Institute of Place Management

Manchester Metropolitan University

CHEADLE HULME

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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This report has been written by an interdisciplinary team of academics and practitioners from the IPM, including:

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Foreword

This report has been prepared following a workshop held on the 23rd March 2022, attended by key local stakeholders from Cheadle Hulme. 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 approaches 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 to the vitality and viability of high streets, this report presents findings from Cheadle Hulme, 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 Hulme 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 2021 to January 2022[3].
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 and Viability Assessment.
6. Application of local evidence using the 4Rs frameworks.

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[1] Available on request – contact the IPM
[2] For more detail see: https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/frameworks/4rs-regeneration-framework/
[3] This measures high street footfall at specific locations, to provide rapid access to anonymised data. The counter measures the physical presence of people and is not dependent upon any form of technology used by an individual (e.g., mobile data, WiFi data). The data can only provide a snapshot of activity in each location but nevertheless provides a robust indicator of activity.

2. Cheadle Hulme 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" that impact upon the performance of district centres, and which local place leaders should be focusing on. The outcomes of this audit can be seen in the Phase 1 report of the project[4].

Since we last visited Cheadle Hulme in 2019[5], overall, the centre has maintained a good retail offer with key retail anchors ASDA and Waitrose providing groceries and convenience retail. There is a good mix of both multiple retailers (e.g., ASDA) and independents (e.g., Station Opticians) providing a good range of quality and affordable merchandise to meet catchment needs, with 73.6% of units independents and 26.4% multiples[6]. Since the last place quality audit, we noted there appears to be several new bars, restaurants and takeaways further enhancing the strong hospitality offer in Cheadle Hulme, which workshop attendees highlighted as a key attractor.

However, there are a few areas of concern. First, although there is a new District Centre Manager in place to help manage the centre of Cheadle Hulme, there does not appear to be any networks or partnerships involving local stakeholders who are prepared to take on responsibility for the delivery of an action plan. This was further evidenced by the low attendance at the stakeholder workshop, where participants drew attention to previous, but failed attempts to galvanise partnership working in the district. Whereas in many respects Cheadle Hulme is a high-functioning district centre at the moment, the lack of a strong tradition of collaborative working will become a significant barrier to future transformation.

Second, whereas workshop attendees drew attention to the value of having a compact centre where many key businesses and services are accessible by foot, the overall experience and walkability remains compromised by the high frequency of road traffic that continues to dominate.

Third, although Cheadle Hulme has a very low vacancy rate figure (4.6% compared to 14.1% GB average in Q1 2022[7]) demonstrating its economic attractiveness, this is also a potential problem in terms of adaptability and innovation, as there are few units which could accommodate new types of business or activity. We would advise working with landlords to carefully curate potential end-users for empty units to ensure Cheadle Hulme is able to adapt to meet the needs of the catchment in the future.

[4] https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=168756
[5] See Appendix 3 for an explanation of the updated 25 Priorities
[6] Based on LDC data
[7] Based on LDC data

Table 1 below summarises the strengths and weaknesses, with key changes highlighted in bold.

Cheadle Hulme District Centre Strengths and Weaknesses	
Key Strengths	**Key Weaknesses**
2. Retail Offer - A strong retail provision supported by the Cheadle Hulme Shopping Centre. - A good mix of both multiple retailers (e.g., Waitrose) and independents (e.g. Station Opticians) creating more diversity. - Retail provision meets the needs of the catchment with groceries and convenience needs met by key anchor supermarkets.	3, 6, & 13. Vision and Strategy, Place Management, and Networks - No clear vision or strategy co-created by stakeholders for Cheadle Hulme's future. - Although there is now a District Centre Manager in place which is a positive move, there appear to be few mechanisms in place to foster local stakeholder collaboration. - Stakeholder workshop poorly attended suggesting challenges with partnership working.
10. Merchandise - Strong range of essentials provided. - A good mixture of affordable and higher quality merchandise to meet needs of catchment.	11. Walkability - Post office, library, and Church Road offer seems to be disconnected from main centre. - A very busy road cutting through the centre.
9. Non-Retail Offer - A good provision of hospitality, including a range of quality pubs, bars, and restaurants, which helps to drive the non-retail offer.	***9. Non-Retail Offer*** - Although the Chads Theatre provides an important entertainment offer, there appears to be a limited range of events in the centre, and it is unclear if the Artisan Market is still in operation due to infrequent place branding.
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	21. & **25**. Adaptability and ***Innovation*** - Existing shopping precinct difficult to adapt - Low vacancy rate in the centre meaning it's difficult to innovate with a new offer. - Limited evidence of innovation such as meanwhile uses or temporary activity.

Table 1: Key strengths and weaknesses

Viability Assessment

The Viability Assessment is a measure of High Street Viability[8]. 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 Hulme is **highly economically viable**, as informed by its low vacancy rate (4.6%) indicating the economic attractiveness of the centre, as well as low levels of income (20% least deprived) and employment (20% least deprived) deprivation[9]. It also scores well for **social and cultural viability**, as driven by low barriers to housing and services (10% least deprived), as well as **technological viability**, which is impacted by the good levels of public transport connectivity in the centre, such as the local and well-used train station (see Figure 1 below).

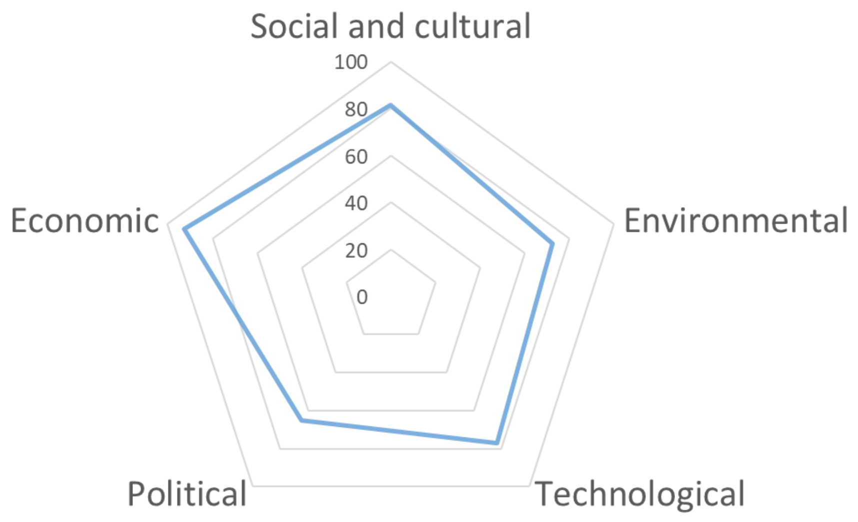

Figure 1: Viability assessment for Cheadle Hulme

Footfall Analysis

The annual footfall figure for Cheadle Hulme for the period of January 2021-2022 for the counter location was 931,434 suggesting Cheadle Hulme is correctly defined as a **district centre** based on the estimated activity level[10]. The average daily footfall count is 2582, November is the busiest month, Friday is the busiest day, whereas Sunday is typically the quietest day.

Monthly Footfall Analysis

Monthly footfall was calculated for Cheadle Hulme for the year 2021. The data demonstrates that Cheadle Hulme is exhibiting a flat footfall profile for the majority of the months, meaning that it is mainly serving a local catchment (Figure 2 and Table 2). Cheadle Hulme fits the profile of a **multifunctional centre** that offers a convenient mix of goods and services. Cheadle Hulme showcases a small November peak followed by a December drop, which can probably be attributed to the surge of the Omicron variant during that time.

[8] See Appendix 2 for an explanation of how the Viability Assessment is calculated.
[9] Based on IMD data
[10] See Appendix 1 for an explanation of how the hierarchy is derived.

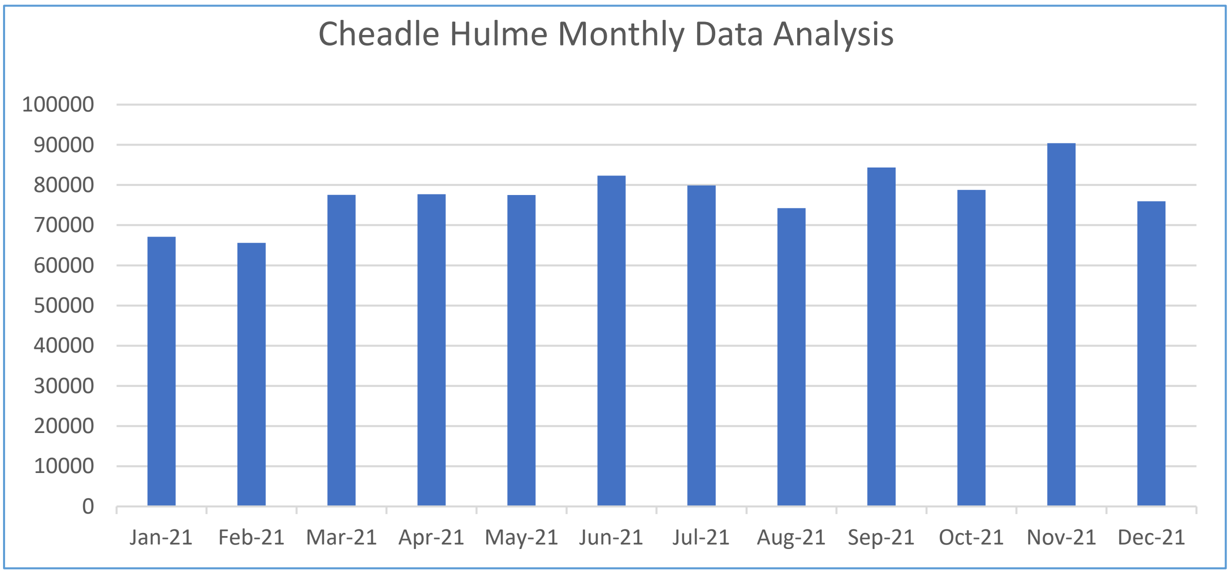

Figure 2: Monthly footfall data for Cheadle Hulme

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

Table 2 provides a monthly footfall count for Cheadle Hulme. It is estimated that footfall during the first months of 2021 may have been hindered by the third COVID-19 national lockdown (which started on January 6). 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 Hulme's footfall appears to be stable. Cheadle Hulme has a smaller footfall count compared to other Stockport district centres, consistent with its neighbourhood feel.

Month	Cheadle Hulme Monthly Data	Monthly Data as Percentage
Jan-21	67094	7.2%
Feb-21	65594	7.0%
Mar-21	77532	8.3%
Apr-21	77724	8.3%
May-21	77520	8.3%
Jun-21	82330	8.8%
Jul-21	79910	8.6%

[11] See https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/media/hr5jbfev/footfall-report-2021-exec-summary-final.pdf

Aug-21	74251	8.0%
Sep-21	84340	9.1%
Oct-21	78788	8.5%
Nov-21	90407	9.7%
Dec-21	75944	8.2%
Annual Footfall	931434	100%

Table 2: Monthly footfall count and percentage for Cheadle Hulme

Events and Footfall

It is unclear if any Christmas-related events took place in Cheadle Hulme during the period of observation, however some noticeable dates include Monday 15th November and Monday 22nd November, where footfall was much higher than normal (5379 and 4274 respectively) compared to an average Monday in that month (average of 2619). Our desk research suggests this may be related to the Cheadle Hulme Remembrance events that month. However more data needs to be collected (e.g., sales data, dwell time, visitors' perceptions) to identify the full footfall effect, with local stakeholder insight required to map any footfall uplifts with any events taking place.

Weekly Footfall Analysis

Finally, the weekly footfall pattern for Cheadle Hulme was calculated (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 Hulme exhibits a Monday through Saturday peak, with a noticeable drop on Sunday consistent with smaller neighbourhood-like centres. The busy Friday pattern is unique compared to other Stockport district centres, and worth exploring further as a unique selling proposition for businesses. Cheadle Hulme's weekly signature may be heavily influenced by the effects of the pandemic (e.g., hybrid working arrangements). Nevertheless, understanding how Cheadle Hulme functions on a weekly basis can help towards the development of strategies and initiatives that fit the centre's profile and catchment.

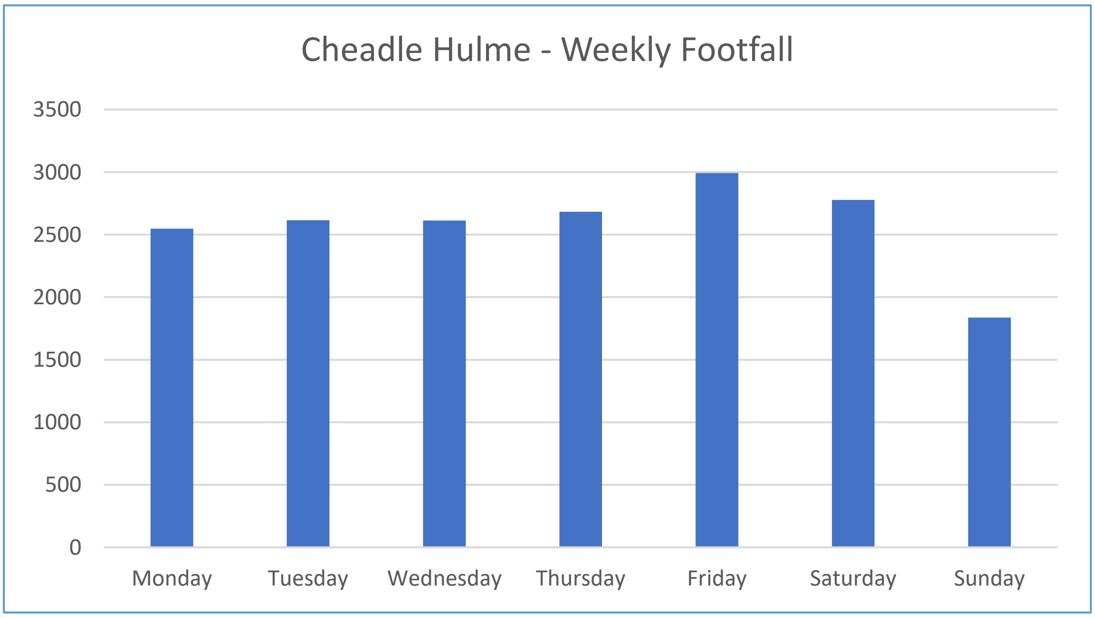

Figure 3: Weekly footfall pattern for Cheadle Hulme

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 summarises the responses of the groups.

Figure 4: Attractors word cloud for Cheadle Hulme

Three themes dominate the analysis: **Retail offer**, **Hospitality**, and **Variety** of offer. Regarding retail offer, workshop participants believed there were some strong retail anchors, such as Waitrose, which contribute to the attractiveness in Cheadle Hulme. They also drew attention to the quality and range of bars and restaurants in the centre (e.g., Gusto), which have strengthened helping the non-retail and hospitality offer. In the case of variety, participants believed there was a good mix of retail and hospitality in Cheadle Hulme and, as indicated above, independent businesses seem to play a great role in providing diversity, with 73.6% of units in the centre identified as being independents.

The second part of this exercise required individual participants to work together in sub-groups. Everyone was asked to identify and explain the importance of one of the three factors they identified to other members of the subgroup. Each sub-group then had to select their top three factors and place them in order of priority. The third part of the exercise required individuals to write down a barrier or constraint they believed was holding back change in their local high street. The word cloud presented in Figure 5 below summarises all the barriers identified by whole group.

Figure 5: Barriers identified in Cheadle Hulme

The top barrier identified by both sub-groups was the limited **partnership working** in Cheadle Hulme, as further evidenced by the low workshop attendance. Although some workshop participants were involved in a successful community orchard, there seems to be limited mechanisms and forums in place to encourage local networks, collaboration and ideas sharing. Additionally, participants pointed to the lack of a clear vision or **action plan** in place to help drive future transformation of Cheadle Hulme. Although these barriers might be partly addressed through the appointment of a District Centre Manager by Stockport MBC, it is important to manage expectations here, as they can only do so much. The ongoing management of the centre will require additional capacity through the formation of networks and partnerships but may first need to overcome a local institutional culture which has been unable to sustain successful partnership working in the past. This may require reaching out to new arrivals unincumbered by previous experiences to refresh or create new partnerships structures.

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

The 4Rs 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 you plan the Action Plan. Depending on where you start, this Route Map 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.

Cheadle Hulme still does not have clear vision or strategy. We would advise the vision reflects findings from the Place Quality Audit and views of local stakeholders in terms of their perception 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, such as providing events and delivering new placemaking innovations in the centre. However, a long-term plan might be to consider how the impact of traffic will be mitigated to improve the overall experience and walkability of the centre.

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.

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.

There appears to be a limited range of community events taking place in Cheadle Hulme over recent years, or at least these are difficult to identify through online promotions, suggesting if they do take place they are not well-mediated (see Rebranding below). This weakness suggests that efforts need to be made to reactivate the centre through a refreshed programme of events, whilst ensuring the continuity of any existing events (e.g., Remembrance Day Parade), and monitoring the effectiveness of these against footfall data (see Repositioning above). Local stakeholders might consider organising additional events particularly at quieter times of the year such as February and August to enhance centre footfall and vibrancy (see Footfall Analysis). Given the strong hospitality offer in the centre, a fitting event might involve local bars and restaurants working in collaboration to produce a food and drinks festival. There could also be greater experimentation in Cheadle Hulme given adaptability and innovation were identified as weaknesses within the place quality audit. This could involve experimenting with temporary activity or 'meanwhile uses' within the existing vacant units to enhance the leisure offer within the centre, such as putting on arts and crafts workshops. It is unclear if the local Artisan Market is still functioning due to irregular social media updates and so one way to enhance diversity in the centre, and to enable new businesses to experiment at low-risk, would be to ensure there is a more regular market in place to diversify the offer and drive footfall.

Rebranding

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). 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.

Sometimes there are good plans, based on good evidence, and these 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. 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. 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 Hulme seems to be largely positive, with the *I Love Cheadle Hulme* social media accounts regularly promoting the things going on in the centre. However, there appears to be little engagement with these posts, or the #ilovecheadlehulme hashtag, by local residents or visitors, e.g. on Twitter. A low-cost and quick win, therefore, might be to include the #ilovecheadlehulme hashtag on all business windows to encourage greater circulation of positive messages about the centre online to enhance place awareness and identity. Local stakeholders might draw inspiration from Bishopgate (York) where the community has developed both excellent online resources https://www.bishyroad.net together with creative maps promoting the local offer.

Perhaps connected to lack of vision, Cheadle Hulme lacks a strong over-arching place identity. Discussions from the workshop suggests local stakeholders believe the diverse and high-quality food and drinks offer is one of the main strengths of the centre, which could therefore be further leveraged to inform a stronger place brand for both locals and potential visitors, for example through greater promotion of this offer on social media and consolidated through more food and drinks events. Existing communication channels could be used to strengthen a shared understanding of the visioning and strategies of Cheadle Hulme between local stakeholders. This should extend to include local businesses to generate more frequent social media messages, with some key attractors posting infrequently making it difficult for both local residents and visitors to attain accurate and timely information about the offer (the Cheadle Hulme Market Twitter has not posted since 2018).

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. 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. There are opportunities in this process to promote synergies and linked trips within Cheadle Hulme, to establish the high street 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 recommendations provide a springboard to address these issues in a proactive way.

As indicated by workshop participants, coupled with the low workshop attendance, there appears to be a history of poor partnership working within Cheadle Hulme, despite a small group of enthusiastic residents, with a lack of networks between local traders, community groups and residents. Cheadle Hulme does not have a formal 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 Hulme attempts again to establish a district centre partnership group or taskforce to manage both short and long-term change, coordinated by the District Centre Manager. This may require reaching out to new arrivals or groups who have not been involved in previous groups to include a much wider range of voices. It would be useful to first establish several small and viable projects, and then establish sub-groups to deliver specific activities. This has worked well elsewhere, for example, in Withington, where local independent traders took control of social media messaging. Given the direction of the rules concerning the distribution of government funding for high streets will require places to demonstrate meaningful and effective partnership working, should Cheadle Hulme seek to address more ambitious strategic development projects, then the development of collaborative working is imperative. With a district centre manager now in place, at least there is a dedicated person who can provide ongoing support to help local stakeholders in this process.

Beyond local governance arrangement, the overriding spatial challenge is the busy main road intersecting the centre which hinders the experience for pedestrians and cyclists, together with limited opportunities for dwelling due to an absence of substantive civic space. This limits opportunities to create space for on-street trading and is likely to negatively impact on dwell time, overall experience, and place reputation. A future vision might begin to imagine how road and parking space could be repurposed to address the challenges we have identified above. For example, space for non-retail uses, civic and performance space, or simply more space created to hold events or a regular market. Although the shopping precinct is active and helps to strengthen the retail offer, it is not overly attractive and recent evidence suggests centres like this are becoming less viable or coming towards end of life. This could provide an opportunity for more transformational projects e.g. mixed-use residential to ensure the future viability of the centre.

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.	Regularly track effectiveness of interventions in the centre through monitoring and interpreting footfall data (volume and pattern of activity), providing impact assessment of any events. It is important to first agree on a reliable, consistent, and sustainable method for collecting footfall data in the district centre to enable this.
Hold a visioning workshop with local stakeholders, facilitated by the District Centre Manager.	Construct a clear vision for Cheadle Hulme based on evidence, which addresses specific challenges and is co-created by local stakeholders.
Compare the modal opening times of businesses to the footfall data to identify any mismatches in activity hours.	Trial revised opening times and days to maximise trading opportunities based on footfall data. And apply any learnings in a vision for the centre.
District centre manager to develop greater awareness of business support and available to local traders through a dedicate 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**
Local stakeholders to come together, facilitated by the District Centre Manager, to map the existing events offer across the year and to identify any gaps in activity.	Extend and diversify the events programme to grow footfall in the high street and diversify local offer.
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.	Identify potential sources of funding to enhance the centre's placemaking and events offer with the District Centre Manager collaborating with local stakeholders to apply for any suitable funding bids.
Work with local property owners to activate empty units, e.g., meanwhile use, pop-ups, community leisure activities.	Generate more opportunities for innovation and non-retail function e.g., start-up scheme, flexible leasing, rents, more regular markets.
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.

Supporting Resources

E-Learn - Reinventing your high street (4Rs) | 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)

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)

Rebranding	
QUICK WINS	**LONGER TERM**
Consolidate and develop social media good practice.	Use existing comms to extend and build a network of place ambassadors including key anchor institutions, stakeholders, and local businesses to promote a positive image of Cheadle Hulme in a sustainable way.
District Centre Manager and local place stakeholders to undertake place sentiment analysis to build a clearer evidence-base on user experiences of Cheadle Hulme.	Adjust social media communications in alignment with these regular reviews, and put on customer service training workshops if the reviews of local businesses are negative to ensure a more consistent centre experience.
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.	Create a more extensive programme of events and activity around the place brand envisaged by local stakeholders within the visioning workshops to consolidate a stronger place identity (e.g. potentially food and drinks events).

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**
District Centre Manager to bring together a wider group of local stakeholders to explore the feasibility of ongoing partnership work. strengthen existing stakeholder group.	District centre manager to facilitate subsequent meetings e.g., the next step would be to conduct a visioning workshop. The ultimate objective would be to establish a more formal leadership group supported by sub-groups with responsibility for specific areas of intervention (e.g., landlords, traders' groups, events, branding).
Review any existing Local Plan and strategic urban regeneration framework and benchmark against IPM's 25 Priorities.	Create a neighbourhood plan or regeneration framework based on the 4Rs framework presented in this report
Undertake feasibility studies which address the spatial challenges identified above (e.g. introducing more mixed-use activity in the precinct space or traffic calming measures).	Devise an action plan of short and long-term placemaking interventions which specifically address the spatial challenges discussed in this report.

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

Partnerships: 237 Vital and Viable Priorities

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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 Figure 7 and Table 3).

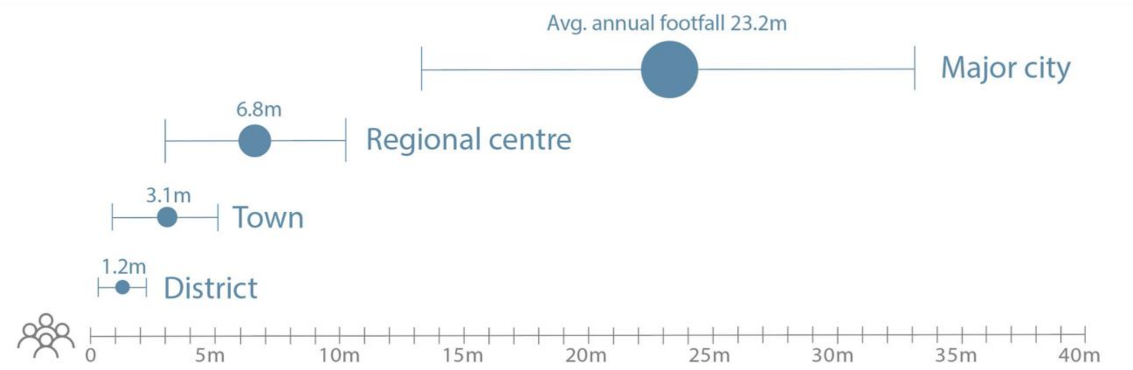

Figure 7: Levels of activity hierarchy and average as well as standard deviation of annual footfall in each level of activity hierarchy

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

Table 3. 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 4 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)

Table 4. The updated 'Top 25 Priorities' for high street vitality and viability

Appendix 4: Summary of LDC Data

Cheadle Hulme Location Report Highlights		
	Count	**Percentage**
Total Units	87	
Retail (shops)	57	65.5%
Leisure	30	34.5%
	Count	**Percentage**
Vacancy Rates	4	4.6%
Retail (Shops)	3	3.4%
Leisure	1	1.1%
Classification Mix	**Count**	**Percentage**
Comparison	15	18.1%
Convenience	10	12.0%
Service	29	34.9%
Leisure	29	34.9%
Net Change in Openings/Closures	**Count**	**Difference in Classification (percentage)**
Comparison	0	0.0%
Convenience	0	0.0%
Service	0	0.0%
Leisure	0	0.0%
Independent vs Multiple Mix	**Count**	**Percentage**
Independents	64	73.6%
Multiples	23	26.4%

Table 5. The LDC data for Cheadle Hulme

Appendix 5: Footfall Signature Types

The section of the report presenting footfall patterns in Cheadle Hulme 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 as seen in Table 6.

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

Table 6. The footfall signature types