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Thoughts on Hayes
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Slide 1

To me, the challenge is identifying "What is Hayes?" What is its identity? - Digital maps locate Hayes at the centre of a roundabout on the bypass. That's not a good sign! Having visited, I was surprised with what Hayes had to offer.

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Is Hayes a town at the heart of the lost county of Middlesex?...

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Or at the western edge of the London Conurbation?

Slide 4

A resilient identity is important - in the 1970s it seemed as though LPs and instant coffee was the future, just as residential development was the ineluctable economic engine of the noughties. Things change, and a sense of place needs to be larger than the sum of its parts.

Slide 5

Hayes is infrastructure rich - and a good reminder that connection and transport infrastructure is not enough to create a strong and beautiful place. In fact perhaps good transport makes it too easy to leave, for the town's top assets to bugger off. Hayes is also surrounded by large single-use land holdings (Heathrow, Stockley Park, etc). Development tends to be amoeba-like; what lies in between? What glue holds it all together?

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Crossrail is undoubtedly a catalyst for change. Crossrail will bring value on the back of public investment - and it is crucial that the public sector steers associated development in order to maximise public benefit - to form the 'glue'.

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A key opportunity is the station area, and the spine of the High Street running north: 'Welcome to Hayes'. Avoid autonomous development, amoebas, but attract long-term investors. Create a strong heart from public realm. Build on what you have, such as the YMCA tower.

Slide 8

So what are the opportunities? Use the town's amazing landscape resources to create a 'green grid' out to the Colne valley - draw on 'carbon guilt' and the environmental offset of Heathrow to develop a strong, inventive landscape connection to attract visitors. Draw on the tradition of innovation and invention - connect with the Brunel campus, find ways to stop the town's brightest jumping on the train to other places: make a town where people want to stay.

Slide 9

Draw on what makes Hayes unique - the extraordinary 'edge of London' quality of the canal and railway, all heading west.

Slide 10

An overview, looking west.