REDDISH

VITAL AND VIABLE STOCKPORT DISTRICT CENTRES

Dr Steve Millington, Dr Nikos Ntounis, Gareth Roberts, Dr Regine Sønderland Saga, & Dr Chloe Steadman

October 2022

Placemanagement.org

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.

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

Dr Steve Millington, a Reader in Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University, with over 20 years of research experience. He is currently a Director of the IPM, where he leads on several projects including the IPM's Vital and Viable programme and coordinating research for the High Streets Task Force for England.

Dr Regine Sønderland Saga is a Research Associate at the IPM where she works across projects. Her background is in urban geography, and her PhD examined socio-technical challenges to the smart city from a citizen-centric perspective. Her research interests include citizen participation, stakeholder collaboration, and the implications of smart technology use and digitalisation in cities.

Dr Nikos Ntounis is a Senior Research Associate at the IPM and Lecturer in Marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University. He joined IPM in 2014 and has worked and contributed to numerous IPM projects such as *High Street UK 2020 (HSUK2020)* and *Bringing Big Data to Small Users (BDSU)*. He is the Editor of the Journal of Place Management and Development.

Dr Chloe Steadman is a Lecturer in Marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University and Research Associate at the IPM. Her research focuses on consumer culture and people's lived and atmospheric experiences of places, as well as lecturing in consumer behaviour and methods for researching places. She has worked on the IPM's Vital and Viable Manchester and Stockport projects.

Gareth Roberts is Projects and Operations Manchester at the IPM and the High Streets Task Force. As well as overseeing IPM operations and activity, Gareth is responsible for managing the research projects running at any given time. He is Associate Editor of the Journal of Place Management & Development and is currently studying for a PhD in the analysis of cultural events.

Foreword

This report has been prepared following a workshop held on the 22nd of March 2022, attended key local stakeholders from Reddish. 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.

Table of Contents

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 Reddish, 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 Reddish 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].
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/

[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. Reddish 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[4] 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[5].

Since we last visited Reddish in 2019, many facets of the centre remain unchanged, although some key businesses appear to have closed. Key anchors, such as Houldsworth Mill and Broadstone Mill remain poorly integrated with the district centre. The Broadstone Mill Shopping Outlet, for example, provides a plethora of comparison/convenience goods, services, and food and café, which rather than complimenting the district centre, most likely deflects potential footfall. Similarly, despite being located much closer, the Morrisons store also provides a wide range of goods, but we would question how many shoppers here undertake linked trips with local business in the district centre.

Reddish has several heritage buildings of note, such as the working men's club and church and the centre is generally walkable and easy to navigate, although several shop facades and buildings look tired and outdated. We still feel more could be done to not only improve the appearance of the centre, but efforts might focus on enhancing and conserving the Victorian character of Reddish.

Reddish's non-retail offer seems to be the main attractor; there is a variety of personal services businesses (travel agents, notaries, solicitors), grooming and beauty businesses, (from nail salons to dog grooming) and a few specialist stores (aquarium, sports nutrition, haberdashery). Cafés are also a strong presence in the centre, although there remains few options in terms of evening hospitality. A positive new venture is the Broadstone Arcade, located between Broadstone Mill and the district centre, which provides flexible terms for new start-ups and potentially could drive synergy between the fragmented anchors.

The main areas of concern in Reddish relate to the centre's spatial fragmentation and lack of identity. As mentioned above, Reddish's heritage and public space anchors are adjacent to, or at the edge of the centre, thus rendering the main area a little unattractive. The public realm is also suffering, and the main square does a disservice to Reddish's Victorian heritage. Reddish has lost all its bank branches, which makes the presence of a post office crucial to centre vitality. Despite the relative confusion of where the centre of activity is, Reddish still has a low vacancy rate figure (8.3% compared to 14.1% GB average in Q1 2022)[6]. Activity hours remain largely the same as in 2019, with most businesses closed by 5:30pm, and local shops closing by 4:00pm, which still 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; Morrisons' dining area seems to be particularly attractive in filling that activity gap. There is ample parking, and the accessibility of the centre can potentially be improved if Reddish South train station connectivity is improved. Whereas Reddish

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

has an abundance of services and leisure businesses, their mix is not very diverse (0.06 diversity index compared to 0.15 in GB). Table 1 below summarises the strengths and weaknesses.

Reddish District Centre Strengths and Weaknesses	
Key Strengths	**Key Weaknesses**
8. Anchors - Mix of supermarket anchors (Morrisons), heritage buildings (Houldsworth Working Men's Club), and multi-purpose mills, albeit adjacent to the centre	3, 6 & 13. Vision & Strategy/Place Management/Networks and Partnership - No vision or strategy for the district centre - Local capacity is there but appears scattered throughout
9. Non- Retail Offer - Vast array of personal and consumer services businesses - Strong café and pub culture	4 & 12. Experience /Place Marketing - Spatial fragmentation limits potential of understanding where the centre is - Limited digital footprint - No evidence of collective centre promotion - Lack of place distinction
17. Markets - Worker Bee Market generating interest, albeit not close to the centre	15-16. Diversity / Attractiveness - Traffic and car dominate - Limited mix of personal and consumer services - Tired centre facades with limited connectivity
25. Innovation - Broadstone Arcade and the Mills have great potential to become hubs of retail and services innovation, providing flexible spaces for new business ventures	19 & 24. Barriers to New Entrants / Redevelopment Plans - Relatively small centre with few vacant units, or opportunities to expand. - Vacant buildings with heritage value might prove difficult to convert - Most units require upgrade/renewal in order to attract pop-up businesses

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 Reddish is **socially, culturally, and technologically viable** with good scores on education and community cohesion, while also showing low levels of housing deprivation and having good access to culture and heritage activities and amenities (see Figure 1 below):

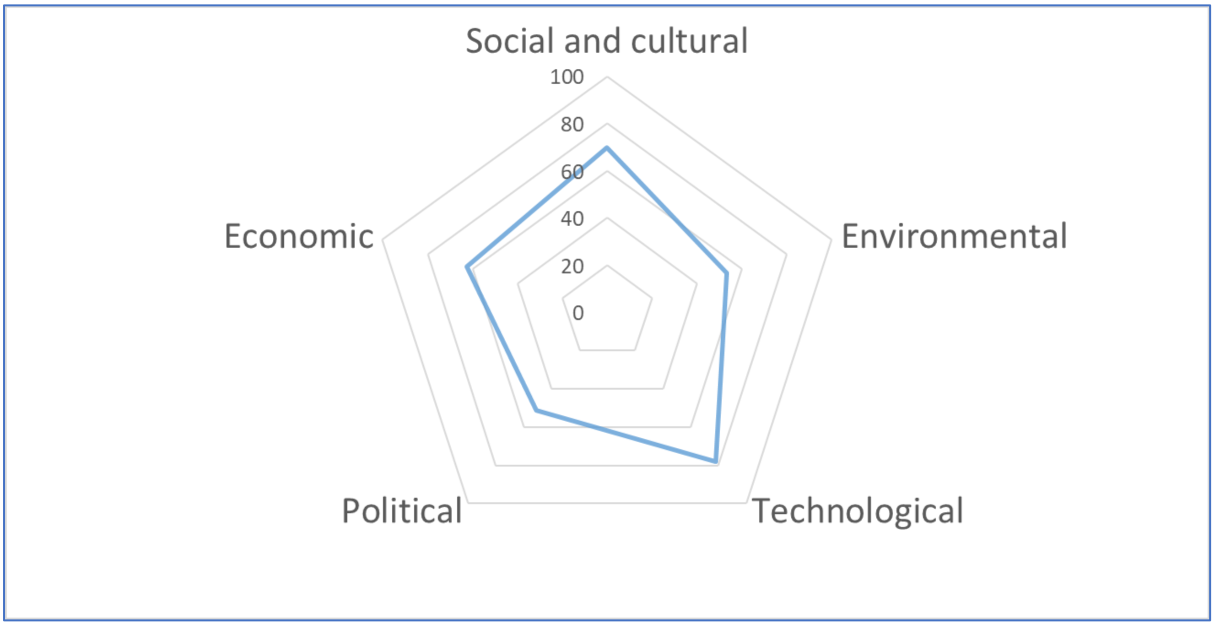


Figure 1: Viability Assessment

We posit that Reddish fulfils the role of a residential centre, and despite its relatively low scores for economic and environmental viability, there is great potential to generate synergies and reconnect the centre with a fresh offer. Reconnecting parts of the centre with unique heritage, multipurpose potential, and innovation will enhance the already solid non-retail offer (personal and consumer services, restaurants, cafés) and will bring forward opportunities to diversify. The Worker Bee market adjacent to the centre is an untapped asset and starting the discussion on activating the train station may present a great opportunity to make the centre more accessible and less car dominant.

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

Footfall Analysis

The annual footfall figure for Reddish for the period of January 2021-2022 for the counter location was 730,738 suggesting Reddish is correctly defined as a **district centre** based on the estimated activity level[8].

In summary, the average daily footfall count is 2,018, June is the busiest month, Friday the busiest day, whereas Sunday is typically the quietest day. The Worker Bee market and the town heritage anchors may boost footfall in the district centre, but their potential could be developed.

Monthly Footfall Analysis

Monthly footfall calculated for the year 2021 suggests Reddish 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). The data suggests Reddish was slightly busier during the summer period compared to September-December, but there is no clear explanation of what is driving this, other than everyday patterns of usage in smaller district centres can reflect general weather conditions and can be adversely affected.

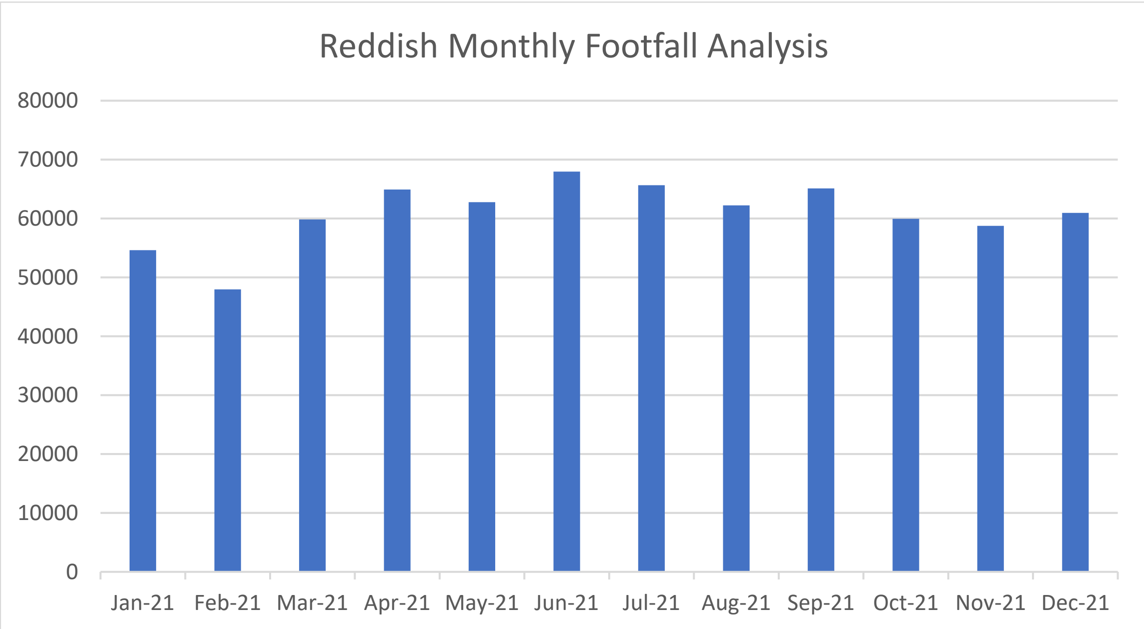


Figure 2: Monthly Footfall Data

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

Table 2 provides a monthly footfall count for Reddish. 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 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.

Month	Reddish Monthly Data	Monthly Data as Percentage
January	54631	7.5
February	47976	6.6
March	59834	8.2
April	64929	8.9
May	62761	8.6
June	67970	9.3
July	65639	9.0
August	62241	8.5
September	65111	8.9
October	59939	8.2
November	58757	8.0
December	60950	8.3
Annual Footfall	730738	100

Table 2: Monthly footfall count and percentage

Events and footfall

Reddish exhibited slight increases in overall footfall consistent with the lifting of COVID-19 measures. April 12 was a busy day in the centre (3135 counts compared to an average of 2018 counts). The Christmas Round-up period was the busiest time in the centre, with Friday 17 December (3650 counts) and Monday 20 December (3252 counts) being the top footfall figures of 2021, despite public concern over the Omicron variant.

Reddish attracts lots of activity adjacent to the borders of the district centre. One of the regular events taking place in Reddish is the Worker Bee market, situated in Broadstone Mill, which is a five-minute walk from the centre. Interestingly enough, our analysis shows that there are potential synergies between the district centre and the market that may be underexplored. We can attest that the market effect on footfall appears to be significant[11], however more data need to be collected (e.g., sales data, dwell time, visitors' perceptions) in order 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

[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 ($M = 2166$, $SD = 174.1$) and no market Saturday ($M = 1948$, $SD = 180.6$); $t(12) = -2.303$, $p = .02$.

monitoring can provide more 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
April	1810	2147
May	1868	2164
June	2178	2205
July	2040	2499
August	1753	2187
September	2176	1970
November	1810	1992
Overall	1948	2166

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

Weekly Footfall Analysis

Figure 3 summarises the weekly footfall pattern for Reddish. 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. Reddish's pattern is closer to a Monday through Saturday peak, with a busy Friday. There is a noticeable drop on the weekend that may showcase the lack of anchors in the district centre and Sunday trading hours. Reddish's weekly signature may be influenced by the effects of the pandemic (e.g., hybrid working arrangements). Nevertheless, understanding how Reddish functions on a weekly basis can help towards the development of strategies and initiatives that fit the centre's profile and catchment.

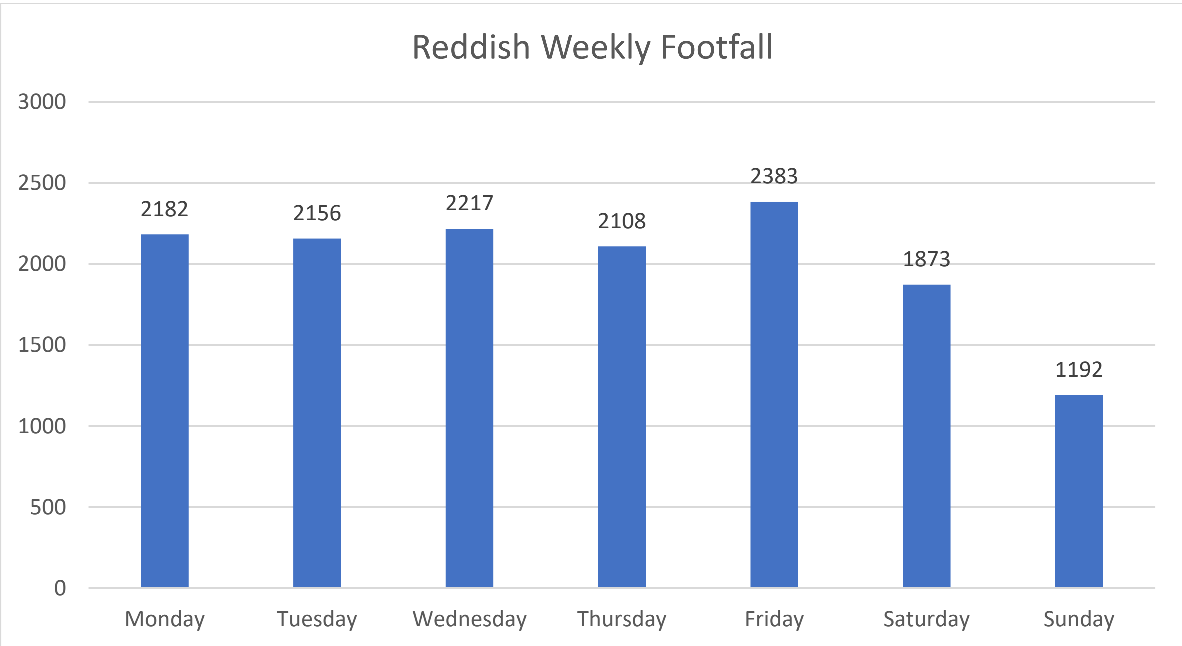


Figure 3: Weekly footfall pattern for Reddish

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 group:

Figure 4: attractors word cloud

Three themes dominate the analysis: **Anchors**, **Retail/Non-retail offer,** and **Community**. The anchor theme is consistent with our updated audit but expands to include the potential of Reddish Vale to become part of an augmented offer that promotes the district centre. Workshop participants recognised the importance of the post office to the centre's vitality and viability, sharing stories of how crucial it proved during the pandemic in terms of services to the community. Most participants identify the centre's offer as part of an augmented centre that includes the market, the shopping outlet, Morrisons, and the district centre. Finally, the sense of community and the idea of reconnecting Reddish firstly in terms of building local capacity was raised during the workshop. Local partnerships and learning from best practices (e.g., charities such as Re:Dish that strives for a sense of civic pride) can be real catalysts towards reconnecting Reddish[12].

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:

[12] See: https://redishcharity.wordpress.com

Figure 5: barriers identified by the whole group

Regardless of a clear passion for participation between workshop participants, barriers identified focus on lack of social capital and collaboration in the centre, challenges due to the changing demographic and a general apathy towards the fate of the centre, which can be attributed to a lack of **diversity, centre experience, and connectivity**. Reddish also exhibits some structural issues regarding spatial disconnection and a lack of quality public realm. Most of these barriers hinder a lack of rapport and relationships with other stakeholders, but also a lack of understanding of who the new residents of the area are. There is an opportunity here for a community partnership that will make the step to approach the new demographic of the centre and identify the quick wins and long-term vision and strategy. Such discussions require a dedicated person to facilitate and drive centre transformation. This role will be partly resolved following the appointment of a district centre manager for Reddish 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 Reddish

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[13] 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.[14]

[13] https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/transformation-routemap-webinars/create-a-transformation-routemap-for-your-town/
[14] 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 key challenge is that Reddish still does not have a clear vision or strategy, and we would advise local stakeholders to start the 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. In the case of Reddish, the relative lack of understanding of who the new catchment population is, combined with the spatial fragmentation of the centre and the disconnection between morning and evening activity pose challenges that need to be highlighted in future short-term actions. However, the long-term vision might be more aspirational e.g., to create a car-free and walkable centre, connecting the Houldsworth Square with the mills located down the hillside. Whatever vision is decided, it must garner support and buy-in from all stakeholders and the broad support of the wider community. We might suggest that there is a unique proposition founded on the Victorian heritage and character of the centre and its surroundings.

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.

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.

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.

Reddish's spatial fragmentation means that the distinct anchors adjacent to the centre remain underused and underexplored. Thus, a detailed retail/non-retail/commercial offer audit (similar to the 2019 Phase 1) is needed in order to identify where the opportunities to diversify are. Whereas this may need some review, efforts need to be made to ensure the continuity of the existing activity as it appears to impact favourably on footfall. Local stakeholders may also wish to organise additional events at quieter times of the year or themed for different seasons. The precedent of the Worker Bee market and Christmas events may be catalysts here. We stress that is important to generate a new and clear centre offer given the centre's reliance on its immediate local catchment and changing demographic. Reddish presents fertile ground for pop-up and flexible working opportunities, based on the plethora of synergies that can be generated from the presence of the Mills and the Broadstone Arcade near the centre, which need to be capitalised. Key to this will be unlocking the potential of public and private sites with the district centre to host new activity.

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 awareness and reputation of Reddish is quite poor, as there is no clear understanding of where the centre is located, and there is limited collective promotion of the centre. Whereas there are relatively strong anchors that can complement the place product and bring forward Reddish's unique characteristics, these need to be clearly communicated in the new vision, which should underpin a place branding and marketing strategy. Discussions from the workshop suggests local stakeholders might benefit from developing a shared understanding of what Reddish has to offer and act more as ambassadors to further promote a positive image of the district centre. this should extend to include a wider range of local businesses to generate more frequent social media messages.

That said, 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 consider how better to promote synergies and linked trips within Reddish, 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. Beyond promoting the idea of linked trips between the mill complexes and district centre, the proposition might extend to include Reddish Vale, which is potentially a strong non-retail anchor located relatively close to the centre. Ultimately 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.

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, 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 a proactive way.

Reddish has a passionate and dedicated core of local stakeholders, but does not have an active 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 Reddish 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 etc. The newly appointed district centre manager might play a key role in brokering new relationships and facilitating partnerships meetings.

Restructuring may also involve physical regeneration when there are spatial challenges or barriers to change. In Reddish, the overriding spatial challenges are the lack of connectivity within the centre, the unattractive public realm, and the spatial fragmentation between main anchors that exist in or adjacent to the district centre. These, combined with limited opportunities for dwelling, can negatively impact on dwell time, overall experience, and place reputation. It is also noted that part of the centre looks tired and thus plans for renovation of some units may be part of restructuring.

Although Reddish is an attractive place in terms of architecture and built environment, there are a few examples of public space underutilisation which need to be addressed in the long term. The main square is a prime example of creating a blockage between parts of the centre, which contributes to the relative disconnection between centre areas. Additionally, the petrol stations in the centre we imagine will become redundant with the phasing out of petrol and diesel vehicles. A future vision might begin to imagine how such sites could be repurposed to address the challenges identified above. For example, to create new and large retail formats, accommodate non-retail uses, civic and performance space, or simply greenery or place to hold events. We see a role for a civic society group to advise on design and aesthetics to ensure the architectural qualities are not only conserved, but reinforced e.g., design codes, street furniture, lighting and so on.

The intervention that will have the greatest potential to transform Reddish, however, is the railway station, although we recognise this will be costly and will take time. Nevertheless, Reddish might take inspiration from Cheadle and other towns around the UK where local campaigns to reopen stations and routes have been successful. An active station with frequent services will provide a new transport anchor, creating additional footfall that will drive activity every day. It would also help establish Reddish as a more desirable residential location. All we can advise at this stage is efforts to bring the station back to full usage should be supported.

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). Agree on a reliable, consistent, and sustainable method for collecting footfall data in the district centre.
Identify who the present population is, what are the catchment's demographics and characteristics – and ensure local stakeholders have a clear understanding of this demographic and how it is changing.	Track trends and developments to feed into the design and creation of provisions for the changing catchment within Reddish.
Hold a visioning workshop with local stakeholders, facilitated by the District Centre Manager. We would advise this expands to include managers of the mill complexes, transport providers, civic societies.	Construct a clear vision for Reddish based on evidence, which addresses 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

Developing place analysts

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

Repositioning: developing collaborative, inspiring visions that achieve change

Understanding Place Data | High Streets Task Force

Reinventing	
QUICK WINS	**LONGER TERM**
Review the range of place-based anchors (retail, employment, transport, green space, heritage, culture) and identify opportunities to diversify overall centre offer.	Ensure key place-based attractors are embedded in local plans and visions for the district centre.
Build upon existing innovation hubs to develop new flexible spaces for businesses and services.	Create programmes and synergies that generate more opportunities for 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.
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.

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 positive stories and a consistent place promotion strategy that clearly defines what Reddish centre is and has to offer – embedding the idea of linked trips between the mills and district centre.	Use existing communications 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 Reddish.	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

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 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 projects which address the spatial challenges identified above. This group could create a neighbourhood plan – or regeneration framework based on the 4Rs.

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

Planning and governance issues in the restructuring of the high street

5. Bibliography

Hallsworth, A., Ntounis, N., Parker, C., Quin, S. 2015. *Markets Matter: Reviewing the evidence & detecting the market effect*. Institute of Place Management. Manchester. Available online

Millington, S, Ntounis, N, Parker, C, and Quin, S. 2015. *Multifunctional Centres: A Sustainable Role for Town and City Centres*. Institute of Place Management. Manchester.

Millington, S, Ntounis, N. 2017. Repositioning the high street: evidence and reflection from the UK. *Journal of Place Management and Development*. 10(4): 364-379.

Millington S, Ntounis N, Parker C, Quin S, Roberts G, Steadman C. 2018. *High Street 2030: Achieving Change*. Institute of Place Management, Manchester

Mumford, C., Parker, C., Ntounis, N., and Dargan, E. 2021. Footfall Signatures and Volumes: Towards a Classification of UK Centres. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science* 48, no. 6 (July 2021): 1495–1510. https://doi.org/10.1177/2399808320911412.

Ntounis, N, and Kavaratzis, M. 2017. Re-branding the High Street: the place branding process and reflections from three UK towns. *Journal of Place Management and Development*. 10(4): 392-403.

Parliament. 2019. *High streets and town centres in 2030*. House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Westminster. Available online.

Parker, C, Ntounis, N, Millington, S, Quin, S, and Castillo-Villar, F. 2017. Improving the vitality and viability of the UK High Street by 2020: Identifying priorities and a framework for action. *Journal of Place Management and Development*. 10(4): 310-348.

Peel, D and Parker, C. 2017. Planning and governance issues in the restructuring of the high Street. *Journal of Place Management and Development*. 10(4): 404-418.

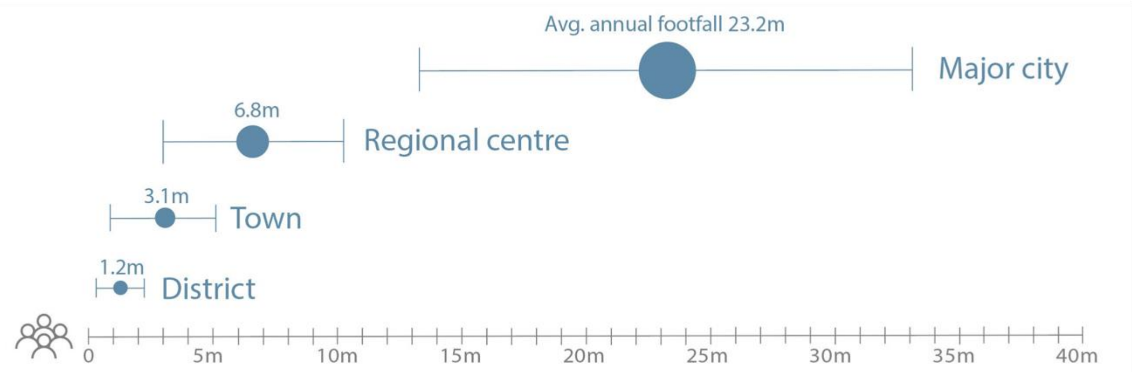
Theodoridis, C., Ntounis, N., and Pal, J. 2017. How to reinvent the High Street: evidence from the HS2020. *Journal of Place Management and Development*. 10(4): 380-391.

Timpson, J. et al. 2018. *The High Street Report*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available online.

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

Reddish Location Report Highlights	Count	Percentages
Total Units	60	
Retail (shops)	42	70.0%
Leisure	18	30.0%
Vacancy Rates	5	8.3%
Retail (Shops)	4	6.7%
Leisure	1	1.7%
Classification Mix		
Comparison	12	21.1%
Convenience	7	12.3%
Service	21	36.8%
Leisure	17	29.8%
Net Change in Openings/Closures		
Comparison	0	0% (per classification category)
Convenience	0	0% (per classification category)
Service	-1	-4.8% (per classification category)
Leisure	-1	-5.9% (per classification category)
Independent vs Multiple Mix		
Independents	47	78.3%
Multiples	13	21.7%

Appendix 5: Footfall Signature Types

The following section presents the monthly data pattern in Bramhall. 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