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For immediate release
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BRITISH HIGH STREETS ARE BOUNCING BACK

PEP&CO unveils customer High Street report sponsored by Savills

Authored by ex-BBC Consumer Affairs Correspondent Nicola Carlaw, report released ahead of its starring role in ITV1's new docusoap

***"Bargain Shop Wars"* to begin six week run on ITV1 at 8.30pm on Thursday 14 April featuring many "secondary" UK High Streets**

PEP&CO, Britain's newest high street fashion retailer, today released a 'vox pop' report authored by former BBC Consumer Affairs Correspondent Nicola Carlaw.

The report, curated during PEP&CO's 'scale-from-scratch' rollout of 50 stores on so-called secondary high streets, comes in the week it takes centre-stage in a new primetime ITV1 docusoap, *Bargain Shop Wars*.

The report, "*Talking Shops*", set out to ask ordinary people what they thought of their high streets as PEP&CO opened its doors in places like Salford, Bolton, Yardley, Paisley and Cwmbran – locations often shunned by mainstream retailers in favour of more glamorous city centres.

The report, co-sponsored by Savills which advised PEP&CO in securing its first fifty locations, found new destinations being forged from the old, to serve people who retain a passion for their towns and their futures.

Particularly referenced is the rise of discount retailers who've been acquisitive, helping helping transform town centre locations as they seek to compete with bigger cities.

Key themes that emerge from the customer vox pops include:

- The importance of great customer service in these secondary locations – customers want shops who know their customers and where staff have time to interact with them;
- The importance of a mix of shops that appeal to a wide range of shoppers;
- Ensuring the whole family can be looked after with kids' activities on offer during shopping trips;
- The importance of cheap public transport and free parking.

"Having served our millionth customer less than 100 days after opening our 50th store, we know better than anyone that British High Streets are in renewal," said PEP&CO managing director Adrian Mountford.

“But when I look at reports from policymakers and consultants about keeping places like Crewe and Corby strong, ordinary shoppers' voices are hard to find.

“What’s clear is that we– and I mean retailers, policymakers, councils and government together – have to keep listening to what customers are saying. They like what’s happening, but progress is patchy and expectations high.

Savills, notes the customer feedback in the report reinforces much of the policy changes already in discussion in the industry. These include:

- A level playing field on business rates for car parks, by removing the liability on town centre parking;
- Greater attention to how revenues from business rates could be used to support secondary high streets;
- Councils taking a bigger lead in improving their high streets and helping them deliver more affordable public transport
- Empowering Business Improvement Districts with better support and training to ensure their new revenue streams are spent wisely.

ITV1's Bargain Shop Wars, which airs this Thursday (14 April), will show the vibrancy on Britain’s secondary high streets as it follows the PEP&CO team as they try and deliver a new format in locations that have seen challenging times.

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Further Information: Jon Welsh, Havas PR
PepandCo@havasww.com
Telephone: +44 (0)161 236 2277

Editors’ Notes:

About PEP&CO

- PEP&CO is one of Britain’s newest High Street retailers – with 50 stores that opened in just a little over 50 days in the summer of 2015.
- With fashion for kids, women and now men too, it serves customers in the towns they live and love. With affordable fashion for the family, its store managers pride themselves on the service they provide in the places it trades.
- PEP&CO served its millionth customer less than 100 days after opening its 50th store and based on reaction in the places its opened, believes it can play a role in helping trade in town centres, offering shoppers another reason to shop locally.
- Each PEP&CO store has simple low pricing on fashion for kids, women and men. It’s an offer that’s become hard to find on secondary high streets.
- Prices start at £1 and 95 per cent of what it sells is under £10.
- PEP&CO is the first strategic investment made by Pepkor UK, a venture established in 2014 by former Asda CEO Andy Bond and ex-Bain & Company consultant Mark Elliott.

- Pepkor UK manages corporate activity in the United Kingdom in support of the wider Pepkor group - a Cape Town-based investment company with retail interests in Africa, Australia and Eastern Europe.
- The leadership team has over 70 years of combined experience, including Adrian Mountford, Cathy Haydon & Mark Jackson.
- Adrian Mountford, PEP&CO's managing director had stints at BHS, Matalan and Sainsbury's where he was business unit director for the Tu fashion brand.
- CFO Mark Jackson had eight years as CFO/COO at Heals and two years at Allders.
- Trading Director Cathy Haydon, joined from M&S where she was head of merchandising in womenswear. She's also worked at Tesco and BHS and has 26 years of retail experience
- PEP&CO trades in England, Wales & Scotland in the following locations:

PEP&CO Store Locations				
Ashton-under-Lyne	Chatham	Eastleigh	Kettering	Runcorn
Birkenhead	Chelmsley Wood	Ellesmere Port	Kirkcaldy	Salford
Birmingham Yardley	Corby	Falkirk	Maidstone	Scunthorpe
Bolton	Coventry	Glenrothes	Middlesbrough	Stretford
Boscombe	Crewe	Gloucester	Newport	Sunderland
Bootle	Cwmbran	Grays	Newton Mearns	Swindon
Boston	Dartford	Hartlepool	Oldham	Warminster
Bridgend	Derby	Hemel Hempstead	Paisley	Warrington
Bristol	Dunfermline	Hull	Redditch	West Bromwich
Burton-upon-Trent	East Kilbride	Irvine	Redhill	Weston-super-Mare

About Bargain Shop Wars

- Bargain Shop Wars will begin its six week run on ITV1 on April 14 at 8.30pm.
- It is produced by Crackit North, led by award-winning producer Kerry Brierley.
- With almost 20 years of broadcast experience, Kerry is a hugely experienced documentary maker specialising in producing access-driven formats and documentary series.
- Filming took place right across Britain from the opening of PEP&CO's first store in Kettering, Northamptonshire on 1 July 2015, and will continue until the beginning of April.
- The series was negotiated and managed on behalf of PEP&CO by retail communications specialist Nick Agarwal, former Asda communications director.

About Savills

- Savills plc is a global real estate services provider with an international network of more than 700 global offices offering a broad range of specialist advisory, management and transactional services to clients all over the world.