofsted rating); Distance to nearest adult education facility; Distance to nearest library) and School quality.
Health	
Description	Access to good quality public, voluntary, and social care services that promote physical and mental health in the community.
Indicators	Access to health services (Distance to nearest GP, Distance to nearest hospital, Distance to nearest mental health service, Distance to nearest pharmacy); Hypertension and heart failure (GP prescription rates for hypertension and heart failure); Diabetes (GP prescription rates for drugs used to treat diabetes); Depression (GP prescription rates of antidepressants); Obesity (GP prescription rates of obesity medication); Dementia (GP prescription rates of dementia medication).
Economy, Work, and Employment	
Description	Services and infrastructure in place to promote a sustainable, ethical, inclusive economy that meets the needs of local people.
Indicators	Proximity of work to home (Workers who work over 30km from home); Hours worked; and Household income; Vacant commercial units; Free school meals; Unemployment (adults claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit); Shops (Distance to

	the nearest food or convenience store (m)); Post office (Distance to the nearest post office (m)); Co-ops / social enterprises (The number of co-ops, social enterprises, community organisations and community interest companies present within each community).
Culture, Heritage and Leisure	
Description	Access to affordable and inclusive cultural and leisure activities, services and amenities which celebrate the diverse histories of people in the community.
Indicators	Places of worship (Distance in metres from outer boundary to the nearest place of worship, with a value of zero if in the community); Types of workers (Proportion of workers in the community that are artists or musicians); Areas of leisure (Distance to nearest leisure facility, Distance to nearest grass pitch, Distance to nearest sports hall, Distance to nearest swimming pool); Museums, art galleries, music halls, theatres (Distance to nearest museum, Distance to nearest art gallery, Distance to nearest theatre); The number of listed buildings (Number of listed buildings in the community).
Transport, Mobility and Connectivity	
Description	Access to affordable and sustainable transport and communication networks for everyone, especially those with disabilities.
Indicators	Communication - Internet (Average internet speed, Maximum internet speed, Count of total connections per 10,000 population); Public Transport (Count of bus stops per 10,000 population, Distance to major rail station (>1,000,000 annual passengers), Distance to any rail station, Traffic counts of buses).
Housing, Space, and Environment	
Description	Affordable, secure, quality housing, a safe and clean surrounding environment, and well-kept, accessible and inclusive public spaces for people of all ages.

Indicators	Affordability; Overcrowding; Public green space; Public space (Distance to nearest community centre (m); Distance to nearest playground (m)); Traffic pollution (HGV traffic; total traffic count); Air quality (The count of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), Sulphur Dioxide (SO2) and Particulate Matter (PM10) within the air).
Relationships and Trust	
Description	The state of family, social and community relationships and the impact of any breakdown in trust on issues like crime.
Indicators	Social spaces (Distance to nearest pub, Distance to cafe, Distance to nearest community centre, Distance to nearest playground); Young children (Proportion of children (aged < 14)); One-person household, aged 50+ (Proportion of one-person households, aged 50+); Proximity of work to home (Proportion of workers who work over 30km from home); Household churn (Proportion of houses sold); Long-term health status (Long-term illness); Crime in the community (Crime in the community per 10,000 population); Crime in town centre (Crime in the town centre); Neighbourhood watch (The number of Neighbourhood Watch within each community).
Equality	
Description	Equal and fair opportunities for everyone, regardless of ethnicity, religion, colour, age, ability, sexuality, gender, income etc. Services and infrastructure in place to promote equality, equity and fairness.
Indicators	The gap between the highest and lowest priced houses within the community; % of second homes in the community; Distance to nearest independent school; Degree-level qualifications versus no qualifications; Ethnic representation in professional occupations; Variance in household income; % families in private renting.
Voice and Participation	
Description	Democratic governance and decision-making mechanisms in place to allow people to express themselves and take either individual or collective action to improve the local community and beyond.

Indicators	Voter turnout (General election turnout; Local election turnout); Co-op member engagement (Co-op member engagement); Signing of petitions (Signing of petitions per 1,000 population).