

# Business Forums: Spring Series

with

**Lancaster University & University of Cumbria**

24 April, 22 May and 19 June 2019

# A role for Universities

## Northern Powerhouse & academic anchor institutions

- The N8 group of northern research intensive universities have committed to working with government:  
*“to build innovation communities for economic growth across the North of England.”*
- Lancaster VC Professor Mark E Smith appointed Chair of N8 Board of Directors, Nov. 2018.

So the interesting question for us:

***Can our ideas and research be useful, when applied to a District or a Town?***



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## Town Centre Performance

Presented by Dr Chris Ford FCA, 24 April 2019

For further information, or to continue the discussion in relation to this presentation, please contact: [c.ford@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:c.ford@lancaster.ac.uk)

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# Town Centre Performance

1. Background – prior research
2. What's the issue nationally – Future High Street Fund
3. What's the issue locally – Recent insights
4. Evaluating Penrith – Who / Why / How
5. Evaluating the town centre *role* through ecosystems
6. Managing action – challenges and opportunities

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# Background – prior research



- Phase I (2011 - 12)
- Collaborative Innovation in 11 multinationals



- Phase II (2012 - 015)
- Business models & performance in three strategic alliances



- Phase III (2015 - 17)
- In-depth study of the performance of a leading bioscience hub and its tenants



Cabinet Office

- Phase IV (2017 - 19)
- Appointed a Cabinet Office Policy Fellow, to advise & evaluate their Open Innovation Team

# What's the issue nationally – Future High Street Fund

Policy paper

## Future High Street Fund

Published 29 October 2018

Contents

Summary

Structural changes on high streets

The Future High Streets Fund

How the Fund will work

Support for heritage high streets

Next steps

### Summary

High streets lie at the heart of our communities and local economies, creating jobs, nurturing small businesses and injecting billions of pounds into our economy. But the way we shop and the way that communities use their high streets is changing: we're shopping more online, making fewer big shopping trips and shopping 'little and more often'. This changes the nature of what makes a high street successful.

The government is committed to helping local high streets evolve and adapt to these changes. We want to encourage vibrant town centres where people live, shop, use services, and spend their leisure time. The Future High Streets Fund will support and fund local areas' plans to make their high streets and town centres fit for the future.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund/future-high-street-fund>

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# What's the issue nationally – Future High Street Fund

- £675m fund for Councils to bid in to.
- Focus is on infrastructure, linked to highly ambitious and visionary projects, in problem areas.
- Last time we saw something similar: Portas review in 2011.



The screenshot shows the top of the Retail Gazette website. The logo 'RETAIL GAZETTE' is in the top left. To its right is an advertisement for 'arm' with the text 'One global mobility contract and fully managed service removes the complexity of IoT con'. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: Home, Categories, Insight, Resources, Newsletter, About Us, and Charged. The main content area features a large headline: 'Timpson report: Grassroots approach needed to rejuvenate high streets'. Below the headline is the author information: 'By Elias Jahshan - December 20, 2018'. At the bottom of the screenshot is a blurred image of a busy city street with shops and pedestrians.

<https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2018/12/timpson-report-grassroots-approach-needed-rejuvenate-high-streets/>

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# What's the issue nationally – Future High Street Fund

- £675m fund for Councils to bid in to.
- Focus is on infrastructure, linked to highly ambitious and visionary projects, in problem areas.
- Last time we saw: Portas review in 2011.
- Common concerns about retail sales and retail footprint.
- Common themes of **Leadership, Collaboration, Community, & Local relevance**

## Indies' fury over Portas Pilot failure

10 NOVEMBER 2017



7 COMMENTS



Independent retailers in “Portas Pilot” towns have said the failed scheme had “its own agenda” and “little focus on retail”.



Five years after 12 towns were awarded a share of a £1.2m fund and access to celebrity retail guru Mary Portas to improve trade on their high streets, research by the Local Data Company commissioned by the BBC found the towns had lost 17% of their shops.

FOR ALL THE FASHION BUSINESS  
**Drapers**

<https://www.drapersonline.com/news/indies-fury-over-portas-pilot-failure/7027465.article>

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# What's the issue locally – preliminary insights

## Retail challenges

- Empty stores
- New Squares unresolved
- Lack of a busy, regular market

## Environment challenges

- Lack of green space in town
- Pedestrianisation, or not?
- Long memories of past glory

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# What's the issue locally – preliminary insights

## Cultural challenges

- *No central hub like Brewery Arts*
- *Not enough 'going on' in the centre*
- *More social spaces*

## Health & wellbeing challenges

- *Access to nature on foot / cycle*
- *Holistic approach to environmentalism*
- *Beacon is part of town identity*

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# Evaluating Penrith – Who/Why/How



Welcome to The Keep Penrith Special campaign site.

Download Our Masterplan



WINTER DROVING

26/27 OCT 2018

TURN BACK YOUR CLOCK FOUR CENTURIES

EVENT OVERVIEW

WINTER DROVING

ULLSWATER DROVING



# Evaluating Penrith – Who/Why/How

## Economy

- Retail performance is just one component
- Place-based investment (business / skills)
- Centre provides the social / cultural glue
- Key asset in **digital economic age**

The measurement of town centre performance, nationally, is dominated by agencies that support the information requirements of big retailers.

These evaluations pay little or no attention to wider economic roles of a town, or responsibilities of those who manage the town.

Need a much better understanding of **what drives people's attachment to a place**, not only for retail or tourism, but for sustained investment.

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# Evaluating Penrith – Who/Why/How

Town centre and retail expertise:  
Dr Cathryn Hart

## Journal Articles

Stocchi, L, Hart, C, Haji, I (2016) Understanding the town centre customer experience (TCCE), *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32(17-18), pp.1562-1587, ISSN: 0267-257X. Full text: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjmm20>. DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2016.1242510.

Hart, CA, Stachow, GB, Cadogan, JW (2013) Conceptualising town centre image and the customer experience, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 29(15-16), pp.1753-1781, DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2013.800900.

Stachow, GB and Hart, CA (2010) Exploring place image: Formation and measurement, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(2), pp.145-155, DOI: 10.1057/pb.2010.13.

New research collaboration,  
Commenced January 2019 and extending  
for two years (minimum).

E·S·R·C  
ECONOMIC  
& SOCIAL  
RESEARCH  
COUNCIL

Loughborough  
University

# The Customer Experience of Town Centres

Cathy Hart  
Grazyna Stachow  
Mohammed Rafiq  
Angus Laing

Loughborough University  
Leicestershire, UK

BRITISH  
RETAIL  
CONSORTIUM  
for successful and  
responsible retailing

market towns  
action for  
amt

Argos

ACS | the voice of  
local shops

LOVE  
Loughborough

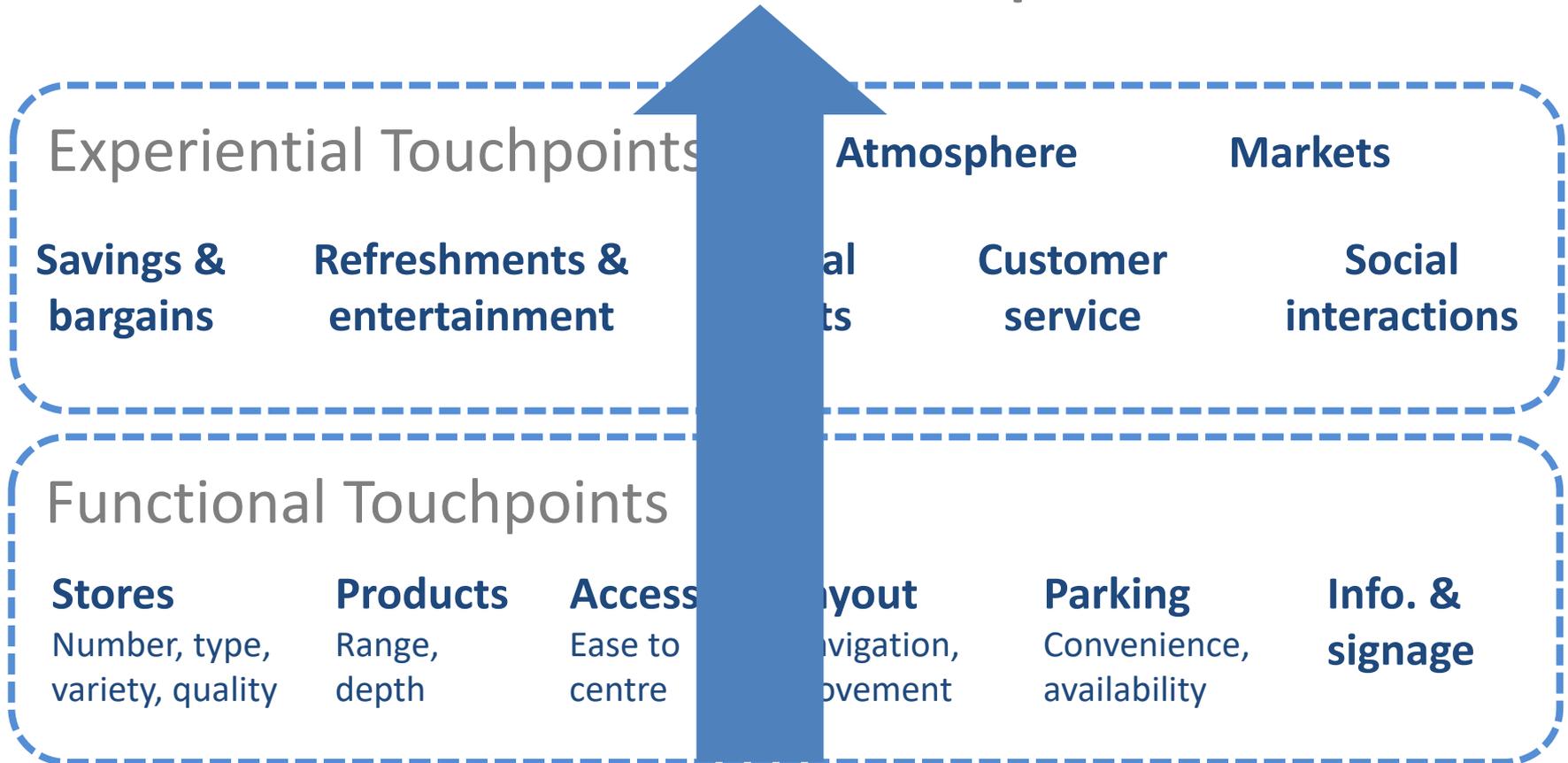
Boots  
let's feel good

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# Evaluating Penrith – Who/Why/How

## Town Centre Customer Experience



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# Evaluating Penrith – Who/Why/How

## Economy

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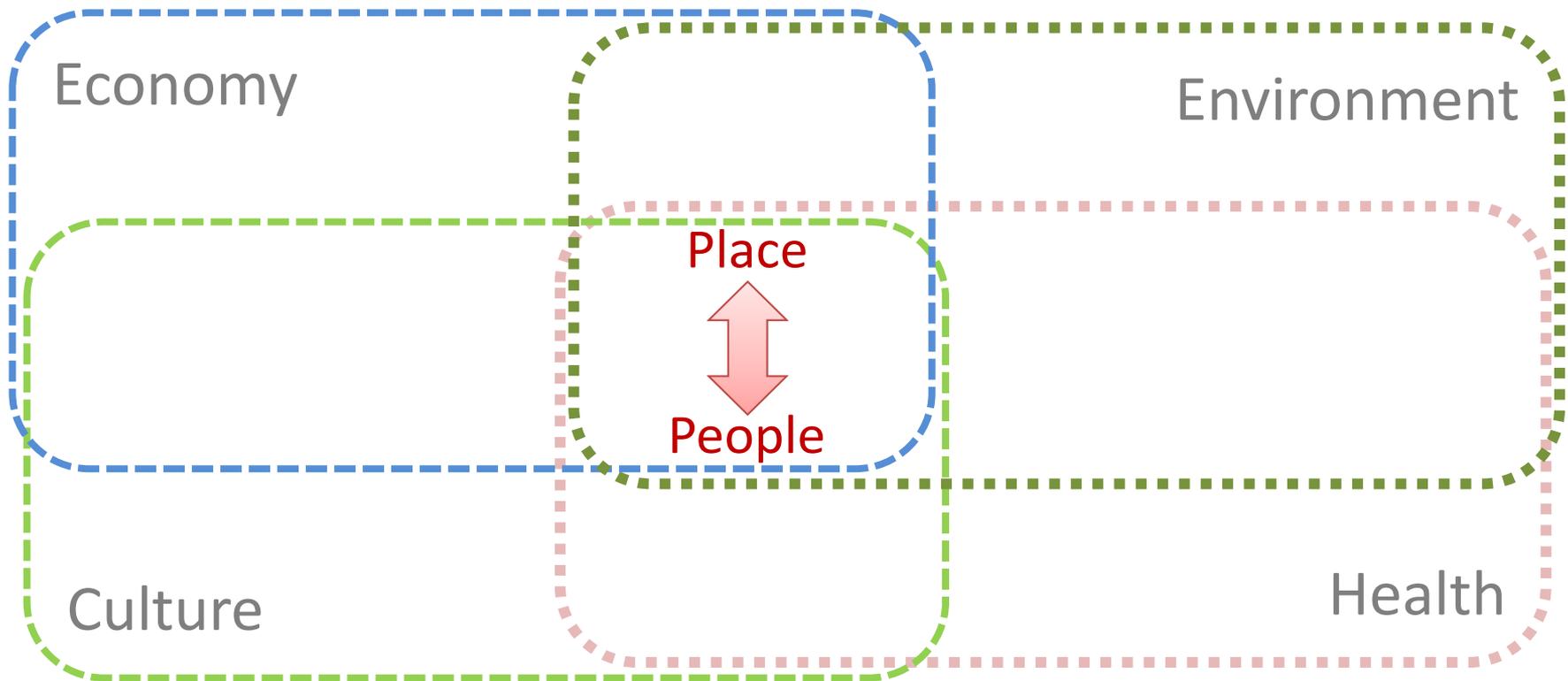
Need a much better understanding of **what drives people's attachment to a place, not only for retail or tourism, but for sustained investment.**

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# Evaluating the town centre *role* through ecosystems



What do we need the town centre to *do for us and our businesses*, to support them?

How does it *add value* to all of the things that we individually value?

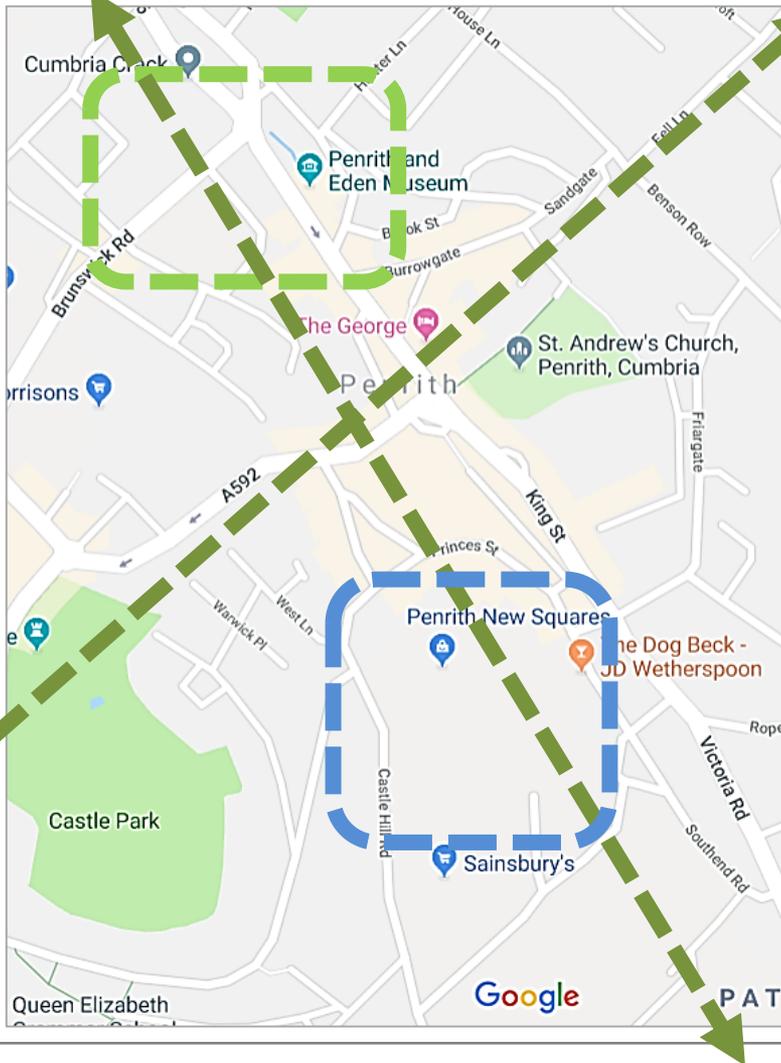
Can this generate both *current* and *imagined-future* place attachment?

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# Evaluating the town centre *role* through ecosystems



## Culture:

- Centre for performing arts on the site of old Argos – practice & performance.
- Summer and Christmas events programme for town centre.

## Economy:

- Business & Innovation Hub in New Squares, with repurposing of units.
- Visitors centre & dedicated attempt to attract tourism, incl. coaches.

## Environment:

- Create green routes out of town.
- Explore different options for the centre.
- New relationship with The Beacon.

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# Evaluating the town centre *role* through ecosystems

Environment

Economy

Culture

Health

- *What is the Vision for each of these? Do they connect up?*
- *What's the 5-10 year strategy to achieve these?*
- *Can we set objectives / targets against all of these – that link to each other in a meaningful way?*
- *What kind of leadership or management do we need, to deliver this kind of joined up performance management?*

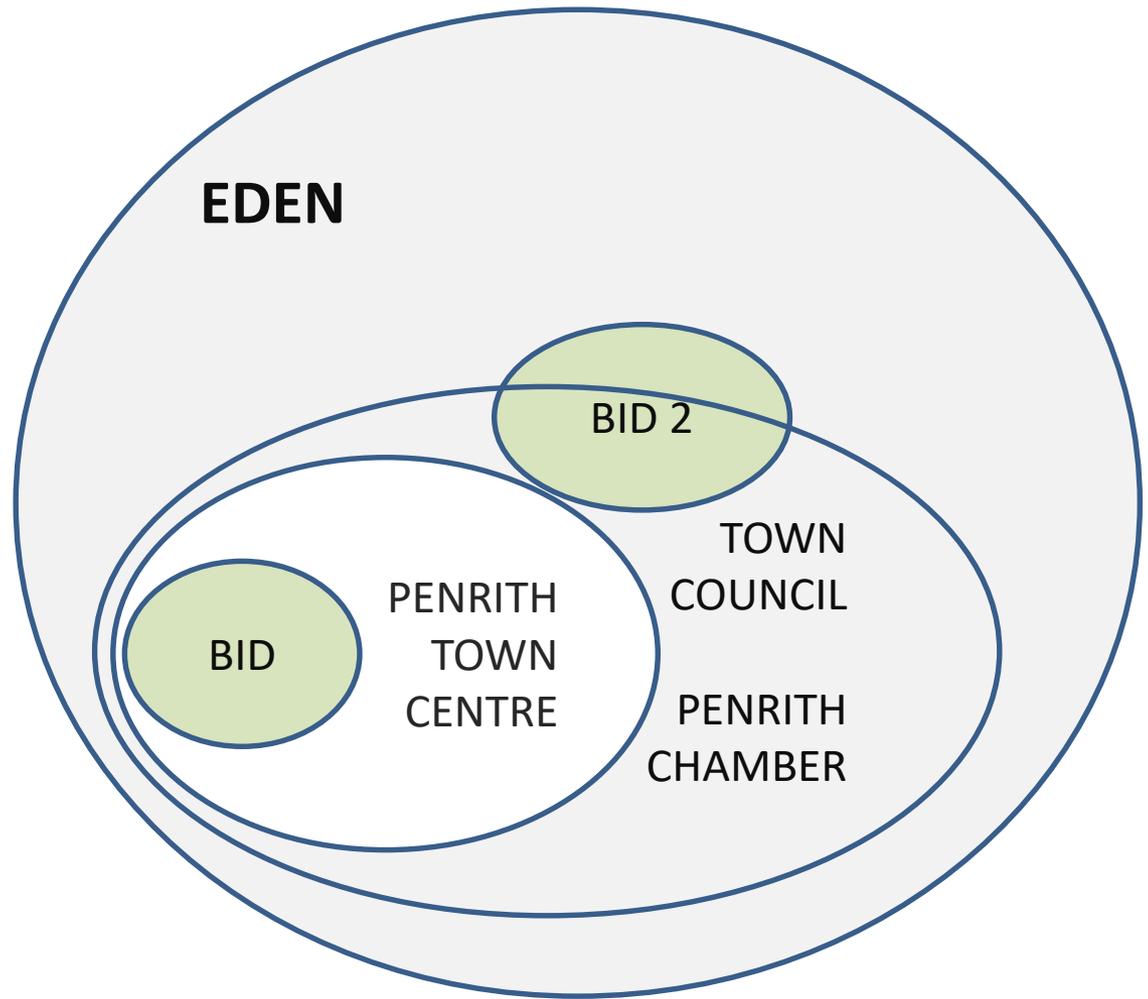
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# Managing action – challenges and opportunities

- Multiple interested organisations
- All with limited resources
- All committed to having a positive impact
- But how well do they co-ordinate?
- Can responsibilities be efficiently divided, and areas of leadership be agreed?



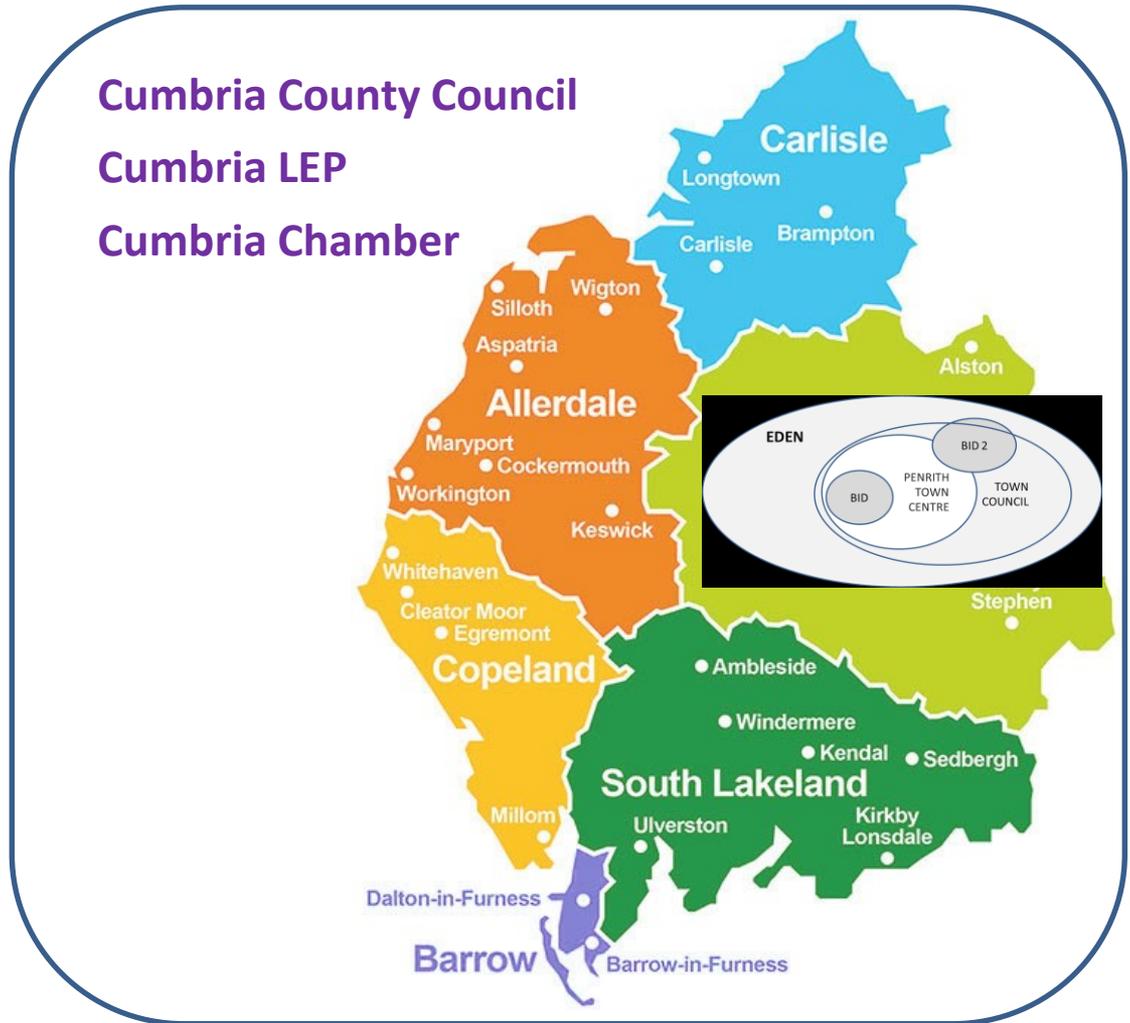
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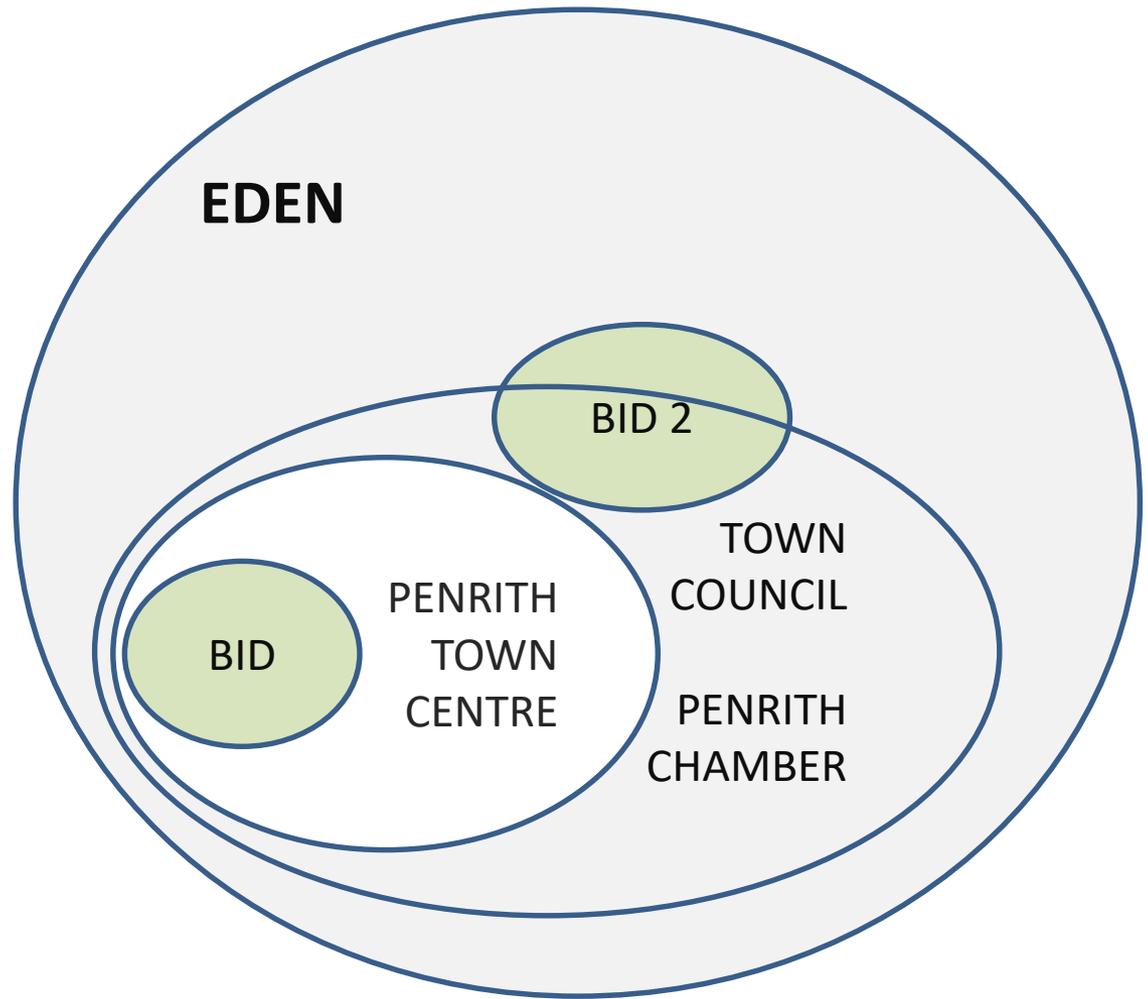
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# Managing action – challenges and opportunities

- Multiple interested organisations
- All with limited resources
- *All committed to having a positive impact*
- *Staffed by a wide range of talent*
- *Dealing with issues that are significantly under local control, ie, real scope for change*



***So where do we start?***

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