

# Purepages Group

Simplifying *complexity*



Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Business and Enterprise.  
Welsh Assembly, 5th Floor, Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA  
Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2012

## **Re Regenerating Welsh High Streets**

Dear Minister,

I have read sections of recent debates in the Welsh Assembly regarding regeneration of the Welsh High Street. And whilst the statistics are not good, even worse than your neighbours in England, it does not, however, have to be all doom and gloom.

There does have to be a realisation, though, that Government intervention and bureaucracy will not provide the solutions, only strategy and direction. The Portas Report will not ride to the rescue and will, sadly, create no regeneration on its own merit.

People, contextual information, pension funds, Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and housing associations are far more important.

I attach my 3-part thought leadership series on Regenerating UK High Streets, recently published in the Retail Bulletin, and well received by professionals and academics. Included in that list are Bob Neill MP, Under Secretary of State for the Communities, John Cridland, DG of the CBI, and recently, Paul Uppal MP, chair of the All-Party parliamentary committee on urban regeneration. They can be downloaded from <http://www.purepages.com/resources>

My solutions involve, inter alia, repopulating our town centres, which, as a result, could massively reduce the need to build on green fields and produce affordable housing to boot. Demolishing large sections of non-refurbishable, dilapidated town centres under CPOs and rebuilding with high quality flats and apartments around National Trust for Wales owned park-squares will create a massive virtuous circle.

1. In conjunction with George Osborne's projected £50bn infrastructure fund, it will allow cash rich UK pension funds to invest in Housing Association / private housing projects which are significantly more sensible than building more lanes on the M25 or M4, for example.
2. Demolition of large swathes of depressing, dilapidated building will uplift peoples' spirits, increase the sense of community and boost economic activity.
3. Will create immediate apprenticeships in the building trades (electricians, gas engineers for example) and long term jobs for 16-24 year olds. Building roads will definitely not do that.

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4. People living and working in town will mean less commuting and therefore ameliorate the need to build more roads, road lanes. Less commuting will significantly reduce UK CO2 emissions
5. Having significantly more people live in town will increase the use of public facilities like museums, theatre for example, all of which are struggling.
6. With the increase in global freight costs and spiralling Chinese wage demands, there is now a huge opportunity to bring back clothing manufacturing to the UK. Mini smart mills could be built on the edge of town, walkable from the town centre apartments. Inditex (Zara et al) is now the World's biggest clothing retailer and much of their fast response to big selling items has been built on local, rural manufacturing clusters. (Read Wikipedia - Zara Manufacture and distribution – over 50% of all Zara goods are made in Spain)
7. Building edge of town smart mills will significantly reduce female employment, also very high like 16-24 year olds. It will also offer jobs to women of South Asian descent who traditionally have textile skills.
8. More 'middle class' people living in town will create significant numbers of service sector jobs; cafes, convenience stores, and restaurants for example. Plus importantly, the greater retail and social mix will dilute the anti-social behaviour as socio-economic groups D and E will not be the only ones inhabiting that space in the evening times when bad behaviour is most prevalent.

In summary, The Welsh Government do have serious options right now, including using contextual information for town centre regeneration such as our prototype system at <http://ppgdev.com/ross/richmond> There are several councils and enterprise partnerships looking at it as we speak.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Phillips', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Mike Phillips MBA MCIM**  
Managing director, Purepages Group  
DTI Research Grant Award 2010 / 2008  
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### **Short Biopic**

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