Institute of Place Management

Manchester Metropolitan University

CHEADLE

VITAL AND VIABLE STOCKPORT DISTRICT CENTRES

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About the Institute of Place Management
The Institute of Place Management (IPM) is the professional body for people involved in making, maintaining, and marketing places. As part of Manchester Metropolitan University, the IPM is dedicated to supporting people who serve places, providing them with unbiased research, continuing professional development, qualifications, conferences, events, and networking opportunities.

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Foreword

This report has been prepared following a workshop held on the 16th of March 2022, attended key local stakeholders from Cheadle. Facilitated by the Institute of Place Management at the invitation of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, the event formed part a wider programme of work Stockport is undertaking to revitalise district centres in terms of post-pandemic recovery and long-term viability. This report builds, therefore, on findings collated by IPM to inform the council's approach to supporting Stockport's district centres.

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1. Introduction

Many factors affect the vitality and viability of high streets and town centres. Some of the changes we see today are long-term processes, some stretching back decades. The global pandemic brought new and additional challenges, but also provided the spur to reimagine and redefine the high street, not only to manage recovery, but to also prepare and adapt for a more resilient future. To help local communities gain insight into these trends please see the High Street Change report[1]. Drawing on the IPM's extensive research and engagement with places across the UK and beyond in relation the vitality and ability of high streets, this report presents findings from Cheadle, before outlining an adaptable action plan based on the IPM's 4Rs Framework – Restructuring, Rebranding, Repositioning and Reinventing, which includes recommendations for quick wins and longer-term priorities[2].

The findings are based on several research and data methods. These include:

1. Updates on the independent Place Quality Audits first undertaken in Cheadle in 2019.
2. Insights from the automated footfall counter located in the district centre installed by Springboard, which collected daily data over a 12-month cycle from the end of January 21 to January 22.
3. Local stakeholder workshop which took place in March 2022. During this 3-hour session, participants were tasked with identifying factors which they believed attracted people to the district centre, and barriers to change.
4. Insights from Local Data Company (LDC) data.
5. Application of IPM tools – including Activity Hierarchy, Diversity measure, and Viability Assessment.
6. Application of local evidence using the 4Rs frameworks.

[1] Available on request – contact the IPM
[2] For more detail see: https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/frameworks/4rs-regeneration-framework/

2. Cheadle Place Quality Update and Assessment

In 2019, the IPM team conducted an audit for all Stockport district centres, categorising the collected information based on the Top 25 Priorities[3] that impact upon the performance of district centres, to inform interventions which local place leaders should focus on. The outcomes of this audit can be seen in the Phase 1 report of the project[4].

Since we last visited Cheadle in 2019, overall, the centre has maintained a pleasant image and is home to a variety of specialist shops and cafes. The centre is mainly clean and litter free, and although the public realm is largely functional, we noted how vibrant Cheadle is, even on a day of heavy rain. The addition of a parklet to create additional seating for local eateries was noted as evidence of innovative practice, despite some concerns from within the community about people using it. From our perspective a more important concern, other than the normal turnover of businesses, is that Cheadle has lost almost all its bank branches and travel agents, and at the time of the visit, notices in the shop window of Boots refer to the store closing, which would leave another large vacant unit. We also noted that many vacant units in Cheadle are in a state of disrepair and provide an unwanted contrast with the heritage buildings and active frontages which contribute the distinctives of the centre. The state, size and format of the empty units may mean they will be difficult to relet in the short term. Despite these challenges, Cheadle is close to the GB average in terms of diversity (0.14 compared to 0.15 in GB)[5]. Additionally, Cheadle's vacancy rate (including Boots' closure) is lower than the national average (9.1% compared to 14.1% GB average in Q1 2022)[6]. In summary, the attractiveness of centre is hindered by a noticeable number of vacant units and tired frontages, which stand out next to the quality of the heritage buildings.

Activity hours remain largely the same as in 2019, with most businesses closed by 5:30pm, and several local shops closing by 4:00pm, which leaves a mismatch between the retail and hospitality offer. There is a time in the late afternoon when most shops are closed, but several eateries and bars are not open. That said, we identified new hospitality businesses that open later and extend activity into the evening, strengthening the evening economy. Despite Cheadle being a small centre, the overall experience is still compromised by the high frequency of road traffic, making even crossing the road an arduous task. There are not many places to sit and relax in the heart of the centre, although there is green space adjacent to it. There is ample parking, and the accessibility of the centre will potentially be improved dramatically once the new railway station is open. Table 1 below summarises the strengths and weaknesses, with key changes highlighted in bold.

[3] See Appendix 2 for an explanation of the updated 25 Priorities
[4] See: https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=168756
[5] See Appendix 3 for a summary of the LDC Data
[6] See BRC https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/fewer-empty-shops-but-uncertainty-ahead/

Cheadle District Centre Strengths and Weaknesses	
Key Strengths	**Key weaknesses**
2. Retail Offer - Good mix of national multiples supplemented by good range of independents - Strong supermarket offer (Tesco, Sainsburys and Iceland)	***3, 6 & 13. Vision & Strategy/Place Management/Networks and Partnership*** - Evidence of a partnership but unsure if this is active - No vision or strategy for the district centre
9. Non- Retail Offer - Good hospitality and community facilities - Vast array of personal services businesses - Strong café culture	***12. Place Marketing*** - Limited digital footprint - Inactive social media - No evidence of collective centre promotion - Lack of place distinction (confusion with Cheadle Hulme)
10. Merchandise - Strong essentials provision - Fresh fish, Greengrocers, Butchers complement the supermarket offer - Speciality independents (game shop, carpets, bookshops)	***14. Accessibility*** - No cycle lanes - Traffic and cars dominate - Difficult to cross the road
17. Markets - Makers Market generating interest	***19, 24 & 25. Barriers to New Entrants/Redevelopment Plans/Innovation*** - Many empty units with slow churn that may be tough to be reused and repurposed - Particular buildings either require upgrade/renewal

Table 1: Key strengths and weaknesses

Viability Assessment

The Viability Assessment is a measure of High Street Viability[7]. This is based on analysis of five key indicators with data derived from the Index for Multiple Deprivation and the Co-Op Well Being Index. The assessment indicates Cheadle is **highly economically viable** with a good score for social and cultural and technological viability, showing low levels of income, employment and housing deprivation, and having good access to education, health services, and culture and heritage activities and amenities (see Figure 1 below).

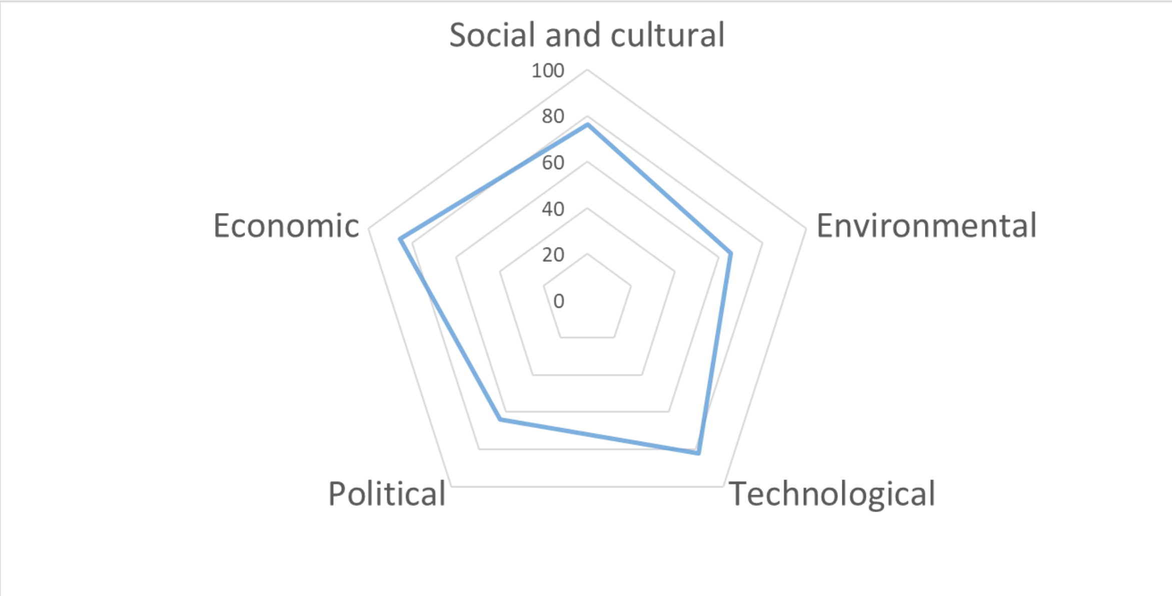

Figure 1: Viability Assessment

We posit Cheadle fulfils the role of a residential centre, and despite its economic strengths there is perhaps finite growth potential in terms of the trading environment. There is high dependency on regular local trade, and the difficulty in converting large store formats may compromise the traditional village architectural heritage. However, the centre benefits from a reasonable retail and non-retail offer (mix of multiples and independents, services, restaurants, cafés) that contribute to a solid amenity/merchandise mix. The market adjacent to the centre is a real asset, and the new railway development is a great opportunity to make the centre more accessible and less car dominant, as it will potentially drive additional footfall from occasional visitors and regular commuters.

[7] See Appendix for an explanation of how the Viability Assessment is calculated.

Footfall Analysis

The annual footfall figure for Cheadle for the period of January 2021-2022 for the counter location was 1,821,467 suggesting Cheadle is correctly defined as a **district centre** based on the estimated activity level[8].

In summary, the average daily footfall count is 5,207, December is the busiest month, Saturdays the busiest day, whereas Sundays are typically the quietest day. The Cheadle Makers market significantly boosts footfall in the district centre, and one-off events such as Remembrance Sunday appear to bring people in the centre.

Monthly Footfall Analysis

Monthly footfall calculated for the year 2021 suggests Cheadle has the profile of a **multifunctional centre,** offering a convenient mix of goods and services[9]. The relatively flat footfall profile suggests the centre mainly serves a local catchment (Figure 2 and Table 2). Cheadle showcases a small December peak, which is consistent with bigger multifunctional centres that have an array of Christmas-related activities and merchandise offer.

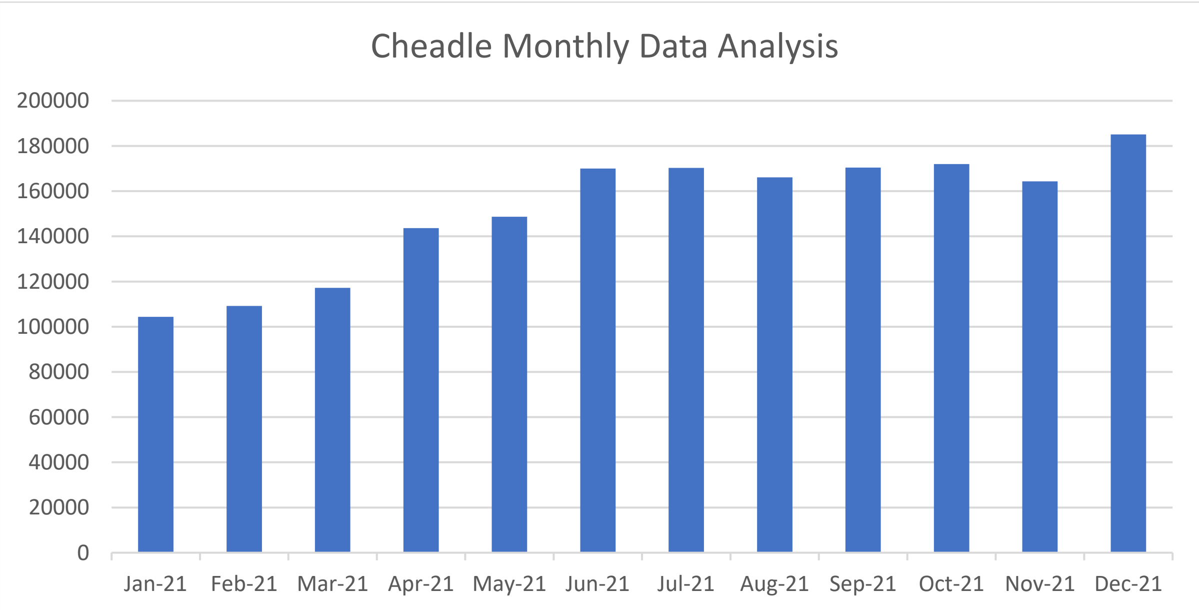

Figure 2: Monthly Footfall Data

Although COVID-19 clearly impacted all centres from March 2020 to late 2021, recent analysis of over 180 high streets suggests the lifting of restrictions contributed to a significant bounce-back in the number of people visiting high streets, boosted further throughout 2021 with the rollout of the vaccination programme. The Annual Review of Footfall produced by the High Street Streets Task Force (2021)[10] suggests smaller local high streets across England recovered more quickly than larger cities and regional centres. With footfall recovery associated with settlement size, we can reasonably

8 See Appendix 1 for an explanation of the hierarchy is derived.
9 See Appendix 5 for an explanation of the different signature types.
10 See https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/media/hr5jbfev/footfall-report-2021-exec-summary-final.pdf

suggest a district centre such as Cheadle should have recovered both to its pre-pandemic levels of footfall and footfall signature.

Table 2 provides a monthly footfall count for Cheadle. It is estimated footfall during the first months of 2021 may have been hindered by the third COVID-19 national lockdown (which started 6th January). There is a slight increase in footfall after April, which coincided with the re-opening of non-essential shops and outdoor venues such as pubs and restaurants. From June 2021 onwards, Cheadle's footfall appears to be stable. Cheadle has the biggest footfall count of all Stockport district centres.

Month	Cheadle Monthly Data	Monthly Data as Percentage
January	104405	5.7
February	109172	6.0
March	117196	6.4
April	143675	7.9
May	148680	8.2
June	170044	9.3
July	170331	9.4
August	166115	9.1
September	170409	9.4
October	171973	9.4
November	164355	9.0
December	185112	10.2
Annual Footfall	1821467	100

Table 2: Monthly footfall count and percentage

Events and footfall

It is noticeable that when events are taking place in Cheadle, a modest uplift in footfall can be noted. For example, the Remembrance Sunday event in November had a 43% increase in footfall compared to an average Sunday that month (5015 compared to 3522). Regardless of the importance of one-off big events, more regular patterns and gatherings also influence footfall. The Cheadle Makers Market during 2021 seem to have generated increased footfall in six out of seven instances. October 2021 was probably a bit quieter than a normal October Saturday (a rainy and windy day for the period). December 2021 observations are also skewed due to the very quiet Christmas day Saturday in Cheadle (749 counts). From these observations, we can attest that the market effect on footfall appears to be significant[11], however more data needs to be collected (e.g., sales data, dwell time, visitors' perceptions) to identify the full market effect. Research has shown that markets have direct and indirect multiplier effects in terms of extra spending to the local economy, as well as for promoting local traders and providing a sense of sociality. Close monitoring can provide more

[11] A two-sample t-test was performed to compare footfall count between market and no market Saturdays. There was a significant difference in footfall between market Saturday ($M = 8051$, $SD = 1066.1$) and no market Saturday ($M = 6952$, $SD = 731$); $t(12) = -2.249$, $p = .023$.

insights into the market's influence on the social and economic vitality of the district centre (Hallsworth et al., 2015).

Month	Saturday average	Market Saturday
June	6902	7671
July	5820	6599
August	7564	9150
September	7600	7239
October	7323	7670
November	6061	9605
December	6952	8051
Overall	6902	7671

Table 3: Comparison of footfall data on market versus no market days in Cheadle

Weekly Footfall Analysis

Figure 3 summarises the weekly footfall pattern for Cheadle (Figure 3). Previous research (Mumford et al., 2017) has shown that two distinct weekly patterns (a distinct Saturday peak and a Monday through Saturday peak) are evident in footfall profiles. Cheadle exhibits a clear Saturday peak that slowly builds up from Thursday onwards. There is a noticeable drop on Sunday that is consistent with centres that have a busy Saturday. Cheadle's weekly signature may be heavily influenced by the effects of the pandemic (e.g., hybrid working arrangements). Nevertheless, understanding how Cheadle functions on a weekly basis can help towards the development of strategies and initiatives that fit the centre's profile and catchment.

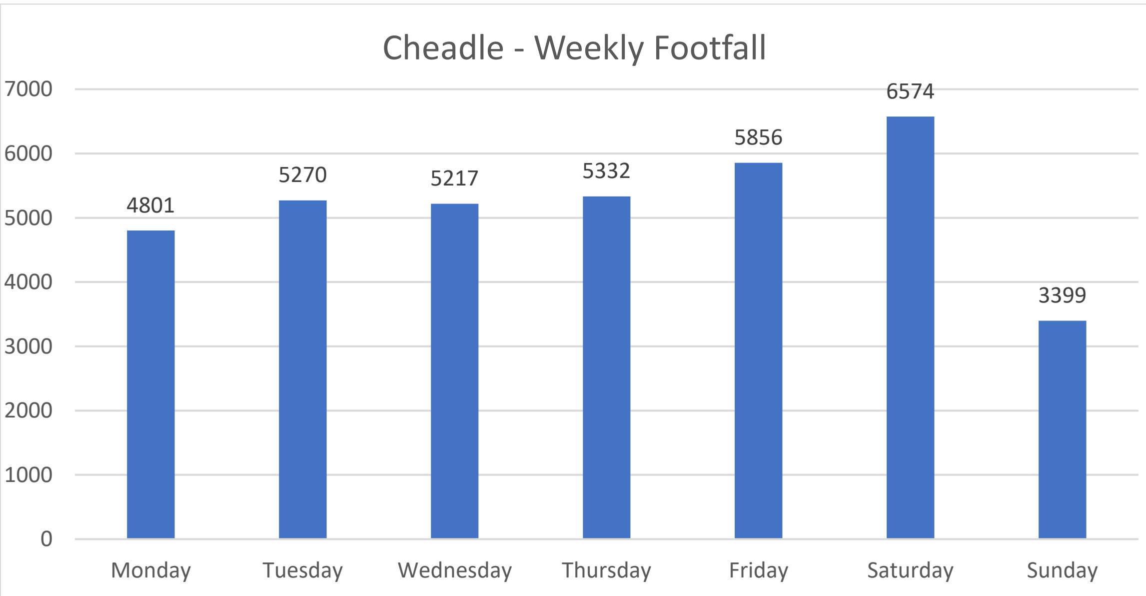

Figure 3: Weekly footfall pattern for Cheadle

Attractors and Barriers

As part of the first interactive exercise, workshop participants were asked to write down three factors they personally believed attracted people to the local high street. Figure 4 below summarizes the responses of the group.

Figure 4: Attractors word cloud

Three themes dominate the analysis: **Greenspace**, **Community** and **Market**. Despite clear differences between participants on how they perceive Cheadle as a centre, there is a strong sense of community with untapped potential waiting to be explored. It was particularly encouraging to listen to younger people’s engagement with the community, and how they use multichannel social media to harvest that. Participants also drew attention to the abundance of greenspace adjacent to the district centre, as well as the importance of having a market once a month.

The second part of this exercise required participants to identify barriers or constraints that they believe are holding back change in their local high street. Figure 5 below summarises all the barriers identified by whole group:

Figure 5: Barriers identified by the whole group

The barriers identified by the workshop participants focus on lack of shop variety in the centre, empty units around it, and challenges with the landlords that may own these units, which can be attributed to a lack of **diversity** and as **barriers to new entrants**. Whereas lack of shop variety was mentioned, unique local traders was also considered an important attractor to Cheadle. This indicates a potential lack of understanding of what the actual offer in Cheadle is. The more structural issues of filling in long-term vacant units and establishing rapport and relationships with landlords require not only effort from local traders and the community, but also a dedicated person to facilitate and drive such discussions of centre transformation. Hopefully these structural problems will be partly resolved following the appointment of a district centre manager for Cheadle by Stockport MBC. However, it may be important to manage expectations here, as the district centre manager can only do so much. The ongoing management of the centre, however, will require additional capacity through the formation of networks and partnerships.

3. Applying the IPM's 4Rs Framework to Cheadle

The 4 Rs Framework provides a simple approach to developing a town centre action plan to create a vibrant centre for everyone that is fit for the future.

Figure 6: 4Rs Regeneration Framework

The Framework distinguishes between the processes of analysis and decision making (*repositioning*), effecting change (*reinventing*), communication (*rebranding*) and governance/spatial planning and development (*restructuring*). An editable version of the transformation routemap with instructions can be downloaded[12] to help create a tailored Action Plan. Depending on where you start, the routemap will take time to deliver but is a useful tool to plan out both short and long-term priorities. Actions under each R may happen simultaneously, consecutively, or repeatedly. Further detail on each of the 4Rs can be found in the supporting resources on the High Streets Task Force website.[13]

[12] https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/transformation-routemap-webinars/create-a-transformation-routemap-for-your-town/

[13] https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/frameworks/4rs-regeneration-framework/

Repositioning

Repositioning is a strategy that relates to clearly identifying and communicating a place's market position (Millington and Ntounis, 2017). In some locations, there is a poor understanding of the catchment, the challenges and trends impacting on the place as well as a lack of data on which to base decisions. In these instances, a strategy of repositioning is sensible. This entails taking time to collect and analyse data and information, as well as develop appropriate visions and strategies that can get widespread buy-in. Repositioning can also be used to counteract decline and enable a centre to identify potential competitive advantages.

A challenge for all district centres in Stockport is availability of reliable longer term footfall data. Much of our analysis is based on analysis of just one year of data, whereas normally we would base our conclusions on two years of data. We suspect the insights we have drawn are reasonable assertions, but further analysis is recommended. Additionally, without access to hourly data we have been unable to perform more detailed analysis regarding peak times and the impact of specific events. Additionally, collection of relevant complimentary data (sales data, consumer data, demographics, dwell time) can enhance trading opportunities and the development of a district vision.

A key challenge is that Cheadle still does not have clear vision or strategy, and we would advise local stakeholders start a process to collaboratively produce a vision. We would advise this vision reflects findings from the Place Quality Audit and workshop findings in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of the district centre. The vision does not necessarily need to involve radical change, but rather should focus on consolidating the centre's strengths, whilst tackling specific challenges through viable and measurable actions e.g., reuse of empty shops and lowering barriers to entry for new business. However, the long-term vision might be more aspirational e.g., to create a car-free and walkable centre. Whatever vision is decided, it must garner support and buy-in from all stakeholders and the broad support of the wider community.

Developing greater knowledge and understanding of each centre is valuable for all local traders on the high street. Although historically retailers have been poorly supported in terms of national and European policy, there are emerging opportunities, such as the Shop Local Initiative, which can open access to business advice and support for both start-ups and established traders s e.g., guidance on marketing or digital technology, recruitment, or even rising energy costs. District centre managers, therefore, could play a vital role in linking high street businesses to this support. It is important the needs of local traders connect to a wider vision or strategy. For example, as the pandemic revealed small traders who were able to flip their businesses from instore to home delivery and online have proved to be more resilient. Raising digital skills of all local traders, such as using social media promotion to drive footfall into stores is another activity that can underpin future resilience.

Reinventing

Reinventing strategies relate to the activities undertaken to revitalise a place's identity and offer (Theodoridis, Ntounis, and Pal, 2017). Any place should understand and seek to meet the needs of its catchment and the visitors it may attract and be sensitive to these insights when making any changes within a centre. Sometimes places have the data they need and sensible plans for how the town or city needs to change to better serve its catchment communities, but nothing is happening there. A process of reinvention is needed. Transformation needs to start, and this might be through temporary interventions, events, pop-ups, or experimental place-making.

Whereas Cheadle is in a strong position in terms of diversity, merchandise, and service offer, it is important to continuously review this in order to fill in any gaps and enhance the everyday offer in the centre. For example, the recent closure of Boots will leave a gap in terms of provision of certain goods and services, which needs to be dispersed within the centre. Whereas this may need some review, efforts need to be made to ensure the continuity of the existing activity if it appears to impact favourably on footfall. Local stakeholders might consider organising additional events at quieter times of the year or themed for different seasons. One suggestion is to follow Bramhall's example and to enact temporary road closures to host the markets on the high street and much closer to existing businesses.

Future events might also introduce trials and experiments to diversify what the centre has to offer, to prepare for future adaption as the local catchment changes. We stress this is important given the centre's reliance on its immediate local catchment and changing demographic. Finally, given the relative difficulty in reoccupying vacant retail units, opportunities to experiment with such spaces needs to be explored, e.g., creation of temporary retail activations or personal and commercial services on rotation.

Measures also need to be taken in the short-term to improve the quality of public realm and improve certain building facades and shop frontages, working in partnership with landlords. In busy high streets with narrow pavements, additional parklets which also accommodate planting would be welcome. Other measures might include shutter art so that when businesses are closed they do not appear permanently shut. Artwork could also enhance the traditional village qualities to the centre.

Rebranding

Sometimes there are good plans, based on good evidence that are being brought to life. The place is both repositioning and reinventing – but catchment perceptions have not changed. People are still negative about the town or city centre. In this case, rebranding may be needed. Strategies of rebranding focus upon the application of branding, marketing communications, and public relations techniques to deliver a consistent place identity, which relates to the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions in the minds of potential consumers of a place (Ntounis and Kavaratzis, 2017). Rebranding also includes stakeholder communications, not just marketing and PR activities. Ultimately, a strong place brand should be positive and consistent, and the product of local co-creation. Successful place brand management can lead to positive word-of-mouth, and assist in the transformation of previously negative, or just as problematic, non-existent images. It might be appropriate to establish a local subgroup to review and develop an appropriate participatory place branding process, which engages a wide range of local stakeholders. We would emphasise, this does not necessarily require professional branding assistance, and neither does the target audience need to be an external one. Rather, low-level, and low-cost social media communication across multiple platforms designed to engage and inform existing users of the town-centre, stakeholders, and residents about existing activities and the wider offer in the centre might prove just as effective.

In this respect, the overall reputation of Cheadle seems to be problematic, with little evidence of a digital footprint and collective centre promotion. There is a clear challenge in terms of toponymy, as Cheadle is "competing" online with Cheadle Hulme and Cheadle Heath, as well as Cheadle, Staffordshire. For some historic reason Cheadle Hulme is dominant. Consequently, rebranding Cheadle should go beyond a good slogan, hashtag or logo, discussions from the workshop suggest that a decision on how to distinguish Cheadle from other centres online is needed (e.g., #CheadleGM). This needs to be done carefully to drive footfall to the appropriate centre. Although there is more work to be done in Cheadle compared to other district centres, local stakeholders might aspire to emulate Bishopgate (York) where the community has developed both excellent online resources https://www.bishyroad.net together with creative maps promoting the local offer.

Additionally, discussions from the workshop suggest local stakeholders might benefit from developing a shared understanding of what Cheadle has to offer and act more as ambassadors to further promote a positive image of the high street. Existing communication channels could be used to strengthen a shared understanding of the visioning and strategies between local stakeholders. This should extend to include a wider range of local businesses to generate more frequent social media messages. This may necessitate training in digital skills for some traders.

Sometimes we encounter a disparity in places between the perceptions of a place held by local stakeholders and those of customers or visitors using the centre. This was evident during workshop discussions, as many people in the room had differing opinions on Cheadle's place image. It would be a useful exercise to undertake place sentiment analysis on a regular basis including to review and evaluate user experiences e.g., TripAdvisor or Google reviews. This is important to ensure marketing and branding messages are consistent and appropriate for the catchment, and especially in the case of Cheadle, where there is potential conflation with other towns. There are opportunities in this process to consider how better to promote synergies and linked trips within Cheadle, to establish the high street more as a destination in which visitors might dwell for longer using local shops and services, attending events, and visiting local bars and restaurants.

Restructuring

Sometimes places just seem to be stuck in a state of inertia around decision making or, when decisions are made and action taken, it does not have the impact that was expected. This can be tackled through a process of restructuring. Strengthening existing synergies perhaps involves more than simply improving communications between local stakeholders, and instead calls for greater collaboration and coordination of local stakeholders. This may involve refreshing existing networks. Sometimes wider town partnerships meet too infrequently or are simply too large to be effective. It might prove useful, therefore, to consider delegating specific tasks to sub-groups, which meet more often, who report back to a smaller executive group. It is not for the IPM, however, to determine how this operates, the various local partnerships and stakeholders, including local government, need to work out what works best. Consequently, there are not many easy wins here, but hopefully the IPM's recommendation provides a springboard to address these issues in proactive way.

Although there is an enthusiastic group of local stakeholders willing to get involved in the future of the centre, it is not clear if Cheadle has an active and/or recognised place management organisation, such as a Business Improvement District, town-team, or similar partnership. It is important the activities and recommendations made in this report are both actioned and coordinated. We would advise therefore, that Cheadle establishes a district centre partnership group or taskforce to manage both short and long-term change. This might extend to the coordination of event organisers and volunteer groups willing to get involved in supporting activity including markets, festivals, litter picking and community planting, and so on.

Restructuring may also involve physical regeneration when spatial challenges are a barrier to change. Cheadle does not possess substantive civic space within the centre, which is also influenced by a relatively poor pedestrian and cycling environment due to the traffic flowing through the centre throughout the day. This limits opportunities to extend pavements, create cycle lanes and space for on-street trading – and is likely to negatively impact on dwell time, overall experience, and place reputation.

Although Cheadle is an attractive location, there are challenges regarding its built environment. Planning blight is evident within the centre, as many units are in a state of disrepair, and their slow churn negatively affects place image and centre perceptions. Opportunities to consider creating alternative uses other than retail need to be explored as viable options, particularly for long-term vacant units. A future vision might begin to imagine if there are possibilities to create civic and performance spaces, simply greenery or places to hold events, or mixed-use residential to ensure the future viability of the centre. It is important that long-term regeneration plans enable the district centre to adapt, whilst retaining its distinct built environment.

4. Recommendations

Repositioning	
QUICK WINS	**LONGER TERM**
Ensure footfall data is widely available and can be accessed by local traders, event organisers and other place-based stakeholders to demonstrate success of delivery.	Continue to track effectiveness of interventions in the centre through monitoring and interpreting footfall data (volume and pattern of activity), providing impact assessment of events etc. Agree on a reliable, consistent, and sustainable method for collecting footfall data in the district centre.
Evaluate the specific impact of markets and events on footfall, sales, dwell time, and visitor perceptions.	Refresh events programme to maximise trading opportunities.
Hold a visioning workshop with local stakeholders, facilitated by the District Centre Manager.	Construct a clear vision for Cheadle based on evidence, which address specific challenges, and is well-defined in spatial terms.
District centre manager to develop greater awareness of business support and available to local traders through a dedicated workshop.	Actively link local traders to specific initiatives which will help them develop or sustain their business – linking to the wider vision.

Supporting resources

Repositioning: developing collaborative, inspiring visions that achieve change

E-Learn - Repositioning your high street (4Rs) | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

Vision and Strategy - 25 'vital and viable' priorities | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

Paisley is open – A vision for Paisley Town Centre 2030 | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

Understanding place data training: Understanding Place Data | High Streets Task Force
Developing place analysts: https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/courses/developing-place-analysts-online-training/

Reinventing

QUICK WINS	LONGER TERM
Review the range of place-based anchors (retail, employment, transport, green space, heritage, culture), everyday activity that significantly attracts footfall.	Ensure key place-based attractors are embedded in local plans and visions for the town centre and include in wider messaging.
Review funding and resources of existing activities to ensure they are sustainable and can be delivered in a predictable way, with the support of the district centre manager.	Extend and diversify the events programme to grow footfall in the high street and diversify local offer.
Work with local property owners to activate empty shops units, e.g., meanwhile use, pop-ups, community use.	Lower barriers to entry and generate more opportunities of innovation and non-retail function e.g., start-up scheme, flexible leasing, rents etc.
Undertake a district centre audit to compile a list of eyesores and unkempt sites, and opportunities to add greenery and floral displays e.g., planters outside traders.	Develop an action plan to identify specific projects which are then assigned to appropriate stakeholder groups. This might include resourcing plans e.g., accessing small grants, crowd-sourcing, stakeholder contributions etc. Important for Cheadle to follow consistent guidance which enhances and protects the architectural qualities of the district centre.

Supporting Resources

E-Learn - Reinventing your high street (4Rs) | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

Specific Resources to Consider

Barriers to New Entrants - 25 'vital and viable' priorities | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

Open Doors: Pilot Programme Report | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

Place investment and engaging landlords | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)

[Temporary Use as a Participatory Placemaking Tool | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)]

Rebranding

QUICK WINS	LONGER TERM
Create a place brand for Cheadle via consultation with local stakeholders and develop multichannel promotions and social media good practices.	Develop an array of comms to extend and build a network of place ambassadors including key anchor institutions, stakeholders, and local business – to promote positive image in a sustainable way.
Undertake place sentiment analysis to build a clearer understanding of user experiences of Cheadle.	Adjust social media communications in alignment with these regular reviews.
Once the visioning workshop is complete - the district centre manager could facilitate a place branding exercise designed to activate the vision. Important this a participatory process in which the place brand is coproduced with the local community.	Construct a place brand to assist district centre development – to counter negative place perceptions which may be detrimental to future investment.
Invest in training and support in digital marketing for both local traders and market stalls.	Ensure traders are both consistent in their messaging and active in communications with customers. This could be monitored through repeat sentiment analysis.

Supporting Resources

[E-Learn - Rebranding your high street (4Rs) | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)]

[Understanding Place Sentiment | High Streets Task Force]

[Place Marketing - 25 'vital and viable' priorities | Resources | High Street Task Force (highstreetstaskforce.org.uk)]

Restructuring	
QUICK WINS	**LONGER TERM**
Review state of vacant units within the centre.	Discuss potential uses that need to be addressed via planning consultations.
District centre manager to strengthen existing stakeholder group – e.g., facilitate workshops and regular meetings.	Establish a more formal leadership group supported by subgroups with responsibility for specific areas of intervention (landlords, traders' groups, events, branding etc).
Review existing Local Plan and strategic urban regeneration framework and benchmark against IPM's 25 Priorities.	Undertake feasibility studies into specific project which address the spatial challenges identified above and create a group to take forwards. This group could create a neighbourhood plan – or regeneration framework based on the 4Rs. Within this there should be scope to develop a design code to help conserve the heritage distinction e.g., shop frontages, street furniture and lighting and so on, that could be managed to reinforce place image and reputation.

General Supporting resources

25 Vital and Viable Priorities

Diagnostic: capacity and structures for managing change (IPM)

E-Learn - Restructuring your high street (4Rs)

Principles of Town Planning in relation to High Streets and Town Centres (RTPI)

Town Centre Partnerships (URBED)

Specific resources to consider for the district centre

Creative High Streets

Curbside Management Practitioners Guide (ITE)

Dealing with Empty Shops (LGA)

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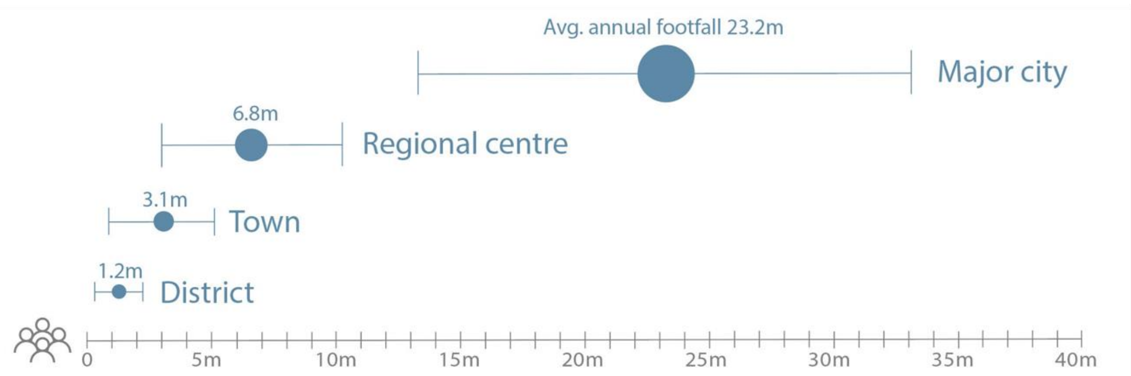
Appendices

Appendix 1: Activity Hierarchy

The activity hierarchy is a classification of settlement size based upon the annual volume of footfall. It is particularly useful for planners and decision makers, as it can enable local authorities and interested parties to monitor the evolution of their centres in a more consistent fashion (Mumford et al., 2021). The activity hierarchy uses a standard order of settlement size (Major city, Regional Centre, Town, and District), and is established by comparing a place's annual footfall volume with the mean footfall volume for each classification and the standard deviation (a measure of how much footfall volume varies across centres in these groups - see below).



Levels of activity hierarchy and average as well as standard deviation of annual footfall in each level of activity hierarchy

Activity Hierarchy	Mean (million)	Standard Deviation (million)
District	1.2	0.9
Town	3.1	2.2
Regional Centre	6.8	3.7
Major City	23.2	9.9

Mean and standard deviation (SD) in each level of the activity hierarchy.

Appendix 2: Viability Assessment

Introduced below is an index of viability, which considers the multiple conditions that affect the overall viability of the High Street, and the interconnectedness between aspects of viability. This index - or tool to measure viability - has been shaped by academics and practitioners with an interest in the health of high streets and has been piloted with a series of towns in England. For this tool to be widely operationalised across high streets in England it uses data that is (1) pertinent to the conceptualisation of viability, (2) is easily available, and (3) enables a fine geographical granularity. The following indices and datasets are included in the tool:

1. Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 scores for the seven domains of deprivation.
2. Community Wellbeing Index (Co-op) for nine main areas that matter for community wellbeing.

Indices	**Viability**				
	Social and cultural	**Environmental**	**Technological**	**Political**	**Economic**
CDRC Geodem (IMD 2019)	IMD Crime IMD Health IMD Housing IMD Education	IMD Living Environment			IMD Income IMD Employment
Wellbeing Index People	Education and learning Health				Economy, Work and Employment
Wellbeing Index Place	Culture, heritage, and leisure	Housing, space, and environment	Transport, mobility, and connectivity		
Wellbeing Index Relationships	Relationships and trust Equality			Voice and decision-making	

Note: All five viability constructs are weighted equally - 20% each.

Appendix 3: Introduction to the updated 25 Priorities

In late 2019, the IPM team updated the list of "Top 25 Priorities" as part of the development of the High Streets Task Force, introducing new or amended priorities that correspond to the ongoing changes on the fabric of the high street. Table x provides the changes in the ranking of the 25 priorities. These amendments and new additions highlight the shift from traditional retail-oriented thinking into a more nuanced and multifunctional way of thinking about what constitutes a vital and viable centre. This is highlighted by the inclusion of "Non-retail Offer" as a separate priority in the 2019 update, the amendment of "Anchors" to include anything that is attracting a significant amount of people to a location (universities, hospitals, parks, train stations), the inclusion of "Markets" in their multiple forms (from collective retail to food halls), and the inclusion of "Redevelopment Plans", "Functionality", and "Innovation" as priorities that can influence centre transformation based on focused development, change in a centre's functions (e.g. from retail-dominant to multifunctional), and opportunities for community experimentation respectively.

Priority Rank	Priority (Original 2014 study)	Priority (2019 Update)
1	ACTIVITY HOURS (Opening hours; shopping hours; evening economy)	ACTIVITY* (Opening hours; footfall; shopping hours; evening economy)
2	APPEARANCE (Visual appearance; cleanliness)	RETAIL OFFER (Retailer offer; retailer representation)
3	RETAILERS (Retailer offer; retailer representation)	VISION & STRATEGY (Leadership; collaboration; area development strategies)
4	VISION&STRATEGY (Leadership; collaboration; area development strategies)	EXPERIENCE (Centre image; service quality; visitor satisfaction; familiarity; atmosphere)
5	EXPERIENCE (Service quality; visitor satisfaction; centre image; familiarity)	APPEARANCE (Visual appearance; cleanliness; ground floor frontages)
6	MANAGEMENT (Centre management; shopping centre management; Town Centre Management; place management)	PLACE MANAGEMENT (Centre management; shopping centre management; Town Centre Management (TCM); place management; Business Improvement Districts (BIDs))
7	MERCHANDISE (Range/quality of goods; assortments)	NECESSITIES (Car-parking; amenities; general facilities)
8	NECESSITIES (Car-parking; amenities; general facilities)	Anchors* - Presence of anchors - which give locations their basic character and signify importance
9	Anchor stores - Presence of anchor stores - which give locations their basic character and signify importance	NON-RETAIL OFFER (Attractions; entertainment; non-retail offer; leisure offer)
10	NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS WITH COUNCIL (Networking; partnerships; community leadership)	MERCHANDISE (Range/Quality of goods; assortments; merchandising)
11	DIVERSITY (Attractions; range/quality of shops; non-retail offer; tenant mix; tenant variety; retail diversity; availability of alternative formats)	WALKING (Walkability; pedestrianisation/flow; cross-shopping; linked trips; connectivity)
12	WALKING (Walkability; pedestrianisation/flow; cross-shopping; linked trips)	PLACE MARKETING (Centre marketing; marketing; orientation/flow)
13	ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE (Entertainment; leisure offer)	NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS WITH COUNCIL (Networking; partnerships; community leadership;

		retail/tenant trust; tenant/manager relations; strategic alliances; centre empowerment; stakeholder power; engagement)
14	ATTRACTIVENESS (Place attractiveness; attractiveness)	ACCESSIBLE (Convenience; accessibility)
15	PLACE ASSURANCE (Atmosphere; BIDs; retail/tenant trust; store characteristics)	DIVERSITY (Range/quality of shops; tenant mix; tenant variety; availability of alternative formats; store characteristics; comparison/convenience; chain vs independent; supermarket impact; retail diversity; retail choice)
16	ACCESSIBLE (Convenience; accessibility; public transport)	ATTRACTIVENESS (Sales/turnover; place attractiveness; vacancy rates; attractiveness; retail spend; customer/catchment views; Construction of out-of-town centre)
17	PLACE MARKETING (Centre marketing; marketing; tenant/manager relations; orientation/flow; merchandising; special offers)	MARKETS* (Traditional markets; street trading)
18	Comparison/convenience - The amount of comparison-shopping opportunities compared to convenience (usually in percentage terms)	RECREATIONAL SPACE (Recreational areas; public space; open space)
19	RECREATIONAL SPACE (Recreational areas; public space; open space)	BARRIERS TO NEW ENTRANTS (Barriers to entry; landlords)
20	Barriers to Entry - Refers to obstacles that make it difficult for interested retailers to enter the centre's/High Street's market	Safety/Crime - A centre KPI measuring perceptions or actual crime including shoplifting
21	Chain vs independent - Number of multiples stores and independent stores in the retail mix of a centre/High Street	ADAPTABILITY (Retail flexibility; retail fragmentation; flexibility; store/centre design; retail unit size; store development; rents turnover)
22	Safety/crime - A centre KPI measuring perceptions or actual crime including shoplifting	LIVEABLE (Multi/mono-functional; liveability; personal services; mixed use)
23	LIVEABLE (Multi/mono-functional; connectivity; liveability)	REDEVELOPMENT PLANS* (Planning blight; regeneration)
24	ADAPTABILITY (Retail flexibility; retail fragmentation; flexibility; mixed-use; engagement; functionality; store/centre design; retail unit size)	Functionality* - The degree to which a centre fulfils a role – e.g., service centre, employment centre, residential centre, tourist centre
25	Store development - The process of building, upgrading, remodelling or renovating retail stores	INNOVATION* (Opportunities to experiment; retail Innovation)

Appendix 4: Summary of LDC Data

Cheadle Location Report Highlights	Count	Percentages
Total Units (Including Village Square)	165	
Retail (shops)	125	75.8%
Leisure	40	24.2%
Vacancy Rates	15	9.1% (per total units)
Retail (Shops)	13	7.9%
Leisure	2	1.2%
Classification Mix		
Comparison	39	25.7%
Convenience	16	10.5%
Service	59	38.8%
Leisure	38	25.0%
Net Change in Openings/Closures		
Comparison	0	0.0% (per classification category)
Convenience	0	0.0% (per classification category)
Service	-2	-3.4% (per classification category)
Leisure	0	0.0% (per classification category)
Independent vs Multiple Mix		
Independents	112	70.9%
Multiples	46	29.1%

Appendix 5: Footfall Signature Types

The following section presents the monthly data pattern in Cheadle. It is based on the findings of the Bringing Big Data to Small Users (BDSU) project, a collaborative research and development project funded by Innovate UK, led by retail intelligence specialists, Springboard, and involving the IPM, Manchester Metropolitan University, Cardiff University, MyKnowledgeMap, and other key partners. Through the analysis of hourly footfall data provided for more than 150 locations over 10 years, the project identified four basic patterns that have profound significance in thinking about the future of traditional retail centres.

Footfall Patterns	Typical Characteristics
Comparison	People come here predominantly to shop Busiest in the run up to Christmas People travel a considerable distance to visit Wide range of retail choice, leisure, food and beverage Strong retail anchor(s) Strong presence of multiples and international brands Depth and breadth of merchandising Large catchment area Accessible by choice of means of transport Organise themselves to compete with other comparison towns and channels
Holiday	People come here for a holiday or a 'day out' Busiest times are July and August People travel a considerable distance to visit Focus on offering a good experience to visitors during the summer peak Attractive to tourists but have a relatively weak comparison offer Organise themselves to increase and enhance their entertainment and leisure appeal
Speciality	People come here for the overall experience Footfall rises steadily from Easter to end of August - and peaks again around Christmas time. People stay longer here (increased dwell time). Anchor(s) not retail - offer something unique and special Attract visitors but serve local population Organise themselves to protect and promote identity and positioning
Multifunctional	People come for a mixture of everyday needs - shopping, accessing public transport, employment, education, services etc. Large multifunctional towns have higher footfall figures than small multifunctional towns. People travel further to access large multifunctional towns whilst small multifunctional towns just serve their local population Retail offer, opening times, events, services and other uses focused on local community and/or a well-defined hinterland Convenience anchor – work, public transport, food shopping, markets Accessible and locally connected Organise themselves to manage accessibility, concentration, reliability, and customer service