

The Walls.

My submission revolves around small traders and the need to support them. They struggle to compete with on-line shopping and out of town retail parks.

The number of town centre independents is dwindling. They need some positive, practical TLC from CBC. Many of them occupy units along Sir Isaacs Walk, Eld Lane, Trinity and Short Wyre streets in the old heart of town.

I'd argue that we don't need more shops in the centre; we need to look after the ones we've got. Years ago Colchester Council talked about giving the area I described an identity-**The Walls**. That seems to have been shelved while attention turned to larger projects. I say it should be revived with urgency.

CBC could facilitate real difference within twelve months for a relatively low cost. But it needs the will and cash injection to make it happen.

It will need three entrance arches, permanent identity flags (like the northern approach ones), good quality bunting, street art and coloured street furniture, better lighting, decent floral displays, generous Christmas lights and so on. Things to enhance the area. Make it '**edgy**' but essentially **commercial**.

Have dedicated pitches for approved street entertainers. No need for big street events. They are usually a shopping distraction and jam the streets up.

Trinity Church is a gem. It leads to a '**Walls**' area and should be the town's central focal point. Its tower ought to be the Christmas highlight. Tidy it up and cut the trees back. (Ditto St Nicholas and outside Lion Walk Church, v. gloomy)

A working group of traders who have a stake along the area, together with creative input from (say) Firstsite and CBC co-ordination/control could sort it.

Keep the professional consultants and big business 'Suits' out. They will make heavy weather of it. It will succeed best if driven by those with most at stake.

The Walls will provide Colchester with a topical more viable retail destination. But it needs investment. £150/200k should be enough. It is overdue. Why not?

Nick Chilvers

Former Colchester retail manager,

(feedback would be appreciated)