

# Place branding and heritage

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## Place branding and heritage

For Historic England

Prepared by TBR's Economic Research Team, Pomegranate Seeds and Middlesex University

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Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....	1
METHODOLOGY .....	1
FINDINGS AND GOOD PRACTICE .....	1
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....	6
1.2 SUMMARISED METHODOLOGY .....	6
1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE .....	7
1.4 UK BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDs) .....	7
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 SUMMARY .....	8
2.2 PLACE.....	8
2.3 BRANDING .....	9
2.4 PLACE BRANDING .....	10
2.5 PLACE PROMOTION.....	10
2.6 CITY BRANDING.....	11
2.7 PLACE BRANDING DEFINITION AND THEORIES .....	11
2.8 WHAT IS THE VALUE OF PLACE BRANDING? .....	14
2.9 PLACE MAKING AND HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTS – A SUITABLE ELEMENT FOR PLACE BRANDING?.....	16
2.10 CONCLUSION .....	21
<b>3. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
3.1 KEYWORD ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION.....	22
3.2 ONLINE SURVEY .....	23
<b>4. CASE STUDIES</b> .....	<b>30</b>
4.1 BIDS’ APPROACH TO AND ROLE WITHIN PLACE BRANDING.....	30
4.2 BIDS’ USE OF HERITAGE WITHIN PLACE BRANDING .....	30
4.3 BIDS’ INTERPRETATION OF THE BENEFITS AND VALUE OF PLACE BRANDING AND HERITAGE.....	31
4.4 CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY BIDS IN DELIVERING HERITAGE AND PLACE BRANDING ACTIVITIES.....	31
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>32</b>
5.1 THE VALUE OF PLACE BRANDING/PLACE MAKING .....	32

5.2	PLACE BRANDING – A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PLACE MAKING AND DEVELOPMENT .....	32
5.3	HERITAGE AND PLACE BRANDING: A SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.....	33
5.4	HERITAGE AND PLACE BRANDING: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, BEST PRACTICE AND GUIDANCE .	33
<b>6.</b>	<b>GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES.....</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1	AUDIT LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS.....	35
6.2	CELEBRATE HERITAGE IN PLACE BRANDING .....	35
6.3	PROMOTE HERITAGE TO PLACE BRANDERS .....	35
6.4	RECOGNISE PLACE BRANDERS’ OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS .....	36
6.5	INFLUENCE PLACE BRANDING GUIDANCE.....	36
6.6	RESPOND TO VARYING REQUIREMENTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES.....	36
	<b>ENDNOTES.....</b>	<b>38</b>

## Executive Summary

### Aims and objectives

The aim of this project is to produce a thorough assessment of the extent to which heritage currently contributes to place branding, how this can be valued, and how organisations engaged in place branding might seek to maximise heritage's contribution to their place brands. These organisations are likely to include, but not be restricted to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs): the findings of this project should appeal to all organisations involved with place branding (and any activity associated with place developing, identity and shaping) and with an interest in how heritage could be incorporated to enhance the places. BIDs were selected as the primary group of organisations with which to engage following a scoping exercise, as described in the methodology section, below.

### Methodology

This project was delivered through a series of research stages that encompassed both quantitative and qualitative research. The initial scoping stage sought to establish the rationale for the project through two separate activities: firstly, to provide an intellectual foundation for the project through a detailed literature review and, secondly, to consult directly with a selection of BIDs in England to determine whether or not they were an appropriate set of organisations to engage in this project.

Having established the rationale for the project, BIDs were stratified by their apparent engagement in heritage and/or place branding. This was achieved through analysing the presence of agreed search terms (covering place branding and heritage) in each BID's most recent key document. All BIDs in England were then invited to complete an online survey to generate primary quantitative data structured around the key questions that direct this project. These quantitative data were supplemented by qualitative engagement with BIDs that generated seventeen detailed case studies.

The research output was then enhanced by input from experts in heritage and, separately, place branding who were interviewed individually. Finally, the interim findings were presented to, discussed by, and further developed at a focus group attended by a group of sector experts.

As with the full project, the executive summary consistently refers to place branding. Although we recognise that the terms place making/shaping/branding/identity are not interchangeable (the differences are captured in the detailed literature review) they are all part of a family of terms that may be grouped together as place development. In this sense, we feel that the findings of this study can be applied to place development activities that may extend beyond place branding.

### Findings and good practice

Below we set out the key findings from the research and the associated 'good practice' points that form a key part of the study output. These are structured to respond to the five key research questions that directed the form and execution of this project. Good practice guidelines are highlighted within the content and respond to the research questions that most demand practical recommendations for action.

#### **What is place branding and what is the value of place branding?**

Definitions of place branding vary but derive from product branding and marketing; essentially a place brand is a perception that people have about a place and its reputation in the eyes of residents, businesses, investors, workers, visitors and the wider public. Place branding has also evolved from earlier (nineteenth/twentieth century) place promotion and *boosterism* and the 'art of selling places' in response to economic and social change and greater inter-city competition, using a place's heritage and historic associations.

Fundamentally, place brands look to project a positive image of a place to potential visitors, potential residents, and potential investors. The brand is the signal that people may wish to visit, live or invest in this location. Measuring and valuing place brands is undertaken through media/content analysis and perception studies of stakeholders views (e.g. experts, businesses, residents), as well as city ranking using proprietary indices.

When asked about the benefits that BIDs believed were accrued by places with strong brands, increased visitor numbers (89%), improved economic performance (86%) and increased media profile (86%) were the three outcomes most frequently selected.

### **Is heritage a suitable element of place branding?**

Heritage is acknowledged as an important element in place branding, but this is often under-developed and not directly measured in place brand valuation. Heritage and historic buildings and places are an increasingly popular and locally valued and often premium location for creative and other new businesses. The role and contribution that heritage assets make to place branding are under-researched and often implicit but not explicit in place branding strategies - this research therefore represents an important contribution to knowledge and practice in this field.

### **How and to what extent are Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) involved in place branding?**

Analysis of keywords within BIDs' most recent business plans and key documents revealed that almost two thirds (63%) contain terms associated with place branding. When asked, almost three quarters (71%) of BIDs felt that they were currently engaged in delivering place branding and almost four fifths (78%) see place branding as part of their responsibilities. Of the 29% of BIDs not currently engaged in place branding, half were engaged in place making, with the remainder engaged in some form of destination marketing and/or events.

BIDs currently engaged in place branding very rarely take sole responsibility for its delivery (4% of those surveyed). They often work collaboratively with, for example, the relevant Local Enterprise Partnership (52% of those surveyed) and/or destination marketing organisation (40%). The phrase 'place branding' may not achieve universal approval amongst rate-paying businesses because it can sound like marketing jargon. In some instances, this led BIDs to pursue place branding activities without presenting them as place branding. BIDs were also unlikely to engage with place branding as part of the initial election campaign; they often felt more comfortable engaging with place branding once they had become more established. This extended, in one example, to commissioning the development of a place branding toolkit.

### **How is heritage used in BID's place branding and place making strategies?**

Heritage is used extensively by BIDs to assist with place branding and place making strategies. Where BIDs did engage with heritage, this invariably extended beyond the most obvious heritage assets in their area to include less prominent, intangible heritage. Individual examples of heritage being used by BIDs to assist place branding include offering local heritage tours to recently arrived businesses, developing smartphone applications (apps) that update with thematic heritage trails that include GPS directions, and leading larger, externally funded projects to restore and maintain heritage buildings.

If BIDs did express scepticism about heritage, it was that it could inhibit the development and/or introduction of a contemporary place brand. Heritage tends to be dominated by a very historic narrative; embracing more contemporary heritage is something that would appeal to BIDs.

### **What is the added value of heritage?**

Place branders often seek to appeal to a range of different audiences. These audiences include visitors, businesses and residents and each have different requirements and impose different demands on the place brand. Heritage provides an authenticity to place brands that appeals across the full spectrum of audiences.

89% of surveyed BIDs felt that heritage played an important role in the image and identity of a place and 80% felt that heritage was important to visitors' perceptions of their BID area. For places seeking to attract visitors and/or investment, heritage can provide a unique means of differentiation from competitors. However, value is a relative concept. Heritage may be seen as less valuable in places that have very strong economies, for example. Places that currently offer highly skilled labour forces, excellent transport infrastructure, ready access to sources of capital, high quality business premises, and a stable macroeconomic environment are less likely to need to rely on heritage as a promotional 'asset' (irrespective of whether or not it is present) because they are able to offer a compelling investment (or other economic development) proposition without it.

### **How aware are place branders of the heritage assets that they have?**

When surveyed, 98% of BIDs were aware of at least one heritage asset within their BID area. The most frequently identified heritage assets were listed buildings (by 88% of respondents), followed by conservation areas (68%), and museums and archives (66%). These assets tend to be highly visible and, perhaps, difficult to ignore. When asked about accessing information on less visible assets, BIDs made reference to knowledge across their board members (many of whom are senior figures within the area) and also to local intelligence captured from volunteer ambassadors or street rangers, whose passion for the locality led to them taking the role and extends into local heritage.

### **How can place branders best be made aware of the presence and value of local heritage?**

Despite possessing existing knowledge of heritage assets, 57% of surveyed BIDs said that they would like to find out more about heritage in their local area. Of those, the type of information most frequently selected as being of interest was the economic value of heritage. The format in which the BIDs interested in finding out more about local heritage would most welcome receiving this information was by accessing a website.

#### **Good practice guideline:**

- All areas will have heritage both tangible and intangible, although the scale and appeal of the asset(s) can vary significantly. Auditing these assets would be valued by place branders. Applying the Cultural Physical Asset Mapping toolkit (available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/71127/DCMS\\_Mapping\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/71127/DCMS_Mapping_Toolkit.pdf)) developed under the DCMS CASE programme could be helpful in identifying and classifying a wider range of cultural and heritage assets in a BID (or equivalent area).

### **How can organisations be convinced of the benefits of maintaining and investing in heritage?**

BIDs are accustomed to managing and monitoring the impact of their activities. Established metrics such as footfall monitors, dwell time analysis, and visitor satisfaction surveys are typically used to provide the requisite information. BIDs recognise the limitations of these measures, however, and displayed an appetite for a more detailed approach to measuring the benefits of maintaining and investing in heritage. This would ideally involve quantitative data that included a measure of return on investment. The Heritage Counts Economic Indicators, published in October 2016 (and available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-the-economy/>) are a welcome resource in this respect and should be promoted accordingly.

### **How can the role of heritage as a key economic development lever be reinforced?**

Different economic development agencies have different priorities and at different spatial scales. It is important, therefore, that evidence of the value of heritage is sufficiently flexible and segmented to respond to these different needs. These can vary from evidencing the quality of life that heritage supports and that would be available to employees of a business should they invest in new premises in a particular location to providing a more comprehensive day out that will convince day visitors within a one-hour drive time to spend a full day somewhere rather than a couple of hours.

### **How can places [better] use heritage in place making and place branding?**

Whilst the majority (93%) of surveyed BIDs were aware of and used their heritage assets in some way, the most commonly reported uses were to provide images for corporate materials (73%) and as a means of attracting people to a place (68%). Conversely, less than one third of surveyed BIDs (29%) reported using heritage assets more strategically as part of longer-term planning.

Heritage events and festivals were often BIDs' first exposure to the active use of local heritage. Although such events can reinforce a place brand, they need at least to be coordinated to make a meaningful contribution. They are more likely to act as a stimulus for BIDs to engage with heritage, which may subsequently lead to a more coherent place brand.

There is a danger that a fascination with more distant history discourages place branders from embracing heritage. This is because place branders feel that this restricts their ability to project a more modern image. BIDs provided examples of interpreting medieval heritage in a modern setting and of deliberately contrasting an historic place brand with contemporary imagery.

BIDs expressed a keenness to embed heritage across an entire place and not restricted to a set of buildings, e.g. museums. This broadens the scope and appeal of the place brand, and BIDs reported developing heritage trails (sometimes using digital technology) as a means of achieving this.

The benefits of maintaining and promoting heritage are often long-term and accrued more by the owners of commercial buildings than by tenants. The consequence of this is that this group may need to be identified and engaged in order to become advocates for heritage investment.

### **Good practice guidelines:**

- Introducing annual 'heritage in place branding' awards would help to raise the profile of heritage and establish it as a core component of place branding. It would also, over time, develop a valuable reference library.
- Develop an online resource with information on local heritage that can be accessed by place branders. As place branders' interest in heritage intensifies this can be supplemented by knowledge exchange with heritage experts.
- Very few place branders have a significant financial resource on which to draw. As a consequence, working in partnership with them to develop projects that can attract external investment in heritage is likely to be more productive than seeing the organisations themselves as sources of investment.
- Influencing place branding guidance represents a good opportunity to increase the presence of heritage in place branding, recognising that BIDs were unlikely to engage with heritage immediately.
- Materials that communicate the value of heritage need to be flexible enough to respond to the varying demands of different place making and economic development agencies.

## 1. Introduction

In March 2016 TBR, working with Middlesex University and Pomegranate Seeds, was appointed by Historic England to deliver a project that explored the concept of place branding and the ways in which heritage was (or was not) being incorporated into and adding value to place brands. Following a scoping exercise, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were confirmed as the vehicles to engage; these self-financing organisations are becoming ever more common across England and often engage with activity that partially or wholly resembles place branding.

### 1.1 Aims and objectives

The aim of this project has consistently been to produce a thorough assessment of the extent to which heritage currently contributes to place branding, how this can be valued, and how organisations engaged in place branding could seek to maximise heritage's contribution to their place brands. These organisations are likely to include, but not be restricted to BIDs: the findings of this project should appeal to all organisations involved with place branding and with an interest in how heritage could be incorporated to enhance the place brand.

This project consistently refers to place branding. Although we recognise that the terms place making / shaping / branding / identity are not interchangeable (the differences are captured in the detailed literature review) they are all part of a family of terms that may be grouped together as place development. In this sense, we feel that the findings of this study can be applied to place development activities that may extend beyond place branding.

1. What is place branding and what is the value of place branding? Is heritage a suitable element of place branding?
2. How and to what extent are Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) involved in place branding? How is heritage used in BIDs' place branding and place making strategies? What is the added value of heritage?
3. How aware are place branders of the heritage assets that they have? How can place branders best be made aware of the presence and value of local heritage?
4. How can organisations be convinced of the benefits of maintaining and investing in heritage? How can the role of heritage as a key economic development lever be reinforced?
5. How can places [better] use heritage in place making and place branding?

### 1.2 Summarised methodology

The project was configured to deliver against these aims and objectives through a suite of complementary research activities. These are described in greater detail in the appendices to this report, presented as a separate document (section 3, page 10). These research activities can be summarised as having produced the following outputs:

1. A detailed literature review that captures the development of place branding and its relationships with other related disciplines.
2. A keyword frequency analysis on one key document for each of the BIDs in England to quantify the presence of terms associated with place branding and heritage.
3. An allocation of the BIDs into one of six classifications, based on the presence of place branding and heritage terms within the document studied. These classifications provided a context that enabled subsequent research stages to achieve coverage across the spectrum of engagement with place branding and heritage and to interpret variations in data.

4. An online survey that generated primary quantitative data focussed on the value that BIDs attach to place branding and heritage. The pilot and final iterations of the online survey are provided in the appendices to this report (sections 4 and 5, pages 21 and 40).
5. A set of seventeen detailed case studies that captured detailed information on BIDs' approaches to place branding and the use of heritage. The case studies were informed by semi-structured depth interviews with each BID. The interview guide is provided in the appendices to this report (section 6, page 60).
6. A set of four interviews with stakeholders with expertise in place branding or heritage from the UK and further afield. These were used to validate and supplement the analysis produced through the other primary research stages and additional information has been added into the report where relevant. A list of interviewees and the interview guide are provided in the appendices to this report (section 7, page 62).
7. A detailed discussion with an audience of expert stakeholders to develop and refine the emerging project conclusions. The materials prepared to inform this discussion are provided in the appendices to this report (section 8, page 64).

### 1.3 Report structure

This report is structured into five further sections. In section 2, we present an extensive literature review which was undertaken at the commencement of the project. Section 3 contains quantitative analysis of BIDs engagement with heritage and place branding, firstly through the frequency with which heritage and place branding terms appear within BIDs' key documents (section 3.1) and secondly through an online survey completed by over 30% of BIDs (section 3.2). Section 4 collates the findings from each of the seventeen case studies across four thematic headings. Detailed write-ups of each case study are available separately. In section 5 we present the conclusions drawn from the study findings and then, in section 6, draw out key lessons for good practice that can be adopted more widely.

A detailed set of appendices are available as a separate document. These contain methodological detail that underpins the content of the report.

### 1.4 UK Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

BIDs were first established in England in 2005 following 2003 enabling legislation and in Scotland and Wales in 2008 - there are now over 200 BIDs in the UK. A Business Improvement District can be set up by the local authority, a business rate payer or a person or company whose purpose is to develop the Business Improvement District area, or that has an interest in the land in the area.

Local firms, landowners and organisations have therefore sought more localised powers and resources to promote their area, to undertake environmental improvements (e.g. urban design, public art, signage/wayfinding) and respond to problems of street crime, litter, and negative associations with their area. There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a Business Improvement District. The only requirement is that it should be something that is in addition to services provided by local authorities. BIDs arose in the context of the decline in local government capacity and resources to adequately deliver local services. In the application for BID status and levy, there is no cultural or environmental audit as such, so there is no requirement for the inclusion of heritage assets or the advantages that their inclusion might bring for the prospective BID area.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Summary

1. Definitions of Place Branding vary but derive from product branding and marketing, essentially a place brand is a perception that people have about a place and its reputation in the eyes of residents, businesses, investors, workers, visitors and the wider public
2. Place branding has also evolved from earlier (nineteenth/twentieth century) place promotion and boosterism and the 'art of selling places' in response to economic and social change and greater inter-city competition, using a place's heritage and historic associations
3. The concept of brand heritage has also been applied to place branding, reflecting a place's track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and a belief that its history is important
4. Heritage is acknowledged as an important element in place branding, but this is generally under-developed and not directly measured in place brand valuation
5. The place branding concept and therefore literature and case study evidence is applied at the level of the city and region (and occasionally country) rather than a specific place or locality – in practice place branding is often 'city branding'.
6. Identifying the role and contribution that heritage assets of various types make in place branding, is not explicit or generally quantified in research studies
7. Measuring and valuing place brands is undertaken through media/content analysis and perception studies of stakeholders views (e.g. experts, businesses, residents), as well as city ranking using proprietorial indices
8. Heritage and historic buildings and places are an increasingly popular and locally valued and often premium location for creative and other new businesses
9. The role and contribution that heritage assets make to place branding are under-researched and often implicit but not explicit in place branding strategies - this research therefore makes an important contribution to knowledge and practice in this field

### 2.2 Place

Place has been a long established concept which has recently found currency in planning and urban design as well as in cultural, tourism and economic spheres. In literature, terms such as 'sense of place', 'space and place'<sup>1</sup> and the contemporary practice of place making and place shaping<sup>2</sup>, has given renewed emphasis to the importance place can make to a sense of belonging and identity. It therefore represents a range of tangible and intangible elements – historic, symbolic, cultural, economic and physical – that together make a place special and distinctive, and therefore potentially competitive and successful from the perspective of those who live, work or come from a place, and those who have an external perspective, whether they have experienced it (e.g. as a visitor) or not, for example through reputation, media, word-of-mouth.

Jane Jacobs defined cities as places that produce wealth, and if they cannot do this, they cannot sustain the employment and quality of life needed to attract and retain people. One of the central paradoxes of our global age is that place matters – it has become more, not less important. Although writing from different disciplinary reference points, three influential thinkers have argued the importance of place in the understanding of urban economies and wealth creation, based on the integration of planning for place, culture and economy: Michael Porter on *Industry Clusters* and Inner City Competitiveness, where economic success and innovation depends on geographic concentrations of interconnected firms, suppliers and research infrastructure; Philip Kotler on *Place Marketing*, where the strategic marketing of place is key to building vigorous local economies requiring places to invest in public infrastructure and marketing distinctive local features and assets; and Richard Florida on the *Creative Class*, where creativity and culture are the new economic drivers and quality of place is a core competitive advantage because

business and investment follow people and people and talent require place distinctiveness, authenticity and amenities. This relationship between place, culture and economy is therefore one that many towns and cities – large and small – are seeking to optimise, as illustrated below (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Place branding through Place-Economy-Culture<sup>3</sup>**



Heritage can form an important part of all three of these Place-Culture-Economy dimensions, providing authenticity and distinctiveness in signifying the culture of place and adding value to its attraction and competitive advantage, as well as contributing to the local and cultural economy as a direct and indirect asset. As leading place brand advocate Robert Govers maintains:

**at the underlying level of place as brand, heritage potentially has a bigger role to play, in order to build a unique, authentic and compelling positioning. In order to be competitive, places are advised to build a brand that is befitting the sense of place, and to engage and develop meaningful initiatives that reflect identity. The essential role of heritage is obvious<sup>4</sup>.**

*However, despite this potential 'heritage essence', place branding literature, practice and measurement has not tended to consider the value or contribution of heritage assets to place brand values, with little in the way of heritage-based case studies or place branding examples below the level of the city and tourism destination marketing, as discussed below.*

### 2.3 Branding

Branding is a concept that represents a number of qualities that go together to reflect the identification with and value attached to a particular brand. Normally associated with specific products and the companies that create them, it is no surprise that the concept and process of branding originates with the emergence of product and corporate brands, and strategies to strengthen and reinforce the brand/brand value. Companies are therefore not just valued financially, but on the strength and future value of their brand and the brands associated with individual products or services, with best known 'super brands' including household names such as BA, Apple, Lego, Dyson and John Lewis. Place brands are also ranked internationally, commonly through 'top city/top town' brand league tables (e.g. Anholt, Saffron) and schemes such as the Academy of Urbanism's 'Great Place and Town' awards, which attempt to measure the best places to live, visit, do business and invest in. Creative cities have also been ranked since the early 1990s as part of World City positioning<sup>5</sup>, with the quantitative measurement of 'creative cities' now including the range of cultural assets and facilities (e.g. museums, libraries)<sup>6</sup> and the comparative strength of their creative industries/economy. These ranking exercises are used by city authorities, mayors and other agencies to justify investment in various cultural schemes and city marketing efforts, and this is therefore one indication of the value put on place branding at city/regional level.

Essentially, a brand and brand association is a sign of particular quality which precedes the actual purchase or experience of a product - or place. Brand identity therefore adds and realises value (e.g. through price, user loyalty) and influences choice in consumer and investor decision-making. However, we do not "use" space or our urban environment as "consumers" of branded products, but we experience the environment individually, productively (i.e. through work), culturally through memory and identities, and collectively. A place is therefore much more complex, socially and spatially constructed and contingent, than a product or even a corporate brand. There is also an observed disconnect between place (city) branding research and practice. Place brand management has emerged from boosterish city promotion, entrepreneurial urban governance and formalised city marketing, to a rhetorical city brand focus, whilst research has evolved from existing brand theories, the development of a critical analytical lens, to more progressive approaches including co-creation of place brands with stakeholders, including residents and businesses<sup>7</sup>.

## 2.4 Place branding

This combines these two concepts and brings together this idea of identity with a specific place, on the assumption that places can also be seen as brands<sup>8</sup>. The popularity and success of product branding and the advent of corporate branding and other marketing concepts, which in reality frees the application of marketing from the dependence on the physical product, are one of the main generators of the growing interest in place branding, combined with the competitive city agenda and the place-culture-economy strategy noted above. Moreover, place branding provides a far broader spectrum of research areas than those associated purely with conventional brand management, brand strategy and destination branding/marketing, as it has attracted interest from the fields of design, sociology, history, geography, economics, planning and political science.

In policy terms, place branding and place making have also emerged from particular concerns and initiatives in the 2000s around notions of local quality of life (QoL), liveability and design quality formalised through QoL and Design Quality indicators and 'Sustainable Communities' policy<sup>9</sup> (e.g. Agenda 21/LA21, Millennium Development goals). The recent government *Make a Plan, Make a Difference* Neighbourhood Planning campaign also encourages local participation and governance around the protection of valued amenities and assets. In this respect, place branding can be seen to be of value in promoting quality of life through strengthening place identity and pride, with positive social effects. This includes the benefits of the arts in social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal<sup>10</sup> which is supported by a wide number of studies into the social impact of the arts<sup>11</sup>, including heritage. For example, in surveys undertaken by CABE<sup>12</sup> and MORI<sup>13</sup> over 85% of respondents said they agreed that better quality buildings and public spaces improve the quality of people's lives and over 90% felt that it was important to keep historic features when trying to improve their town, with concern about the state of buildings often acting as a motivation for people to take much greater interest in their local heritage. In analysis of best practice in regeneration, historic buildings were found to act as focal points around which communities will rally and revive their sense of civic pride<sup>14</sup>. A high profile example is the regeneration of the King's Cross area - 134 acres including 20 historic (Georgian, Victorian) buildings and structures (e.g. gasholders) refurbished to provide 8mft<sup>2</sup> of floor space and cultural/education hubs, including Regents Quarter and Granary Square<sup>15</sup>.

## 2.5 Place promotion

As a precursor to place branding the promotion of places can be observed in earlier, nineteenth/ twentieth century urban policy and 'boosterism'<sup>16</sup>, with places seen as marketable commodities – both investment/industry and consumption oriented. This developed organically rather than being planned, often in response to economic change, restructuring, post-industrialisation etc. This process is therefore akin to rebranding existing places which is the norm in most scenarios, since: *they have personalities already moulded and constrained by history and preconceptions. But if branding is to work, they must be a common cause and consensus among stakeholders*<sup>17</sup>.

In many places, this legacy has been used positively in place branding for example in the case of historic towns and cities such as Cambridge and Bruges where architectural heritage and other historical artefacts have been used in competitive marketing and repositioning strategies (e.g. Bruges *European Capital of*

*Culture* 2002). One of the acknowledged starting points of academic attention to place marketing was Burgess's 1982 seminal study of the content of local authority promoted images in the UK, where she identified four main elements as being *centrality, dynamism, identity* and *quality of life*, whilst a later (1989) study in the Netherlands revealed that historical elements were being used widely in campaigns designed principally to attract external investment – official brochures and advertising stressed historical events and personalities associated with the place and local monuments<sup>18</sup>. It is clear therefore that place branding and promotion is not a recent phenomenon even if the branding concept and term has not explicitly been used.

## 2.6 City branding

Today, the competitive city discourse dominates the place branding literature<sup>19</sup>, with the vast majority of case study and empirical material (including various city/place branding indices) focused on city and regional branding<sup>20</sup>, rather than distinctive place branding, i.e. at a more local level. Examples of heritage based on regional branding include Northumberland/North East region and Essen-Ruhr in Germany, both using industrial heritage to develop heritage and creative clusters through place (re)branding<sup>21</sup>. This scale issue has implications for place branding as distinct from whole city branding with the latter more reliant upon marketing slogans, logos, straplines and stereotypical images and destination marketing techniques. Local place making on the other hand has looked to a combination of urban design, town centre and local economic development measures (including BIDs) and various forms of culture-led regeneration and cultural planning. This has included the identification of clusters – for example Nottingham's Lace Market which emerged organically from its historic textiles and architecture legacy to be an exemplar of a 'convivial ecology' of small independent cultural and creative firms, subsequently attracting larger firms to the area<sup>22</sup>. Other examples include Rope Walks in Liverpool, Little Germany in Bradford and Sheffield's Creative Industries Quarter. In Vienna the *museumquartier* is centred on the former imperial stables adjacent to museum quarter which has been transformed into a cultural and creative industries hub. In New York, a study of commercial gallery location and clusters found that art galleries tended to locate in areas with high level of heritage amenity such as historic districts and museums and other cultural institutions, even in lower rent neighbourhoods<sup>23</sup>. Whilst generally not explicitly using place branding, these area-based regeneration processes have employed similar strategies and pursue similar objectives to place branding and place making, so there will be lessons and parallels from the role of culture - and heritage in particular - in regeneration in considering the value of heritage in place branding and business improvement (see Table 2, page 20).

## 2.7 Place branding definition and theories

Definitions of place brand and place branding are numerous, but they originate from definitions of product branding and associated marketing concepts which have been initially linked to place promotion or 'selling places'<sup>24</sup>. A corporate brand is defined as: 'the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of an organisation's unique business model'<sup>25</sup>; whilst a brand is described as a 'multidimensional assortment of functional, emotional, relational and strategic elements that collectively generate a unique set of associations in the public mind'<sup>26</sup> – and here one could substitute 'place brand' for 'brand'. For the purposes of place branding, the leading UK academics on the subject describe the concept as:

**a multidimensional construct, consisting of functional, emotional, relational and strategic elements that collectively generate a unique set of associations with the place in the public mind<sup>27</sup>**

In other words, a place brand is 'a representation of identity, building a favourable internal and external image leading to place brand satisfaction and loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality and other favourable brand associations'<sup>28</sup>.

### 2.7.1 Place brand types

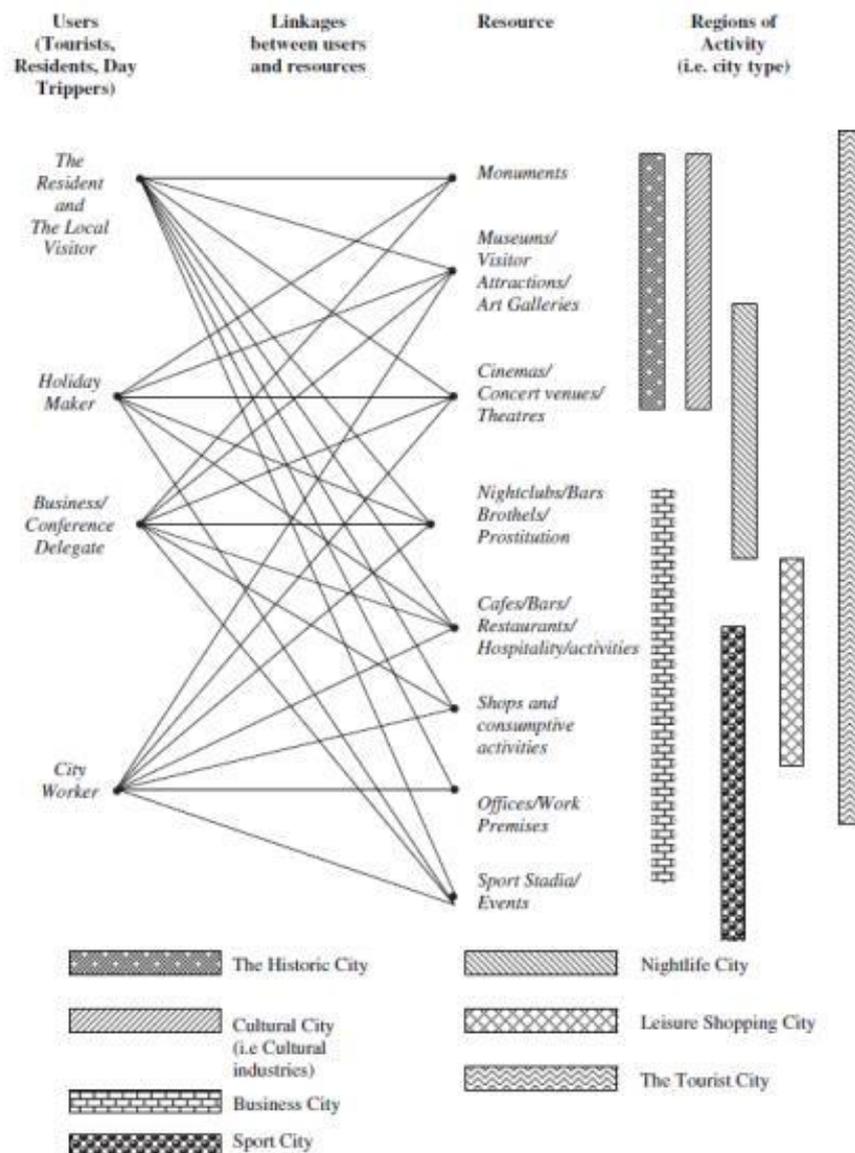
Literature on place branding also follows distinct types<sup>29</sup> although these increasingly overlap. These include *Place of Origin* branding with the usage of the place of origin in branding a product - using its qualities, images, history and associations, including of its residents. Examples include Silicon Valley, Hollywood, and in the past, agricultural production and industrial towns and cities such as Sheffield 'Steel

City' celebrated through its industrial museums and Ruskin connection. Industrial and rural heritage therefore forms part of this 'place of origin' brand approach. The use of prefixes/suffixes to promote a particular character or strength of a city's offer is evident today, for example: City of Sport, City of Culture<sup>30</sup>, Science City, Knowledge City Heritage City<sup>31</sup>, Smart City, and Creative City. These are seldom unique however with other cities using the same associations.

Ashworth & Page in their systematic review of urban tourism show the overlapping relationships within the city in terms of different users – residents, local visitors, tourists, business and workers – and to different attractions and cultural offerings, characterising these through concepts spatially such as the *historic city*, *cultural city*, *leisure city* etc. (see below).

This may be a useful way to visualise the relationships between different users and beneficiaries of a place through the range of amenities and cultural assets located there – and this could be developed in the case of a BID area, particularly the relationships between these different users and facilities. This blurring between the user/visitor types is important in the case of area-based branding since the presence of local/commuting workers has been found to benefit cultural facility usage, whilst visitors (e.g. business) increasingly combine their main trip purpose with other (cultural) activity<sup>32</sup>.

**Figure 2: Areas in the tourist city (Ashworth & Page, 2010: 1-15)**



*Destination* branding – the most common place branding type, focuses on the role of branding in the marketing of tourism destinations. This includes historic towns, heritage cities and heritage tourism generally - including heritage assets such as monuments and World Heritage Sites. In these cases heritage is a more explicit element in place branding and management, often used by Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) in their promotional and marketing materials and place strategies. Place branding here directly exploits heritage assets, images and historical associations particularly where designation e.g. UNESCO/ICOMOS World Heritage Site (WHS) and historical/ancient monument status infers a stamp of quality and authenticity. The heritage tourism literature in particular focuses on the relationship between hosts and guests – i.e. whose identity and history/heritage is being presented and interpreted - and the role of/impact on residents and governance in this 'branding' process<sup>33</sup>. It is interesting to note that in studies of local residents of urban world heritage sites such as Greenwich and Quebec, the historical value and pride in the built heritage ranked highly, but this value is more closely identified with local and national historic status rather than 'world' WHS status, which brings with it negative associations with tourism, commodification, price inflation, overcrowding and seasonality etc.<sup>34</sup>

*Culture/Entertainment* branding – this approach promotes the effects of cultural branding on the physical, economic and social environment of cities. Place branding in this case is associated with a range of cultural and entertainment zones, 'downtown' areas and quarters, night-life and festivals including designated City/Capitals of Culture under European and national award programmes (e.g. in the UK – Derry 2013, Hull 2017). The role of place branding was investigated for example in the case of Liverpool's Capital of Culture 2008 which found that place branding played an important role and driver in the sustainability of the city, facilitating economic growth, social harmony, employability and environmental sustainability and a stronger cultural brand<sup>35</sup>. A notable cultural activity associated with BIDs and town centre/Central Business District (CBD) area initiatives, is the use of festivals as a promotional and awareness-raising tool. These often locate in and around historic and heritage facilities and are used to both celebrate cultural assets and attract a wider visitor group - local and tourists - to the area. This includes the growth of late night festivals<sup>36</sup> for example in Chicago Loop BID's 'Looptopia' and Atlanta's 'Le Flash' festival held in the historic landmark area. In Ireland also, the Temple Bar, Dublin BID-type organisation organises several festivals including an annual late night event which includes local churches and museums.

*Integrated* branding - the emerging trend in place branding literature has been an approach to use branding to integrate, guide and focus place management. This is because place management depends upon changing the way places are perceived by specified user groups/beneficiaries, which in turn involves the creation of a recognisable place identity and the use of that identity to achieve other goals, such as investment, changes in user behaviour and perceptions, or generating political support.

However, a conclusion from an extensive analysis of the terminology used in place branding observed a clear gap between the term 'place' and its associated geographical units with no clear definition of the area types of place brands. Whilst 'destination' indicates tourism, the absence of 'town' as a possible place brand term was apparent as was the lack of case study research below the level of cities, regions and countries<sup>37</sup>. This may be a semantic issue, but place branding relies on words and images – actual, symbolic and constructed. The art of describing an area (chorography) has been defined as the genre devoted to place, which Rohl refers to as 'the representation of space and place'<sup>38</sup>. Place branding in particular manifests itself through various communications strategies, and three main types of place brand communication have been recognised in the literature<sup>39</sup>.

- i. Primary - including architecture, urban design, infrastructure (e.g. transport), museums and other physical attributes, and also the area/city's behaviour, e.g. by local government, neighbourhoods, residents and businesses (including creative/cultural)
- ii. Secondary - formal communication through advertising, public relations, graphic design, use of logos, slogans, social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs)
- iii. Tertiary - such as word-of-mouth reinforced by the media and a wide variety of users

In a survey of Dutch place marketing professionals for example, the study found that place brands are mostly communicated through their physical features, with visitors commonly attracted to new museums,

entertainment, shopping streets and monuments. Word-of-mouth and physical features and images were found to be more important than traditional advertising and logos/slogans<sup>40</sup> - although this aspect still tends to preoccupy city marketing campaigns and budgets.

A place brand is thus a perception that people have about a place and a place's reputation in the eyes of residents, businesses, investors, commuters, visitors and the wider public, all of which can have differing perceptions of a place and its offerings<sup>41</sup>. A place brand is therefore a complex, multi-dimensional construct with a changing reputation, so it is neither a simple message nor just part of a marketing strategy, but it is actually the perception in the recipient's mind about a place after encountering its varying facets through personal experience, media exposure, purchasing its products and services or receiving second-hand assessments through word of mouth. As Zenker maintains<sup>42</sup>, place identity influences the perception of the place's audience - and their historic and contemporary sources - and these are often reinforced through images, prior knowledge and land/city-scapes.

## 2.8 What is the value of place branding?

One of the roles of place branding is to ensure that a place gets the appreciation it deserves for its strengths and positive attributes and behaviours, and that the place brand gains appropriate recognition. Because of the multi-dimensional nature of place and the different interests in place promotion, development and management, the practice of place branding is closely associated with place-making activities, the broader concept of place shaping<sup>1</sup>, and operationally, the marketing and management of destinations. The terms 'place branding' and 'place marketing' are often used interchangeably, however the branding of a place is more inclusive than destination marketing whose main focus is on the attraction of tourists and visitors and is more likely to rely on advertising and promotion, whilst the branding of a place covers all the communication and *imagineering* - the implementing of creative ideas into practical form - of a particular place. This means that it is not only the attraction of visitors, but also the attraction of inward investment and businesses as well as the attraction of people and talent. Place branding can thus have just as much an inward or 'endogenous' focus as an outward focus, for example, building up pride and a vision among the businesses and the people who inhabit a place. Collectively, these internal and external brand associations combine to produce a value on the place encapsulated by the place brand and its constituent assets. Heritage is one specific asset of a place brand which contributes physical/environmental value, as well as economic (capital/ investment and property values, revenue) and social/quality of life benefits to an area.

Managing a place brand is generally not a task solely for the public sector, private sector or local government, but rather a collaborative undertaking by the place's key stakeholders including cultural organisations, businesses and landowners. As Govers & Go state, '**place branding can be used to mobilize value-adding partnerships and networks among public and private actors in order to build a coherent product offering, communicated in the right way in order to guarantee the emotion-laden place experience that consumers are seeking**'<sup>43</sup>. Branding a place is probably the most complicated form of branding due to the fact that it is neither owned nor controlled by a single entity. From destination marketing and tourism to business development for place brands, everyone living within the area 'owns' and influences the brand in one way or another and many of the major stakeholders may not agree on what to do or how to do it. This is one reason why the process and inclusion is so important in place branding, and where historic and heritage assets and identity may be of particular significance and value.

Place branding strategies and the practice of place-making can have a wide range of rationales and effects. They may inter-act or represent separate processes, and operate at different spatial scales – city-

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of place-shaping was used in the Inquiry into Local Government (HMSO, 2007). In this context place-shaping meant that local authorities should employ *strategic leadership* to promote the well-being of a local community and its citizens. This well-being should not be approached from just an economic or service delivery perspective, but it should also contain an element of a local sense of belonging and identity: 'the term place-shaping covers a wide range of local activity – indeed anything which affects the well-being of the local community. It will mean different things in different places and at different levels of local government, informed by local character and history, community needs and demands, and local politics and leadership' (p.174, my emphasis).

wide, region, district, quarter, site or neighbourhood and in some cases, routes or trails (for example, the Council of Europe's *Cultural Routes*). Place branding, and its spatial equivalents, city and nation branding, is commonly applied and an important element in destination marketing and management. Place branding can both draw upon and serve to integrate place making, shaping and destination marketing, with heritage assets a distinguishing place-making feature in this process, as illustrated diagrammatically below (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Place branding through Place Making, Place Shaping, Destination Marketing and Heritage**



### 2.8.1 Measuring place brands

As well as city brand league tables and indices<sup>2</sup>, research on the measurement of place brands tends to take a deconstruction approach effectively 'reverse engineering' a place (or more often a city) to determine which elements and factors go together and best represent the value and power of the place. These can include elements such as architecture, parks/green space, historic association and the image and 'feel' of a place. Given the marketing and branding oriented definitions noted above, place brand analysis uses a range of quantitative and qualitative surveys, network analysis and audits in this process. These tend to rely on surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders and experts with an opinion or experience of a place – residents, workers, visitors/tourists, businesses and those responsible for destination and place marketing and management. This is supported by secondary content or documentary analysis of images and media. For example Budapest carried out a communication audit which concluded that the city brand was too segmented, controversial and inconsistent, and lacking in leadership and ownership<sup>44</sup>. Branding indices ranked it highly on the 'Place' dimension, but poor for 'Presence', with the city underperforming based on what its assets would predict. There has been surprisingly little statistical analysis of place brands in relation to other indicators and performance - economic or social – or attempts to correlate with other factors such as cultural or heritage assets. More advanced place brand analysis attempts to weight factors, distinguishing between an assessment on each place brand association and the individual importance of that association.

<sup>2</sup> The best known are the Anholt-GMI City Brands Index and Saffron European City Brand Barometer, others include Monocle magazine's Top 25 Liveable Cities, EIU and Mercer's Quality of Life city rankings

In perhaps one of the highest profile examples of culture-led regeneration and place branding, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, successive studies have assessed the economic impact and positive financial return to the city from this long term and ongoing investment in the art museum franchise, with the growth of a cultural cluster in and around the museum, including existing historic and museum facilities<sup>45</sup>. In a longitudinal study on the value of this particular place brand<sup>46</sup>, a quantitative model was developed which looked at the relationship between visitor numbers (and spend) and international media coverage on the museum and other Bilbao/ regional news (both positive and negative) over a thirteen year period. This study calculated that for a 10% increase in news articles on the museum, visitor numbers increased by 1.7% and the place brand value of the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum was worth over €2m per year. Assessing media and press coverage and impact is therefore a key method used to both measure and to value a place brand. With the growth and importance of the internet, social media analysis is increasingly employed (e.g. Google Analytics) to measure the reach and impact of place and city brands, for example a study of Spanish cities and internet visibility concluded that cities with high visibility tended to have high levels of cultural heritage and therefore cultural/heritage tourism is likely to be a key factor in the brand image and value of these cities<sup>47</sup>.

## 2.9 Place making and heritage environments – a suitable element for place branding?

With a focus on the built historic environment and its suitability for place branding in this study, the branding literature characterises the built environment in a number of ways. Firstly as *place physics*<sup>48</sup> or as a *spatial picture*<sup>49</sup>. Ashworth & Voogd<sup>50</sup> proposed a *geographical marketing mix* to capture the whole entity of place-products whilst Kotler<sup>51</sup> adopts the marketing mix as suggested by general marketing, but distinguishes between four distinct strategies for place improvement that are the foundations for building a competitive advantage:

1. Design (place as character)
2. Infrastructure (place as fixed environment)
3. Basic services (place as service provider)
4. Attractions (place as entertainment and recreation).

Heritage assets can feature in both *Design* (1) and as *Attractions* (4), and in some cases, *Infrastructure* (2) – where facilities are heritage based (e.g. transport facilities, public spaces/ parks), and where *Services* (3) are located within heritage sites such as visitor information, retail, venue.

Identifying the role and contribution that heritage assets of various types make in place branding, is therefore not explicit or generally quantified in research studies. So that despite the physical imagery and landscapes strongly associated with city and place branding and destination marketing, it is interesting to note that in Zenker's<sup>52</sup> international analysis of 18 place branding studies (which included Bradford and Birmingham) – architecture, buildings and heritage spaces were largely absent in the brand elements cited. General brand elements such as built/physical environment/aspects, architecture/historical places, along with the general 'culture, history, public spaces' and infrastructure were cited in a few cases. Less tangible associations such as 'buzz', 'feel' and prior reputation featured highly in these place branding cases which were based on qualitative and quantitative surveys, case studies and mapping. Heritage therefore tends not to be an explicit element in place branding when measured experientially, but to serve as a backdrop, and general image and attractor of how a place is perceived and promoted. From his meta-analysis of these place brand studies Zenker produces a combination of place features or categories from these and prior assessments of key place brand elements. Heritage is associated (implied) with place characteristics, history and familiarity, as well as contributing to the quality of place (e.g. through amenity values, aesthetics, diversity, architecture/landscape) and therefore as an attractor to businesses, customers and residents - all key objectives of Business Improvement Districts (below).

**Table 1: Place features**

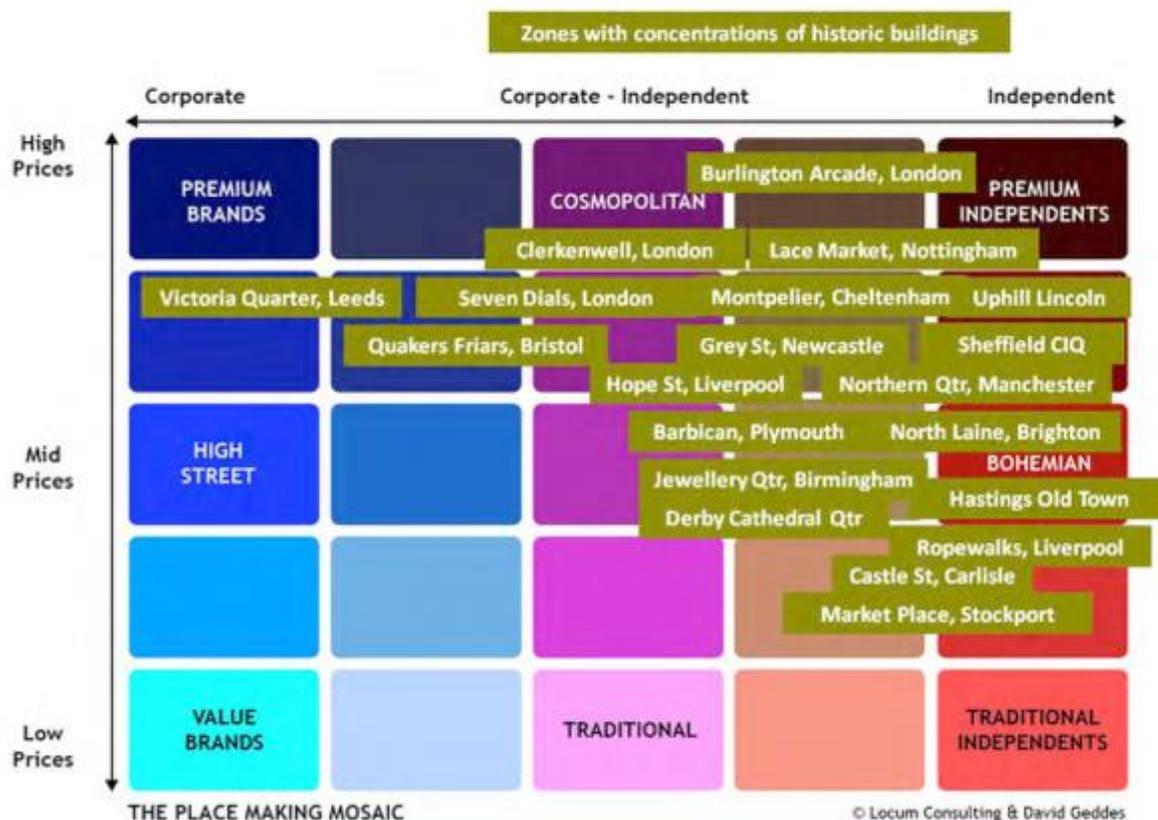
Anholt (2006)	Grabow et al (1995)	Zenker et al. (2009)	Combined place categories (Zenker 2011)
The place	Spatial picture	Nature and recreation	Place characteristics
The pulse	Cultural picture	Urbanity and diversity	Place inhabitants
The people	Business picture	Job chances	Place business
The potential		Cost efficiency	Place quality
The prerequisites	Historic picture		Place history
The presence			Place familiarity

The concept of *brand heritage* has also been applied to place branding<sup>53</sup> which can be related to its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and a belief that its history is important, defining brand heritage as: '**a set of brand associations grounded in the past and relevant to a particular city's present and future**'. The value of place brand heritage has acknowledged benefits through increased distinctiveness in positioning, adding depth, authenticity and credibility to the value proposition, generating pride and commitment among internal audiences<sup>54</sup>. This concept was tested in the case of Marseilles with an expert qualitative and online resident and visitor survey. A number of heritage associations emerged and were ranked in terms of their frequency including cultural and natural heritage features, buildings, sites/streets, historic personalities, products and atmospheres. Interestingly there was little differentiation in the responses between residents and visitors except where locals had a more complex and rich representation of the city's heritage, whilst tourists focused on more obvious iconic elements. In a separate study of city branding in two smaller Dutch cities, Amersfoort and Breda, both had developed rapidly over the previous 20 years from small provincial towns into medium-sized agglomerations. The growth in scale and the altered relationship to their surroundings formed a new context, in which the role of the historic centre as the one provider of identity is no longer sufficient. The city slogans indicate this change: *Amerfoort-City with a Heart*, and *Breda-City of Character* – the innermost identity versus the interface of communication with the surroundings. These slogans illustrate two controversial concepts of city branding: internal branding addresses the inhabitants and the inner-image of the place, whilst external branding focuses on the city's relations with the 'outside world'<sup>55</sup>. The significance for place branding is that the city can no longer feasibly represent local identities and heritage, whilst local area place branding can better encapsulate local heritage, whether town centre, urban village or 'quarter'.

For example, in their study into the *Impact of Historic Regeneration* carried out for English Heritage, Amion/Locum<sup>56</sup> developed a framework, the *Place Making Mosaic*, by which destination experiences, including the experiences offered by different parts of a town or city, can be plotted to demonstrate the way in which commercial and other types of activity of different type tends to 'cluster' in different parts of towns and cities and how historic environments impact on this clustering. BIDs as discussed below, are a particular type of cluster of economic and built environment/public realm activity and assets.

Their figure below (Figure 4) maps a range of some of England's best known historic environments in towns and cities, all of which have been the subject of investment in both the public realm and the buildings, onto the framework. This shows the niches they occupy – either predominantly occupied by independent businesses or by multiples at the top end of the market. They are very different in nature: London's Clerkenwell, for example, has a high concentration of architects, Nottingham's Lace Market has a concentration of professionals, Cheltenham's Montpellier is full of shops that specialise in interiors. They are, however, alike in that they have economic activity that is different from other parts of the town/city they are located in and is dominated by occupiers that are not commonly seen elsewhere, including distinctive heritage buildings and spaces.

Figure 4: Locations plotted on the Place Making Mosaic



In North America, some BIDs also coincide with historic districts, e.g. Milwaukee, which is home to more than 350 businesses and 400 residences and is a nationally listed historic district. The Historic Third Ward Association which is responsible for the BID has focused on developing a strategy for converting various manufacturing and warehousing structures into commercial and residential uses.

By mapping known and 'hidden' heritage assets in BID areas it would be feasible to assess the extent to which heritage features in these BID zones, set against the profile given to heritage in place branding and communication. One likely finding is that whilst BIDs contain heritage assets, these are not generally made explicit in the BID branding, operation and membership.

These scenarios and the relative integration of heritage and place branding in BID (or equivalent) areas can therefore be tested through research into selected BIDs:

- Mapping of BID areas and heritage assets data
- Content analysis of BID web sites and promotion materials (e.g. brochures, reports)
- Survey/interviews with selected BID organisations and associations (ATCM, British BIDs)
- Interviews with policy and heritage agencies (e.g. HLF, DCLG BID unit, LGA)
- Workshop/focus group(s) with place branding specialists

### 2.9.1 Creative Spaces

The value of place branding was particularly evident from an international study of creative space policies and strategies in cities around the world carried out for Creative London (LDA) and Metro Toronto/Ontario Province<sup>57</sup>. This influential study analysed cultural and creative industry strategies and policies adopted by over 130 towns and cities in terms of 'creative spaces'. The prime rationales for public investment and policy formation were firstly economic development/job creation, followed by infrastructure/regeneration wherein place branding was a common strategy adopted for the delivery of these economic and regeneration policies. Branding as an explicit strategy was also ranked highly within

creative space policies, with heritage and historic branding found to be of particular value to towns and smaller cities. Place branding is therefore a key element in economic development linked to the creative economy and other growth sectors, with creative quarters increasingly identified as both symbolic and economic clusters, often based around heritage assets<sup>58</sup>.

The potential symbolic and economic value of former industrial and municipal heritage buildings is therefore well recognised<sup>59</sup>. They can provide attractive and interesting spaces to accommodate creative and cultural activity—both exhibition/entertainment and production-based. As Jane Jacobs argued: 'old ideas can sometimes use new buildings.. new ideas must use old buildings' (a reference used more recently by the HLF<sup>60</sup>). Jacobs herself had emigrated from the USA to Toronto in the late-1960s and her influence in the promotion of mixed use areas and development linked to architectural conservation is evident in historic districts and subsequent BIA projects in this city. Two examples of cultural/creative-led historic districts include the Distillery and Liberty Village areas (see the appendices to this report, [section 1.2 page 4]).

A contemporary example of a key heritage building transforming the local economy and environment is Hornsey Town Hall in Crouch End, north London. This Grade II\* listed building built in 1935 as the district town hall, has been empty for over a decade, but following a temporary licence, whilst redevelopment is considered, to run the space as an arts centre and workspace, over 100 small businesses now occupy various offices plus workshops for dance, architecture studios, children's and other events including heritage tours of the building. One of largest community arts festivals in the country is now centred on this heritage building and square. This site was recently designated as an Asset of Community Value by the local authority and has now transformed and diversified the local economy as the main business and cultural hub for this urban village, otherwise known as a retail and residential area. A putative BID through the local Neighbourhood Forum has taken on local planning and business development role, using this heritage facility as its base.

The importance of heritage is also apparent through studies of the property value uplift associated with businesses located in heritage buildings and conservation areas. For example, in 2011, Colliers International were commissioned by English Heritage to undertake a study looking at ways to encourage investment in heritage assets<sup>61</sup>. One of the objectives of this exercise was to better understand how such buildings perform as investment properties. Through an in-depth analysis of the Investment Property Database (IPD) between 1980 and 2011, the research found that listed buildings can represent a good commercial investment:

- Listed commercial property generated a higher level of total return than commercial property overall for 3, 5, 10 and 30 year time periods
- Listed office space generated a higher level of total return than office property overall for three, five, ten and thirty year time periods
- Listed properties used for industrial purposes have generated a higher level of total return than properties used for industrial purposes overall for 3, 5, 10 and 30 year time periods

The British Property Federation are looking at updating this study, and are firmly of the view that when sustainably and carefully incorporated into schemes, heritage assets can make a significant economic and social contribution to a locality<sup>62</sup>.

The impact of the regeneration of historic assets on business location decisions was also evaluated in a study of five UK case study areas. The study found that 25% of businesses surveyed agreed that the heritage setting was an important factor in the decision to locate there (particularly smaller, independent firms), ranking this equally with road access<sup>63</sup>. It was estimated in 2011 there were 138,000 UK businesses located in listed buildings, accounting for £4.7 billion in economic output and 1.4 million jobs (3.5% of UK economic output and 5% of all UK employment)<sup>64</sup>. Furthermore, as successive studies of 'creative class' growth and economic impacts from arts & culture have shown, amenity values - particularly from cultural and natural heritage - rank highly in both quality of life/place and competitiveness studies<sup>65</sup>. This is of particular significance given the property and business interests normally associated with the establishment of Business Improvement Districts and the lead by property owners and occupants in BID formation and funding.

## 2.9.2 Culture and Regeneration – Heritage and Place branding

In the UK review of the evidence of culture's contribution to regeneration: 'Culture at the Heart of Regeneration'<sup>66</sup>, three distinct approaches were highlighted from the literature, and from evidence and policy. This distinction was made between the extent to which culture was central or marginal to the regeneration and planning process, with three key impact areas evident from culture's inclusion in regeneration: 'Economic, Social and Environment/Physical (and latterly, Cultural). These also correspond with the 'four pillars' of sustainable development<sup>67</sup>. Adapting this to the role that heritage plays in place branding - with heritage a sub-set of culture; and place branding a feature and outcome from regeneration - three types of interaction can be seen, with weaker and stronger strategic relationships between the two elements in place branding.

**Table 2: Heritage and Place Branding in BIDs**

Heritage relationship to Place branding	Examples	BID implications
<p><b>Heritage <i>in</i> Place branding</b></p> <p>In this model, heritage activity is not fully integrated at the strategic development or planning stage of area-based development (i.e. regeneration, place making and branding) often because the responsibilities for heritage facilities and provision and for place branding sit within different departments or because there is no 'champion'. Although introduced at a later stage of local area and business development, such interventions can make a positive impact on the regeneration/place branding process, enhancing the facilities and services that were initially planned</p>	<p>The heritage intervention is often small-scale, such as heritage interpretation, plaques, or local history museum. In some cases, where no planned provision has been made, residents - individuals or businesses - and cultural organisations, may respond to the vacuum and make their own interventions, for example recording the history of their area, organising a heritage-based festival events (e.g. Little Germany Festival, Bradford).</p>	<p>Heritage assets are not explicit or evident in BID promotion, marketing (e.g. web site) or programming; heritage (e.g. architecture, monuments, museums) is a benign backdrop and heritage organisations are not members of the BID company. Heritage is not seen as being part of the local economy/business ecosystem</p>
<p><b>Heritage-led Place branding</b></p> <p>In this model, heritage activity and assets are seen as one of the main catalysts of place branding and destination marketing through icons or heritage sites<sup>68</sup>. The activity/heritage asset is likely to have a high public/physical profile and frequently cited as the sign or symbol of rebranding or place making.</p>	<p>The activity might be the renovation or repurposing of a heritage building or site /landscape for public or business use (e.g. Baltic, Gateshead; Tate Modern in London Bankside - a BID area); or the reclamation/redesign of open space (e.g. Garden Festivals, Public Squares); or the introduction of a programme of activity which is then used to rebrand a place, for example, European or national City/Capital of Culture.</p>	<p>Heritage assets feature in images (e.g. web site, brochures) and as visitor attractions; but heritage organisations are not involved in BID management or planning, or generally in local economic development and BID services.</p>
<p><b>Place branding <i>through</i> Heritage</b></p> <p>In this model, heritage activity and assets are more fully integrated into an area strategy alongside other activities in the environmental, social and economic sphere. This more integrated model also benefits from the 'cultural planning' approach to place making and branding, i.e. where heritage is embedded and prioritised in mainstream urban/economic planning and policy-making and therefore in governance and decision-making. In this case heritage organisations would be expected to be key players in BID development and operation (and in equivalent local area initiatives, e.g. Community Neighbourhood Forums, LETs), contributing to and benefiting from the BID strategy and economic impacts.</p>	<p>Examples include historic towns and World Heritage Sites (e.g. Bath, Greenwich) where heritage is incorporated with area/urban policy, planning, conservation and resourcing including tourism, economic/business development and place marketing and management.</p>	<p>Heritage organisations and assets are included in planning and development of the BID and place branding, playing an active role in local services and delivery including as venues for events and facilities. Heritage is an explicit element in brand value and local place brand association and used in image and place communication and marketing.</p>

### 2.10 Conclusion

This review of literature and evidence on place branding and its value in place making and marketing confirms that the concept, process and practice of place branding is widely accepted, if not applied or defined consistently.

Place branding is primarily undertaken by advertising and marketing agencies and by destination management organisations particularly in the tourism field. However, case studies and academic literature tends to focus on city branding and tourism destinations rather than more localised place brand examples. This practice does however include specialist agencies and consultancies who work with BID organisations to help brand and support their campaigns and image<sup>3</sup>.

Place branding is also an implied element and outcome from area-based regeneration and place-making strategies, particularly where there is a 'competitive city' imperative and where places need to radically change their image and perception e.g. Guggenheim-Bilbao effect.

The value of place branding is generally measured in terms of the impact of its profile and 'name' relative to other cities/places - particularly with those who are seen to be competitors e.g. for visitors, business/trade. This is assessed through media coverage and content analysis, as well as brand indices in the case of cities/larger towns, and also through visitor and business satisfaction and place-recognition surveys. The strength of place brand is also measured in terms of visitor numbers (and income), although there is less hard evidence of this in terms of correlating brand value with activity levels and economic value.

Heritage in various forms – tangible, (built environment, sites, landscape) and intangible (history, identity, festivals and cultural associations) is recognised by place branding experts as an important element in place branding and in the impact and value it can generate. Heritage assets are less explicit in place brand strategies and evidence in part due to the methods of measuring place brands, which tend to use either general features or the 'feel' of a place in the eyes of users /beneficiaries.

Heritage assets, as evidenced from previous studies, play an important and increasing role in the growth of cultural and creative clusters and hubs - as sought-after facilities for workspace, cultural exchange and businesses, as well as amenities for locals and visitors. Several BIDs are located in historic districts and include key heritage sites.

Heritage is therefore both a significant element in place branding and in the place brand values which benefit from the historic associations, built environment and distinctiveness which together make up a sense of place.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the Central Management Solutions company has undertaken several marketing and branding campaigns for BIDs such as Southend (*You're On-Sea*); Ipswich (*East Anglia's Waterfront Centre*) and Ilford (*A Sense of Community*) <http://centralmanagementsolutions.co.uk>

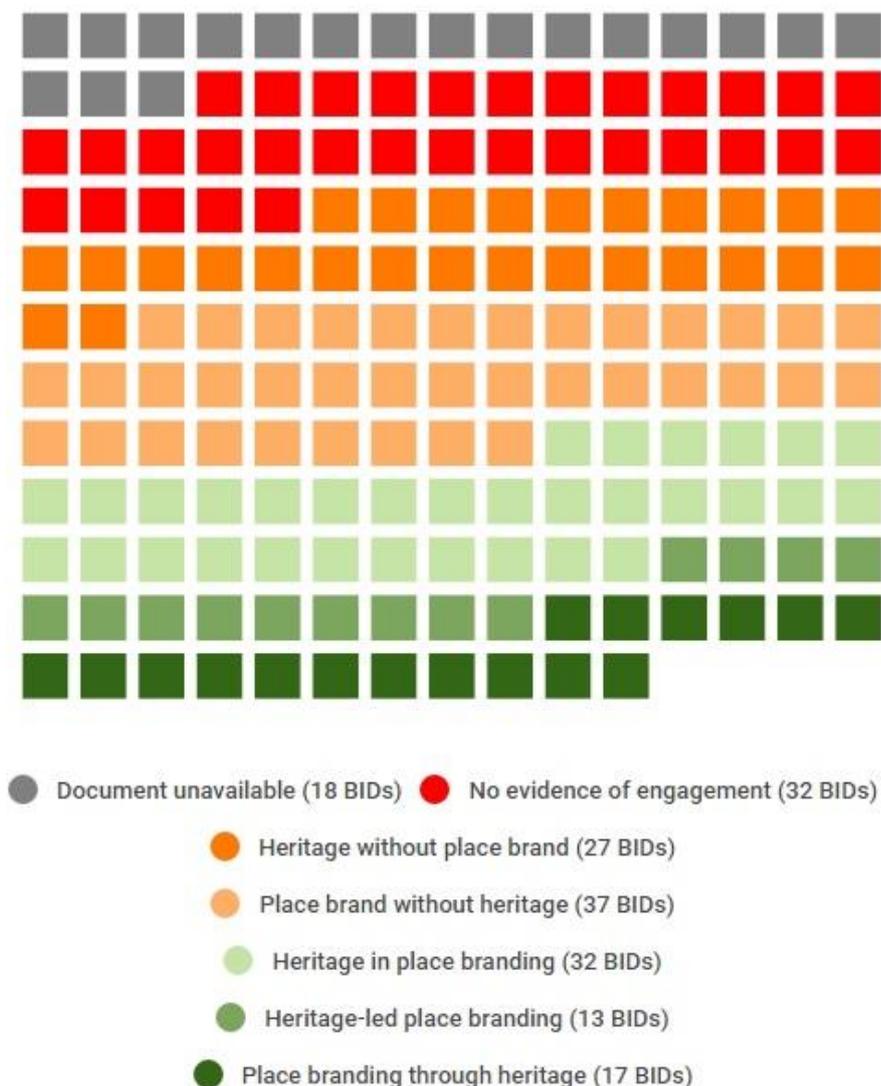
### 3. Quantitative data analysis

The section brings together two separate elements of quantitative analysis. The first (section 3.1) is a quantification of the presence of heritage and place branding keywords in key documents published by BIDs in England. This provides a general indication of the extent to which BIDs are engaged in heritage and place branding. The second (section 3.2) presents data gathered through an online survey to which BIDs responded; these primary data enable a more focussed analysis of BIDs' current attitudes towards heritage and place branding

#### 3.1 Keyword analysis and classification

The project attempted to access key documents for each of the 176 BIDs identified in England. It succeeded in accessing 158 in an appropriate format. A list of keywords associated, separately, with 'place branding' and 'heritage' was agreed and the presence of the keywords within the key documents informed a classification of the 158 BIDs by the apparent intensity of their involvement with place branding and/or heritage. Some search terms were prioritised ahead of others. This process is described in detail in the appendices to this report (section 3.1, page 10). The distribution and count of BIDs across each category is presented in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Allocation of BIDs by category (one block = one BID)**



TBR ref: (W2/S3)

Adopting these classifications provided structure to the subsequent research stages; for example, online survey responses could be disaggregated by classification to determine whether those BID areas that appeared more engaged with place branding and/or heritage in their key document reflected this in their survey responses. The classifications have been constructed to add value through providing structure to the report, but should not constrain alternative approaches to analysis. The keywords were identified through an automated process and, as a consequence, lacked a contextual assessment of how they were used within the document.

The analysis supports the following key findings:

- Almost two-fifths (39%) of active BID areas were found to feature prominent references to both heritage **and** place branding within their key document
- Over half (56%) of active BID areas were found to feature prominent references to heritage with or without place branding.
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of active BID areas were found to feature prominent references to place branding with or without heritage.
- One fifth (20%) of active BID areas were found not to feature prominent references to either place branding or heritage.

More detailed analysis of the presence of individual keywords and the limitations of this approach are provided in the appendices (section 3.2, page 16).

### 3.2 Online survey

This section summarises the key findings of an online survey; data were collected from 56 of the 176 identified BID areas, representing a response rate of 31.8%. This process is described in detail in the appendices to this report (section 3.3, page 19). The online survey represented a valuable opportunity to capture primary quantitative data.

#### 3.2.1 BID areas' objectives and activities

BID areas were asked to select and rank from a list of ten, objectives that they felt were important to them. The format of the question allowed BID areas to select as many or as few of the ten as they felt were relevant. Data generated demonstrated that the most commonly identified objectives appearing within the top three were to: increase visitor numbers, promote the BID area, and increase footfall from local residents.

Figure 6 presents the cumulative total of how often each objective was selected by BID areas in their top three (distinguished by classification [see Table 4 provided in the appendices, page 16]). The three most frequently selected objectives are all aspects/outcomes of place branding. This suggests that, in general, BID areas attach importance to place branding activities, even if these may not currently be sufficiently coordinated to be classified as a place branding.

The six most frequently selected objectives were chosen by BID areas allocated to various classifications. However, the seventh and eighth objectives were selected either exclusively (delivering high profile capital projects) or mostly (developing the identity of your BID area, 75%) by BID areas allocated to green classifications (indicating that their key document exhibited a high level of engagement both with place branding and with heritage). These objectives are less tangible than many of the others and suggest that the BID areas that selected these objectives are willing to prioritise more ambitious activities. Although BID areas in their second term were overrepresented amongst those prioritising the delivery of high profile capital projects, the correlation between BID areas' maturity and their likelihood to engage in more ambitious activities was weaker than subsequently observed during qualitative research stages.

**Figure 6: Objectives selected in top three most important**

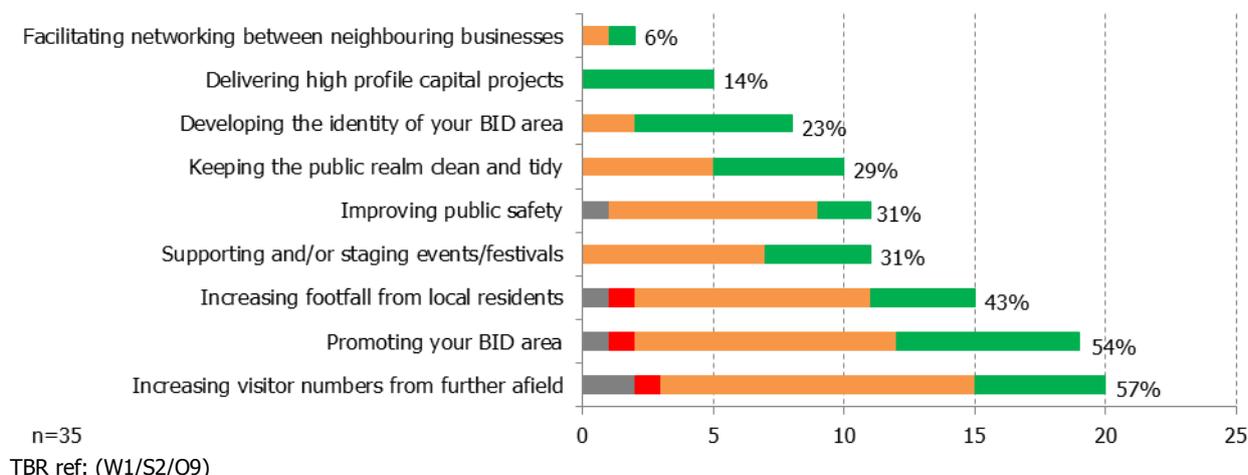
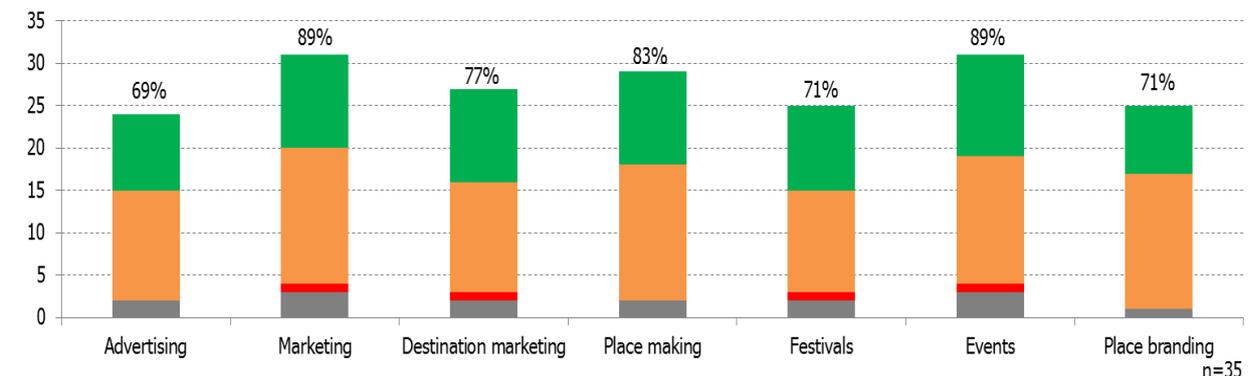


Figure 7 shows that, across the seven activities that they were asked about a majority of BIDs reported that they currently engaged in, with marginally higher frequencies for marketing and events. Almost half (49%) of BIDs reported that they engaged in every one of the seven activities. Place making was selected by a slightly greater proportion of BIDs (83%) than place branding (71%). This perhaps reflects the notion that place making is a more established term.

**Figure 7: Activities BIDs are actively engaged in delivering**



TBR ref: (W1/S2/Q10)

### 3.2.2 Attitudes towards, and involvement with, place branding

BIDs were asked to select, from a list of fourteen, which words they associated with place branding. The frequency with which each word was selected is presented as a word cloud in Figure 8. Although words that would indicate circumspection around place branding (such as 'jargon' and 'novelty') were presented as options, BIDs clearly favoured words that embraced place branding as a concept (such as 'opportunity', 'exciting', and 'beneficial').

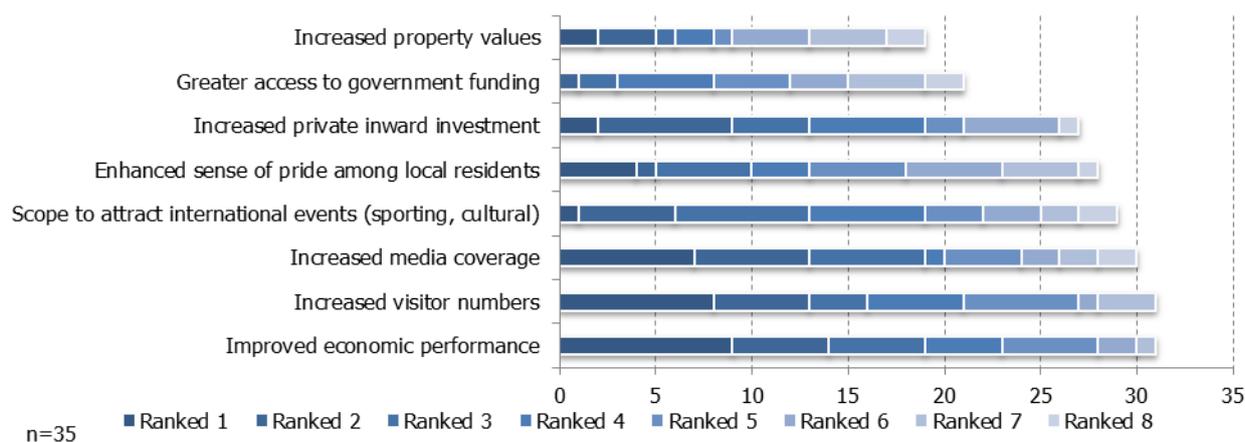
**Figure 8: Words BIDs associated with place branding**



TBR ref: (W1/S3/Q14)

Figure 9 indicates that BIDs recognised the potential for strong place brands to achieve a range of desirable outcomes. Increased visitor numbers, improved economic performance, and increased media profile were the three outcomes most frequently selected. These three outcomes were also the three most frequently selected as the most important benefit accrued by places with strong place brands. These benefits align well with the principal objectives previously identified by BIDs (Figure 6, page 24).

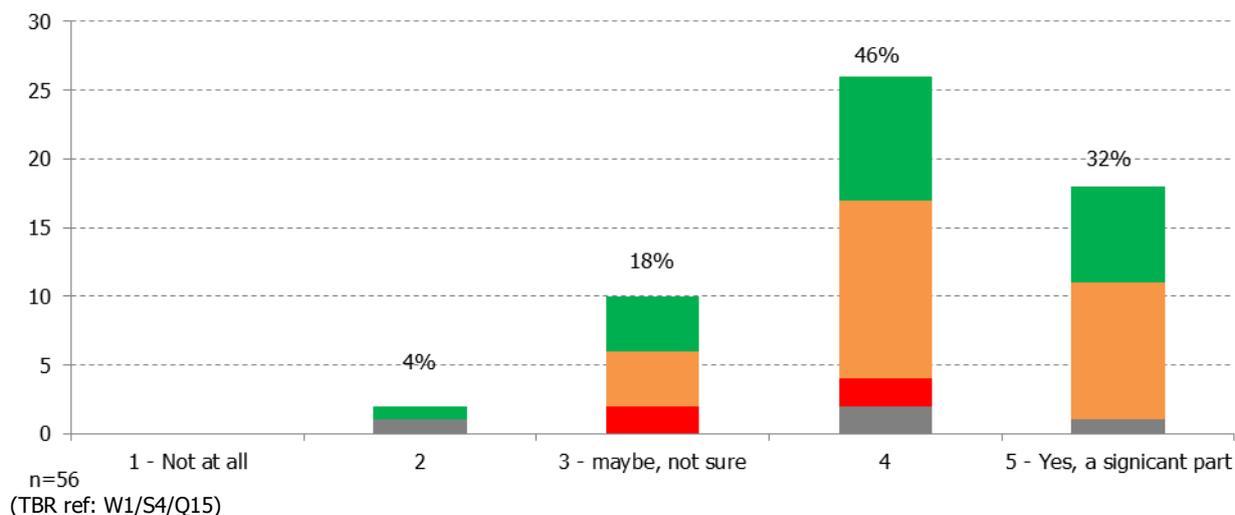
**Figure 9: Which benefits do you expect to accrue to places with strong brands?**



TBR ref: (W1/S3/Q13)

Of the 56 BIDs asked, 44 (79%) considered place branding to be part of their responsibilities, rating it 4 or 5 out of 5. A further ten (18%) answered 3 – maybe or not sure. Just two BIDs reported that they did not believe place branding to be part of their responsibilities. Revisiting data presented in Figure 7 (page 24), 71% of BIDs are currently actively engaged in place branding. This suggests that a handful of BIDs that see place branding as part of their responsibilities are not currently engaged in place branding.

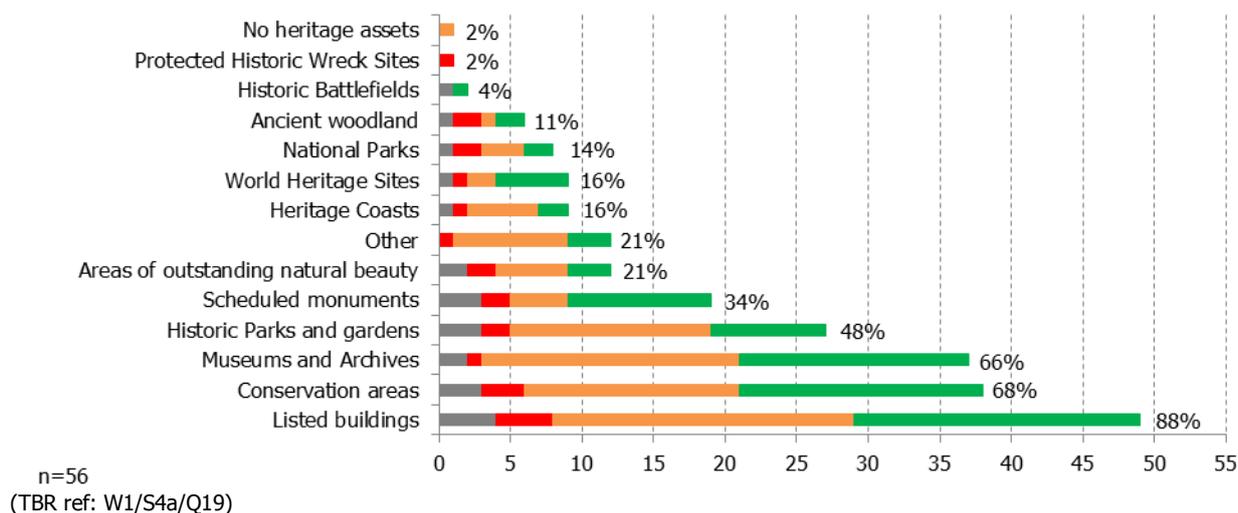
**Figure 10: Do you consider place branding to be part of BID's responsibilities?**



**3.2.3 Awareness and use of heritage**

All except one of the BIDs that completed the survey identified at least one heritage asset within their BID area. Listed buildings were the most frequently identified heritage asset (by 88% of respondents), followed by conservation areas (68%), and museums and archives (66%). The concentration of BIDs in urban areas is likely to influence the profile of heritage assets that were identified by the BIDs. The list that respondents were invited to select from was dominated by physical heritage assets; the additions made by BIDs following the selection of the 'other' option included "industrial heritage", "maritime heritage", and "spa heritage".

**Figure 11: Heritage assets present in BID areas**



Whilst the majority of BIDs were aware of and used their heritage assets in some way, Figure 12 demonstrates that the most commonly reported use was to provide images for corporate materials, although their use as part of strategic planning was stated by less than one third of respondents. Further popular uses of heritage were as a means of attracting people to a place.

**Figure 12: How local heritage assets are used by BIDs**

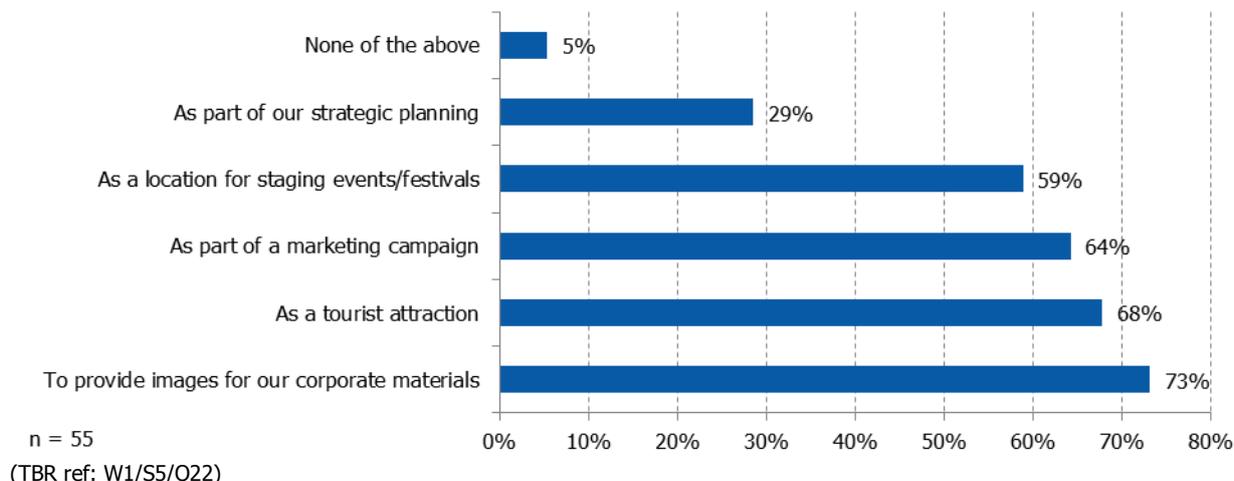
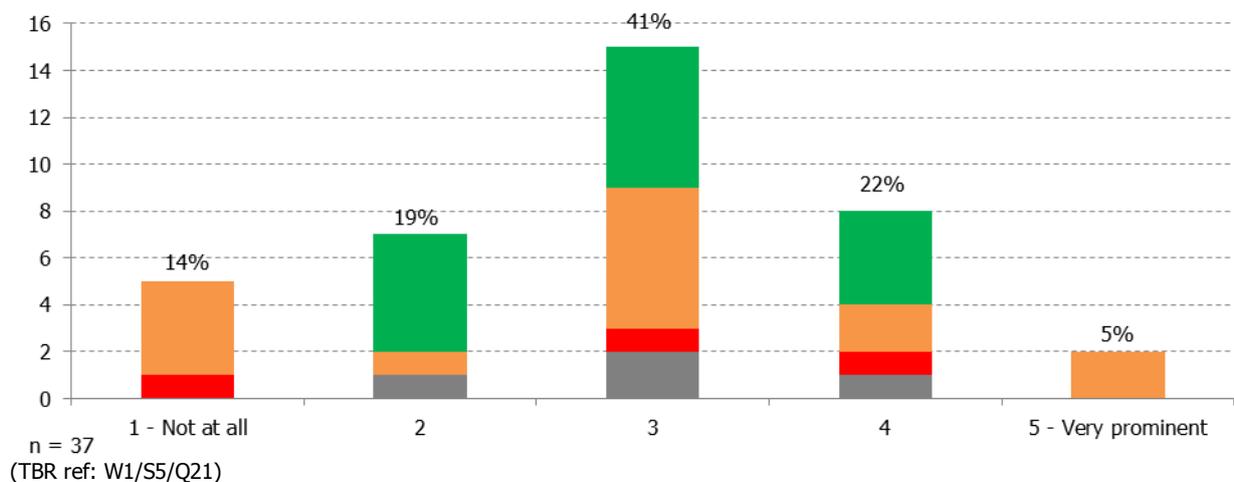


Figure 13 presents BIDs’ views of how prominent they believe heritage to be within their current business plans. Earlier analysis has classified the BIDs represented by the green bars as making the greatest use of heritage within their business plans. However, Figure 13 suggests that BIDs in these classifications are cautious in their assessment of how they use heritage, with all responses from this classification coalescing towards a moderate assessment (i.e. between 2 and 4 out of 5).

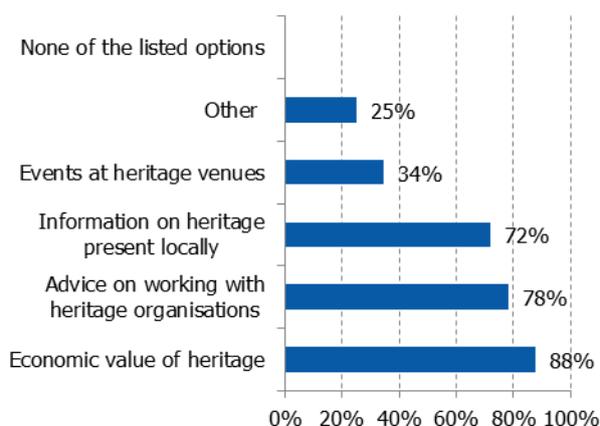
**Figure 13: The prominence of heritage within BIDs’ business plans**



**3.2.3.1 Additional heritage information desired by BIDs**

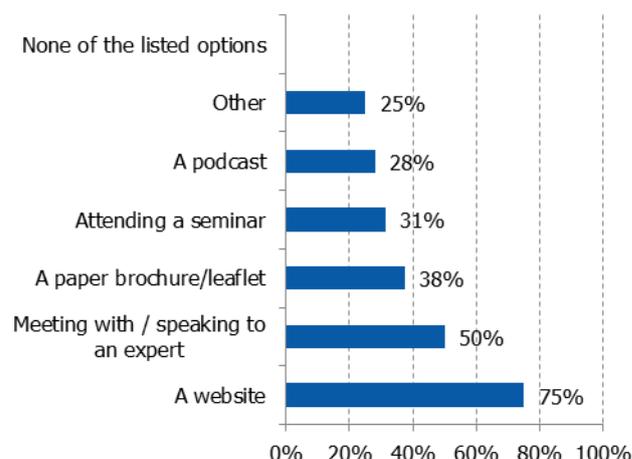
57% of surveyed BIDs said that they would like to find out more about heritage in their local area. Of those, the type of information most frequently selected as being of interest was the economic value of heritage (Figure 14). The format in which the BIDs interested in finding out more about local heritage would most welcome receiving this information was by accessing a website (Figure 15).

**Figure 14: Heritage information in which BIDs are most interested**



(TBR ref: W1/S10/Q36)

**Figure 15: Means through which BIDs would like to access information**

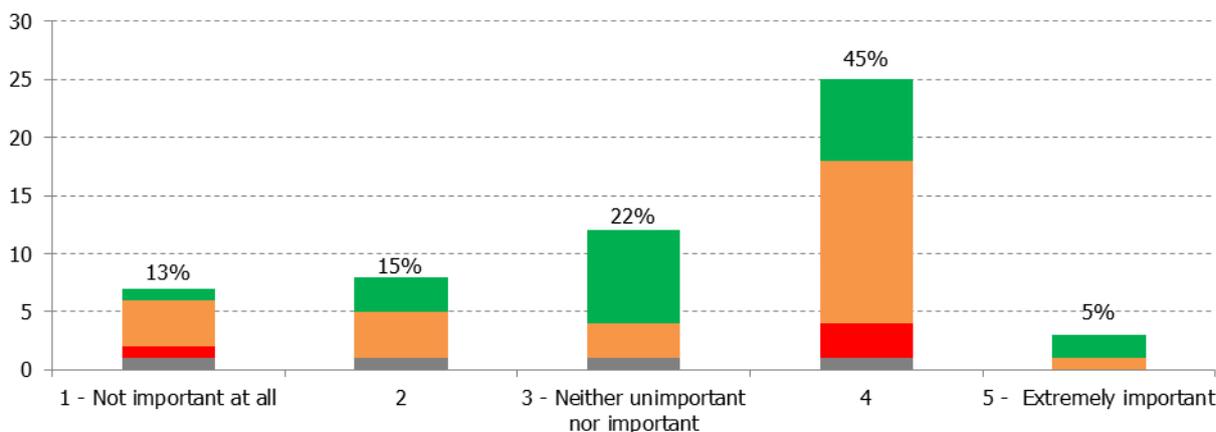


(TBR ref: W1/S10/Q35)

### 3.2.4 Estimating the importance of heritage

Half of BIDs (51%) rated heritage assets as being important (either 4 or 5 out of 5) to achieving their objectives. A further 22% answered 3 – neither unimportant nor important out of 5. This reinforces the view that many BIDs understand the value of heritage and can visualise how heritage assets can help them achieve their objectives (as set out in Figure 6, page 24).

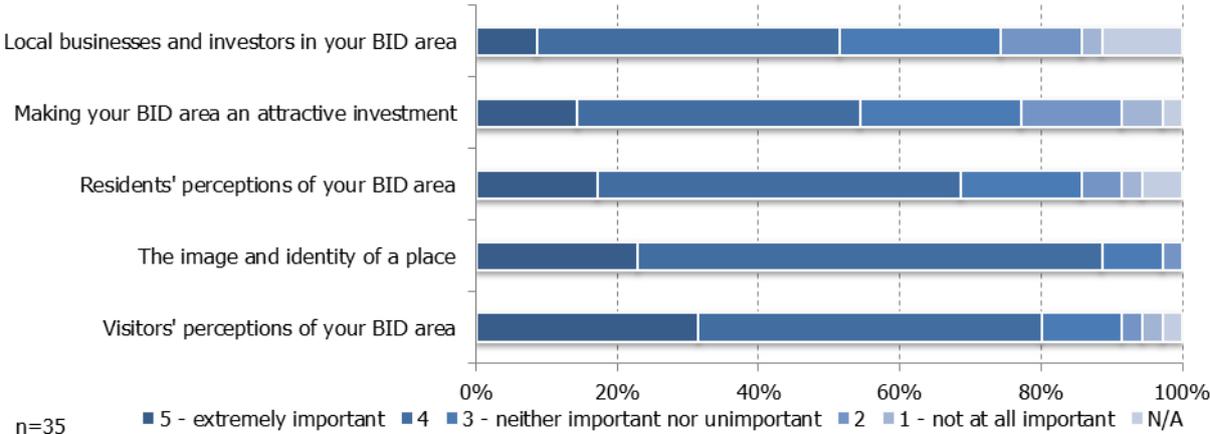
**Figure 16: The importance of local heritage assets to BIDs achieving their objectives**



n=56  
(TBR ref: W1/S9/Q32)

When asked about the importance of heritage to a selection of five other considerations, BIDs reported that heritage was more important to issues of image and identity ahead of investment. Figure 17 demonstrates that 31% of respondents felt that heritage was extremely important (and a further 49% felt it important) to visitors’ perceptions of their BID area, for example. Heritage was seen as more important to visitors’ perceptions than residents’ perceptions; this might be because residents have access to a wider range of information sources on which to base their perceptions, whereas heritage can cut through to visitors with greater immediacy.

Figure 17: The importance of heritage to various considerations



(TBR ref: W1/S6/Q24)

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## 4. Case studies

This section synthesises the BIDs' responses to four key themes explored through the case studies. The case study interviews generated rich qualitative data that complement the quantitative insight provided by the online survey. Each of the seventeen case studies is presented individually as separate documents but sections 4.1 to 4.4 present a summary of the key findings. The commentary is not universally applicable across all seventeen BIDs (some BIDs' involvement in place branding remains embryonic) but represents a general consensus across those studied.

### 4.1 BIDs' approach to and role within place branding

The process by which BIDs have become involved in place branding varied from place to place. Some BIDs reported having been the driving force behind the development of a place brand, others were involved in partnerships that had developed local place brands collaboratively, and some reported having inherited elements of a place brand (of varying quality) that they have taken forward unilaterally. The budget reductions imposed on local authorities across England in recent years have often led to reduced local capacity to engage in place making. In some instances, local authorities have withdrawn from this activity completely, which has intensified the need for BIDs to exist and engage with this.

BIDs were generally comfortable with the concept and terminology of place branding and provided a clear articulation of what components a place brand might be expected to include alongside the objectives that it might realistically expect to achieve. BIDs exhibited a clear understanding of the distinction between destination marketing and place branding. BIDs recognised that while the visitor economy was important, an effective place brand was as much about engaging and enthusing local residents as it was attracting visitors to the area. In some instances this would involve the restoration of pride and/or confidence within local communities.

BIDs are business-led representative bodies who must secure a mandate from rate-payers in their local area once every five years. This model focusses BIDs towards investing their resources on activities that have a demonstrably positive impact upon businesses in their area. There are examples where BIDs consider themselves to be engaged in a programme of activities that would be classified as place branding, but where they hesitate from using the term place branding because local businesses find it too abstract. When this is the case, BIDs are inclined to promote the activities individually because they believe that this approach achieves greater traction with local businesses.

### 4.2 BIDs' use of heritage within place branding

BIDs consistently displayed a sophisticated appreciation of local heritage. They were rarely inclined to limit their engagement with heritage to the most prominent 'household name' assets or to the most physical, visible heritage assets. In some cases, these heritage assets had an individual brand that was extremely well established and consequently expressed a benign disinterest in the development of a collective place brand.

BIDs were typically drawn towards history as a primary frame of heritage reference. This extended beyond buildings to encompass events, folklore, historical figures (e.g. Oscar Wilde, Reading; Charles Darwin, Shrewsbury), industry, work, and social movements. This focus on history as fundamental to heritage could well reflect a perception held by the general public. Although the BIDs engaged through the case studies were generally enthusiastic about heritage, they occasionally expressed concern that the dominance of history could inhibit attempts to introduce a more contemporary place brand. BIDs *were* able to draw upon more contemporary examples of heritage engagement, but these were relatively isolated. BIDs were keen to embrace heritage from a variety of perspectives, from the melancholy of medieval battles to the playful iconography of a giant branded deckchair.

Local heritage events provided a valuable means through which BIDs felt comfortable first engaging with heritage. Their visibility and appeal to the local community gave BIDs the confidence to engage. Having initiated a positive relationship with heritage, BIDs sometimes turn their attention to more ambitious and expansive projects. These can involve leveraging financial support from various sources, including

government grants. Given their imperative to seek re-election, BIDs are innately keen to get involved in projects that are appreciated by rate-paying businesses.

### 4.3 BIDs' interpretation of the benefits and value of place branding and heritage

BIDs were acutely aware of the need to evidence the benefits and value of all of the activities in which they were engaged or had invested in. Implicit within this was the sense that investing in heritage and place branding needs to achieve a clear (and ideally quantifiable) impact for local businesses. BIDs were familiar with traditional metrics, such as footfall monitors, and suggested that they would keenly embrace a more sophisticated metric capable of quantifying the value of heritage and/or place branding. Despite referencing some interesting esoteric techniques, the BIDs did not recount any scalable proposals that could be rolled out.

Integrating heritage into a place brand presents a valuable opportunity to differentiate one place from another. BIDs recognised this and saw this as a compelling reason to engage with heritage. This was particularly true of BIDs both in post-industrial cities which have sought for some time to recast perceptions of decline and in ultra-urban areas where scope to develop competitive advantage through other means was restricted. BIDs in more prosperous areas were unaccustomed to these challenges and found that their inherent offer was sufficient to, for example, consistently attract private investment.

The limitations of traditional retailing were understood by BIDs; attracting customers to city/town centres now requires a more coherent offer and 'experience' that encompasses leisure, arts, and culture and can meet the varied and combined needs of a group of individuals or family. A place brand that projects an ability to meet these needs was coveted by BIDs; successfully leveraging the appeal and authenticity of local heritage assets was seen as a key contributor to this.

### 4.4 Challenges identified by BIDs in delivering heritage and place branding activities

The local institutional landscapes into which individual BIDs emerged varied significantly. These scenarios might be characterised as follows<sup>4</sup>:

- a vacuum, where there was no existing agency engaged in place branding and the BID had carte blanche to initiate and seek to establish a place brand that was embraced by other agencies.
- discarded activities, these were typically developed by an agency that had since closed or an organisation that had since disinvested from place branding. In some cases, these were resurrected, even if on a temporary basis, and in others updated and integrated into a new place brand.
- established structures achieving partial coverage, leaving some aspects of place branding vacant for BIDs to deliver, but with a need to integrate these with other, existing activities being delivered by external organisations.
- established structures achieving comprehensive coverage, where BIDs have worked collaboratively with existing agencies to accommodate and further an existing place brand, contributing to its development where possible.

BIDs did comment, although often in abstract terms, on the perpetual dissonance between the need to prioritise the need of rate-paying businesses and the dividend yielded by investments in heritage and place branding being more likely to be accrued by property owners. Although there were few specific examples of this, the general principle was raised or endorsed by a range of BIDs.

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<sup>4</sup> BIDs with limited or no current engagement with place branding identified with these scenarios, even if they had not yet sought to actively respond to them.

## 5. Conclusions

The project conclusions reflect the evidence generated through all of the preceding research stages. The structure of the content reflects both the key themes to emerge and the intended structure of the place branding chapter within the 2016 Heritage Counts publication.

### 5.1 The value of place branding/place making

Across the various methods of analysis, BIDs endorsed the importance of place branding and place making. However, some BIDs were cautious over whether or not this was a vernacular that they would use in discussions with rate paying businesses; they retained some concerns that it would be perceived as marketing jargon that lacked substance. Data generated by the online survey demonstrated that, of the surveyed BIDs, their most commonly identified objectives are to promote successful businesses, contributing to economic growth through increased visitor numbers and spending, promoting their area, and increased footfall from local residents and a wider catchment.

BIDs were often initiated in an environment where place making and (to a lesser extent place branding) was already being delivered by other agencies. The impact of this varied; some BIDs reported being welcomed by incumbent organisations and being able to work collaboratively and leverage value from existing activities and/or bring together activities that were disjointed. Others reported that the presence of existing organisations constrained their ability to engage effectively in place making and/or place branding, including the protection of, and improvements to, heritage assets.

The place branding and place making activities in which BIDs have previously been engaged vary depending on their maturity. BIDs are often first established to address more street level issues, such as litter, crime and a generally untidy public realm. Perhaps as a consequence of this, BIDs in their first term often report engaging with the delivery of events as being a 'first-step' into place making. BIDs in their second or third term were more likely to engage in more complex projects, such as improving the built environment through infrastructure projects that can enhance place identity, and engaging or initiating cultural programming involving heritage (tangible and intangible).

### 5.2 Place branding – a holistic approach to place making and development

BIDs recognise the need for coordinated branding across multiple media, and had embraced a range of approaches to this; from reinvigorating retro slogans (for example, I [heart] sunny Worthing) to more contemporary examples which embraced a wider narrative or 'story'. BIDs recognised that place branding could not be limited to logos and slogans, however, and heritage was often cited as a means through which a place brand could achieve greater authenticity as it sought to achieve differentiation. An issue raised through the national interviews was the understanding and potential of heritage to support differentiation where brand development is led by a marketing or destination management agency.

There was variation in the constituencies with which BIDs sought to develop place brands. Some felt that the primary objective was to develop a sense of pride amongst local residents, so that they would eventually become advocates for the area. Others felt that this was to capture a greater proportion of visitors within a one-hour drive time. Others felt that this was further afield; to gather traction in national and international visitor markets<sup>5</sup>.

The extent to which BIDs were able to proactively pursue place branding also appeared to increase as they matured. BIDs' early attempts to capture value from place branding may have been through reacting to opportunities presented by external events. However, as BIDs mature, they tend (at least to try) to adopt a more coordinated approach to their place branding activities and to collaborate with cultural organisations and agencies. In some cases bringing culture organisations and agencies together to work on place.

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<sup>5</sup> BIDs felt it important to distinguish between visitors and tourists. Tourism may make an important economic contribution, but they saw visitors as being more desirable and also more receptive to substantiated place brands.

Quantifying the value of place branding and the role of heritage within place branding represents a challenge. BIDs actively pursue a range of performance management solutions but these tend to be relatively generic and offer little opportunity to isolate the impact of a place brand. Footfall monitors/cameras and turnover/spend data from retailers are the most popular amongst these performance measures, but BIDs also monitor empty commercial premises and occasionally visitor satisfaction. BIDs do not have the resources to develop other performance measures, nor is it necessarily their remit to do so, but would be very keen to access more sophisticated data that quantified the economic (and social) value of a strong place brand and the contribution of heritage; access to such data would make it easier for BIDs to support increased investment in these activities. It would also help them in making the case for greater involvement of arts and heritage in their programme and budget priorities. National interviewees noted that the tools used in PR and by tourism may be of value to BIDs in quantifying value and impact<sup>6</sup>.

### **5.3 Heritage and place branding: a source of competitive advantage**

BIDs displayed a generally high level of awareness of local heritage assets. In many cases, these were physical assets that were visually prominent within the BID area. However, BIDs interest in heritage extends beyond the built environment. There were examples of BIDs offering walking tours of the locality to newly located businesses to bring to life the environment around them, producing promotional materials that celebrate local heritage and history and focussing visual imagery on historic/heritage events, commissioning and organising heritage based events and promoting guided heritage walks and heritage trails. Where heritage was not immediately apparent or accessible (often non-physical assets), some BIDs were able to seek out heritage and recognise the value of it. The imprisonment of Oscar Wilde in Reading Prison ("Gaol") is an example that has captured international media coverage<sup>69</sup> for a place that is typically known as a commercial centre.

BIDs recognised the changing nature of the visitor economy. There is an increasing need to give visitors a combined leisure offer such that a family shopping trip, for example, now needs to offer additional activities that can fill a day out. Individual retailers use the term 'clienteling' to understand and respond to customers' individual desires; places need to adopt a similar approach that encompasses a broad offer. A generic retail offer must be supplemented by boutique retail, coffee shops, restaurants, arts and cultural events, sports events, and visitor attractions. Heritage can be a crucial part of this; heritage assets can either contribute as standalone attractions, or offer the canvas in front of which other experiences occur as well as featuring in a place itinerary.

### **5.4 Heritage and place branding: challenges, opportunities, best practice and guidance**

'Household name' heritage assets should not be assumed to be an automatic driver of heritage engagement with localised place branding activity. These heritage assets may have a brand of their own with sufficient market reach to not need to work collaboratively. Some significant heritage asset owners, such as cathedrals, varied in the extent to which they proactively engaged with place branding activities. These assets could sometimes be a benign presence in place brands and maps, but not otherwise integrated into the place; this presented challenges to collaborative working. Some lesser known heritage assets and historic associations were more inclined to contribute to the development of a more collaborative place brand.

The autonomy with which BIDs operate offers them the opportunity to set their own agenda. A corollary of this is that prescriptive guidance is rare. Commercial organisations have emerged to advise and manage the campaign to establish a BID in advance of its initial ballot, including establishing the initial narrative and brand/logo. These organisations are sometimes retained to manage the implementation of the BID, but it is more common for this function to be delivered independently. Once established, BIDs in their second and third terms sought to develop more sophisticated place branding and to replace these

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<sup>6</sup> In the case of PR, this may include tools such as press-clippings services. In the case of tourism impact, there are more formal and involved approaches used such as tourism impact modelling systems.

initial profiles with a more inclusive and culture-based brand identity. This operational model reveals an opportunity to guide independent BIDs towards a greater understanding and engagement in place branding and capitalising on the available local heritage assets. Beyond this, as referenced above, some BIDs that do not include or possess obvious physical heritage assets often find it more difficult to access information around local heritage; this is something that could improve. Heritage assets can be 'hidden' and identifying lost or understated heritage could be a useful exercise.

Property owners and property tenants can have different priorities and/or perspectives. Some BIDs reported that local ratepayers tend to be tenants with shorter-term horizons and rent pressures; developing a heritage-led place brand is something that can take time to accomplish and is, therefore, perhaps of greater value to property owners (landlords, including heritage landowners) than tenant businesses. In London BIDs, however, property owners can be levy-paying members of BIDs. The sharing of good practice by BIDs who have successfully engaged property owners as well as tenants would also be useful.

### 6. Good practice guidelines

This section presents a series of actions that seek to catalyse greater engagement with heritage amongst organisations with an interest in place branding. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are typical of the audience at which these guidelines are aimed, but the ambition is that these should be usable by a broader range of organisations with an interest in place branding.

#### 6.1 Audit local heritage assets

All areas will have heritage, both tangible and intangible, although the scale and appeal of the asset(s) can vary significantly. Organisations engaged in place branding are likely to welcome information on the heritage assets present within their locality. Auditing these assets would, therefore, be valued by place branders. One example of this is the Heritage Index developed by HLF and the RSA.

Place branding should not compromise the integrity and authenticity of local heritage assets by overstating or misrepresenting their offer; there are parallels with the notion of a visitor hierarchy and how far people will realistically travel to visit somewhere, based on its appeal. Evidence from the case studies developed for this project suggests that it is not always straightforward to integrate 'household name' heritage assets into a coherent place brand. Sometimes working with a collection of lesser known heritage assets is advantageous; as these will be more likely to embrace a shared place brand that can deliver benefits 'greater than the sum of its parts'. Applying the Cultural Physical Asset Mapping toolkit developed under the DCMS CASE programme could be helpful in identifying and classifying a wider range of cultural and heritage assets in a BID area.

#### 6.2 Celebrate heritage in place branding

Introducing a suite of respected annual awards that celebrate examples of effective use of heritage in place branding has the potential to achieve a range of desirable outcomes. The awards may want to consider different categories that reflect variation within the scale of the place branding organisation and differentiate between projects that focus on tangible heritage and those that focus on intangible heritage. The potential benefits of introducing these awards include:

- Produce case studies for each of the annually shortlisted projects which, over time, will develop into a reference library that organisations that aspire to integrate heritage into their place brand can draw upon.
- Develop the profile of heritage amongst organisations engaged in place branding to the extent that it can come to be seen as a core component of place branding.

Current awards schemes that recognise achievements in similar disciplines include the Heritage Alliance's annual *Heritage Heroes* awards, which were established to celebrate the outstanding contribution to society made by heritage volunteers in England, Historic England's annual *Angel Awards*, which recognise the efforts of local people who have saved historic buildings and places, and the Academy of Urbanism's *Urbanism Awards*, which recognise the best, most enduring or most improved urban environments. None of these existing awards schemes quite capture the combined focus on the use of heritage in place branding, however.

#### 6.3 Promote heritage to place branders

The responses to the online survey confirm that BIDs are positive about the role of heritage in place branding and that just over half would like to receive more information. They would like information on the economic value of heritage, how to work with heritage organisations, and the presence of local heritage. They would like this information to be available online, which should be relatively low-cost, but may need to be promoted initially. This could be achieved through a speaking slot at a relevant event or leading a training/workshop session, such as those organised by the Association of Town & City Management (ATCM).

Historic England's regional offices are well equipped to engage with place branders as a supplementary source of expertise and guidance. Meeting experts to find out more about heritage was second only to

an online resource in BIDs' preferred means of accessing information. These sources are complementary, and should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

### **6.4 Recognise place branders' operational constraints**

Many organisations engaged in place branding have limited financial resources and organisations promoting heritage should not, therefore, view a source of revenue as the basis for engagement. However, BIDs were invariably entrepreneurial and dynamic enterprises who were keen to scale up their activities. Whilst 80% of BIDs reported an annual budget of £750,000 or less (although they also benefit from in kind resources), they are well placed to capitalise on external funding opportunities; it could be that partnering with place branders to deliver projects represents a more sustainable relationship than selling to them.

Equally, organisations engaged in place branding can also be sensitive to geographic boundaries. Many cover relatively small geographies (often a fraction of a local authority) and therefore heritage assets need to be within or adjacent to the boundaries of the organisation.

### **6.5 Influence place branding guidance**

Engagement with the BIDs confirmed that in their infancy, their focus is more likely to be on more visible and easily deliverable outcomes. This could well be true of other, similar organisations with an interest in place branding. Therefore, guidance that is made available to these organisations should not expect (and maybe not advise) that heritage will be integrated into place branding work from the outset. The principal message to communicate through this is the economic contribution and value of heritage, with worked examples of how heritage may come under threat and why and how these threats should be repelled.

Within this, the use of the term place branding may not meet with universal approval. Some established BIDs reported that they engaged in activities that, in combination, they feel constituted place branding, but did not refer to these activities as such because of the risk that the terminology was too abstract for rate-payers to engage with. Some BIDs referred to place making, viewing place branding as too narrow a term, to define their activity.

There may also be opportunities to embed greater heritage awareness in the work of the BID support organisations through the skills development, accreditation and award schemes of the Association of Town Centre Managers and British Bids. The potential for BIDs to engage with heritage and place funding initiatives such as Heritage Action Zones could be highlighted in programme guidance for applicants and case studies.

### **6.6 Respond to varying requirements of economic development agencies**

Materials that communicate the value of heritage need to be flexible enough to respond to the varying demands of different economic development agencies. The remit of these agencies, and accordingly the audience that they seek to engage, can differ. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are often involved in attracting inward investment and working with investors to convince them of the merits of investing in their area. The value of heritage in this context could be the lifestyle amenities that local employees will be able to access, making recruitment and retention more straightforward for the investor. BIDs more often seek to engage and attract a local audience that can visit their area within a one hour drive time and may visit for a day trip. The value of heritage in this context is to increase the frequency and extend the duration of these visits; instead of going shopping in the morning and then going home, visitors begin with a culture trail, have lunch in a bistro, go shopping, have a mid-afternoon coffee, go the cinema, go for dinner in a restaurant, and then go home.

Furthermore, the outlook of these agencies can vary depending on local economic conditions. Prosperous areas with burgeoning economies are more likely to attract investment without having to include heritage as part of their pitch to investors. If the investment proposition is sufficiently compelling, it is possible that the differentiation that heritage can offer will be superfluous. An area with

a less prosperous economy is likely to want to capitalise on any form of competitive advantage it can identify, and therefore could be keener to embrace heritage as a more influential part of its offer.

These considerations support the notion that expressing the value of heritage needs to involve a sophisticated approach capable of responded to an inherently segmented marketplace. Recognising and responding to the needs of different economic development agencies will be an important aspect of this.

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## Endnotes

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