

# **Planning and Real Estate Development in the Public Realm – New Forms of Sub-Municipal Governance**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the UK, globalisation, neo-liberalism and individualism are combining to create different institutional constructs. These are reflected in the prevailing Third Way political economy and congested state apparatus. This has clear implications for the emergent balance of state-market-civil relations at large. The importance of the Treasury which is currently driving a relatively more hard line interpretation of public policy implementation cannot be under-estimated. The pre-Budget reports for 2006 demonstrated a particular interest in defining an economic assertion of land use planning practice. This stressed an economic development and business model imperative.

This is leading to the design of new legal, institutional and policy arrangements for the governance of public spaces, such as town centres, including the introduction of Business Improvement Districts. This paper will consider the spirit and purpose of Business Improvement Districts in terms of the associated reconfiguration of private, public, and common property rights. In town centres where Business Improvement Districts operate, or are in the process of being established, their morphologies of governance frame competing individual and collective experiences and behaviours. Drawing on evidence from England and Scotland, the paper will consider the implications of Business Improvement Districts with respect to the reconfiguration of new business-led sub-municipal governance of the associated public realm.

**Key Words:** sub-municipal governance, public realm, Business Improvement Districts