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**Sent:** 26 February 2014 12:45  
**To:** Tim Oldham  
**Subject:** Fw: Retail Enquiry

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**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2014 10:12 AM  
**To:** Steve Luce  
**Subject:** Retail Enquiry

**Deputy Steve Luce**  
**Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel – Retail Enquiry.**

Dear Deputy Luce,

As a business with 4 shops in Town, and having been trading in Town for 18 years, from premises in Colomberie, New Street, Sand Street and Conway Street, I write with reference to the Retail Enquiry.

I have read with interest the comments reported from various contributors to your enquiry and are in agreement with most of them. The biggest threat to Town though, that has not been mentioned, is the truly devastating effect the proposed Esplanade Square development will have to the footfall of Town.

Just to be clear, I am a committed supporter of our Finance industry, we are lucky to have it and it should be nurtured and cherished. I say this, because from some quarters, if one makes a negative comment about Esplanade Square, it is considered heresy, almost treason. With both of our businesses, Mange Tout and EL Tico, those employed by the industry are our number one customers, so it literally is our bread and butter.

The proposed development totals some 4,500,000 square feet, which will house between 4000 and 5000 workers. Those workers will be moved from existing space in Town and that will have an effect on footfall that no one has so far mentioned. As an example, when 37 Esplanade was finished, it sucked nearly 700 people out of Colomberie overnight. Our shop was 25% down, the dry cleaners closed and other shops are hanging on by their fingernails. Take another 4500 out from an area stretching from New Street up to Colomberie, and “devastating” is not the word. At a recent Town Team meeting, one senior civil servant enlightened us with the comment “there are areas of Town that will become retail wastelands...”. As unacceptable as that is, from someone charged with our future, it is an accurate appraisal.

As I have said, we need to support the Finance industry with first class accommodation, but rather than use up valuable space, and to protect our Town centre dynamics, they should be encouraged to re-develop their existing sites to provide better accommodation. What happens in 25 years when Esplanade Square is considered out dated? Where will they build next?

I recently watched a fascinating documentary about the Architect Richard Rogers and specifically London and the parallels between us, although on different scales, were startling. He said they were realising the City of London was becoming "untenable", particularly with the development of shiny new offices in Canary Wharf. The large moves to Canary Wharf were sucking the life out of the City, not just office wise, but with the shops and support services around it. The answer was to encourage occupiers to re-develop. Get creative and build the type of offices that people wanted, but within the confines and physical restrictions of the City. The result has been that the City has thrived and they have created some truly iconic architecture, such as the now listed Lloyds Building, rather than the boring boxes of Canary Wharf.

Clearly Town has other threats, and the Internet has been discussed at length. The internet will always win on convenience, price and choice. We can't compete on price, as that is volume driven, and we can't compete on choice for obvious reasons. But we absolutely can compete on convenience. In our early days in Colomberie, cars would pull up outside and customers would come into us for their lunch, or run across the road to pick up something from the clothes shop or drop dry cleaning off. Then the bollards came and that market dried up. It's the same across Town. All the old stopping places have gone and we all drive round and round with nowhere to go, being chased off by stab-jacketed Parking Control Officers. We have to improve access to Town if we are to stand a chance of getting shoppers to come back. Even John Rogers of TTS, will tell you our car parks are not fit for purpose.

It is clearly a complicated issue and as a stakeholder in Town, I genuinely wish you well in your challenge. Of course, my comments on Esplanade Square are irrelevant if we are allowed to grow the population to fill all our office space, but with no population growth allowed, the question needs properly addressing. Should you wish to discuss this further, I am very happy to meet you.

Kind regards,

Andrew Hosegood