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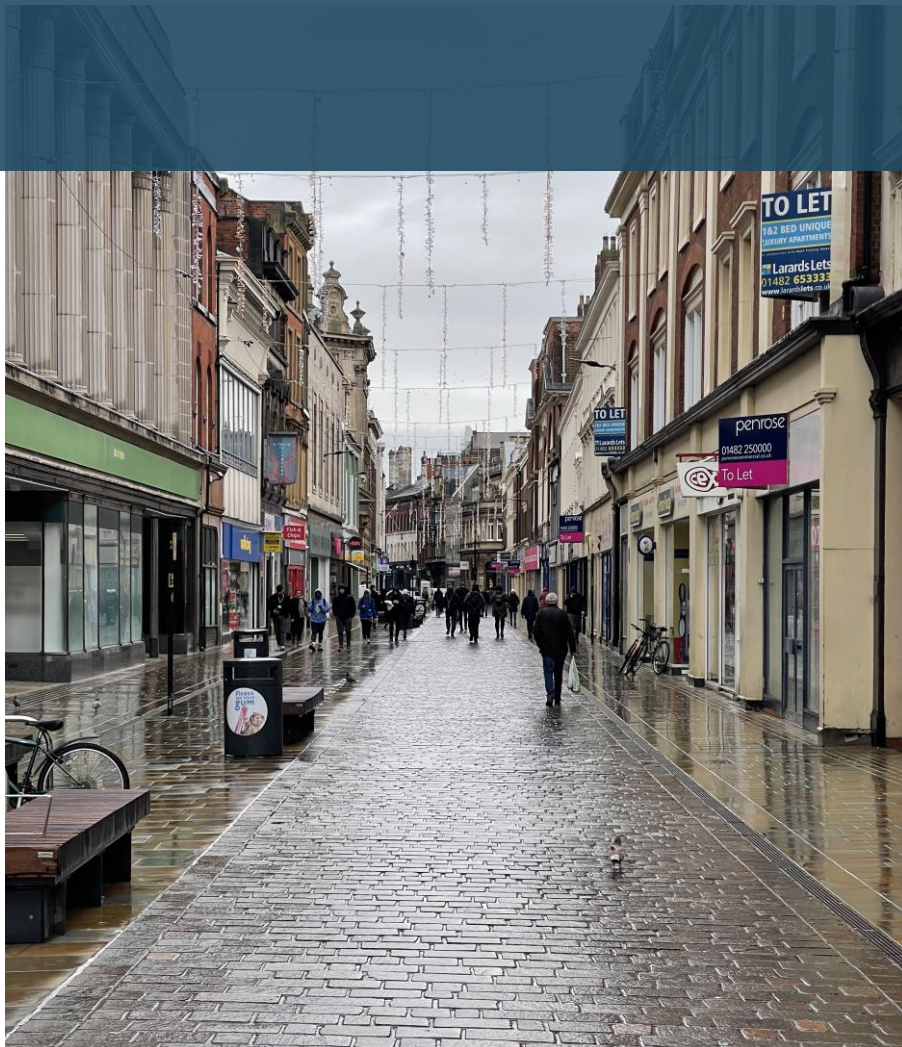
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Place Making Programme – Whitefriargate, Hull Report and Action Plan



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Foreword

Hull and the High Streets Task Force (HSTF) began working together following an expert visit in October 2021. Based on discussions with the Council, the subsequent *Unlocking Your Place Potential Report* (UYPP) outlined how the Task Force could provide further support for Whitefriargate, Hull.

There are solid development plans and funding applications in process to further regenerate Hull and build on the Capital of Culture success in 2017. £19.5 million in the Levelling Up Funds will bid support further infrastructure improvements, with £7.5 million of this fund to create a new grant scheme to bring unused floorspace of vacant or partially occupied property back into use. This is targeted on the historic Whitefriargate where there several vacant or under utilised ground floor units, where activation might address negative perceptions of the area.

Following the UYPP Report, in March 2022 Taskforce Expert Support recommended continuing the collaborative work in the short term to animate vacant spaces, involving young people through the introduction of a Teenage Market, events, festivals, pop-up retail, community activities, and basic improvements to the appearance of Whitefriargate. Such interventions might diversify the local offer through trialling new products or services and promote activity beyond 5pm. Other recommendations included improving wayfinding, further greening pedestrian and cycle linkages from other parts of the city centre to encourage visitors to key attractions and events to explore Whitefriargate, and strengthening engagement with property owners and commercial agents to resolve issues relating to vacant units.

To help places tackle reinvention, HSTF provides a Placemaking Workshop developed and delivered by the Institute of Place Management (IPM). This is designed to bring together key stakeholders to identify the challenges and opportunities for Whitefriargate and to agree short and longer-term priorities which can be the focus of an action plan to ensure its future sustainability. The workshop took place in November 2022 and included representatives from the arts and festivals sector, property developer, shopping centre, Market business owner and the BID. Council representatives from Business/Enterprise Development, Major Projects, Destination Hull and the Portfolio holder for Regeneration were also present. The Task Force would like to thank all who attended the workshop for their active contributions and to thank Hull City Council for organising the session.

This report summarises ideas provided by local stakeholders, but also reveals barriers they identified which they think currently stops activity from happening. Based on the workshop discussion and findings, HSTF has developed a series of short and long-term recommendations to inform a strategy of reinvention for Whitefriargate. The recommendations outlined in this report form part of the direct support offered through the High Streets Task Force which includes continuing expert support alongside online resources and training available through the [website](#).

Thank you for participating in the High Streets Task Force Programme. With your permission, the High Streets Task Force would like to check in with you after 12 months to evaluate how delivery of your transformation plan is progressing. Please indicate whether this is possible in your response to this report.

About the High Streets Task Force and Report Authors

The High Streets Task Force

The High Streets Task Force is an alliance of placemaking experts working to redefine the high street. We provide guidance, tools, and skills to help communities, partnerships and local government transform their high streets. The programme, funded by HM Government will run in England until 2024.

The report authors

Dr Steve Millington is the Director of the Business Transformations Research Centre, based at Manchester Metropolitan University. His academic career spans over 20 years, he is Senior Fellow, and a director of the Institute of Place Management, where he leads on several projects including the IPM's Vital and Viable programme and designing the placemaking programme for the High Streets Task Force for England.

Penny Bell is a long time member of the Institute of Place Management and a High Streets Task Force Expert. She is also a Director of IntoPlaces, a high streets consultancy which helps to revitalise places, developing longer term sustainability. Penny and the IntoPlaces team have a proven track record in building strong partnerships that achieve positive results for places, including landlord/commercial sector involvement, community activation and major stakeholder buy in.

Summary of the expert visit

The HSTF's earlier work (in 2021) with Whitefriargate identified place activation as a main barrier to transformation i.e., there needs to be more activation of vacant or under-used space in this part of the city and the encouragement of a more diverse offer that extends into the evening. With the business grant scheme in place and the plans for improvement of pedestrian and cycle linkages/wayfinding, the ambitions for this area of Hull are taking shape. Rather than revisiting previous recommendations and the longer-term plans for the city, the experts instead concluded Whitefriargate should focus on developing a placemaking programme which delivers quick wins, diversifying the local offer and priming the area for future adaptation.

In preparation for the workshop, the HSTF Experts reviewed previous recommendations and desk-based research, participated in a walking tour of the city centre facilitated by the local council, and gathered evidence from the workshop (summarised in the appendices). The workshop was attended with representation from Hull stakeholders including property management companies, Trinity Market stallholder, the BID, Hull City Council and arts/culture focused organisations. Useful contributions were made from all participants, and it is clear stakeholders want to revitalise a once thriving part of the city, one which is successfully adapting for the future whilst celebrating its heritage as a unique place to be proud of.

In summary, there are many opportunities for Whitefriargate but there needs to be short to medium interventions to stop the decline whilst new developments are underway and to start diversifying the town's offer now, not when the new projects are complete.

Whilst redevelopment work is progressing on some major vacant sites around Albion Square to diversify the city centre with uses other than retail, it was felt that developing an extended programme of activation through the day and into the evening would help to showcase the Whitefriargate area and increase investor, business and visitor interest. It would help to create a sense of wellbeing in a safe and vibrant atmosphere thereby encouraging dwell time and spend by a wider range of local residents or visitors to the city centre.

It is important for local stakeholders to act quickly. The workshop aimed to galvanise local stakeholders into action and equip them with low resource ideas which could be taken forward in the short-term to activate the town centre, attracting additional visitors, supporting businesses and encouraging investment.

Developing A Framework for Action

High street revitalisation is complex and challenging. Although they face common challenges, places are unique and there are no easy prescriptive solutions for regenerating high streets and town centres. Whereas the Taskforce can provide expert guidance and frameworks to help, it is incumbent on local stakeholders to use their insights and capacity to create and deliver bespoke programmes of change to ensure their high street or town centre is both attractive and prepared for the future. It is vital stakeholders have a well communicated plan that recognises the tasks which need to occur to manage recovery and longer-term transformation. This is effective place management and is what gets places from a collection of investments and actions onto a path of transformation.

Based on the results of a major research programme The 4 Rs Framework is designed to help places make a town centre action plan. The figure below distinguishes between the processes of analysis and decision making (*repositioning*), effecting change (*reinventing*), communication (*rebranding*) and governance/spatial planning and development (*restructuring*). The High Streets Task Force encourages town centres to use this framework in their recovery and long-term planning.

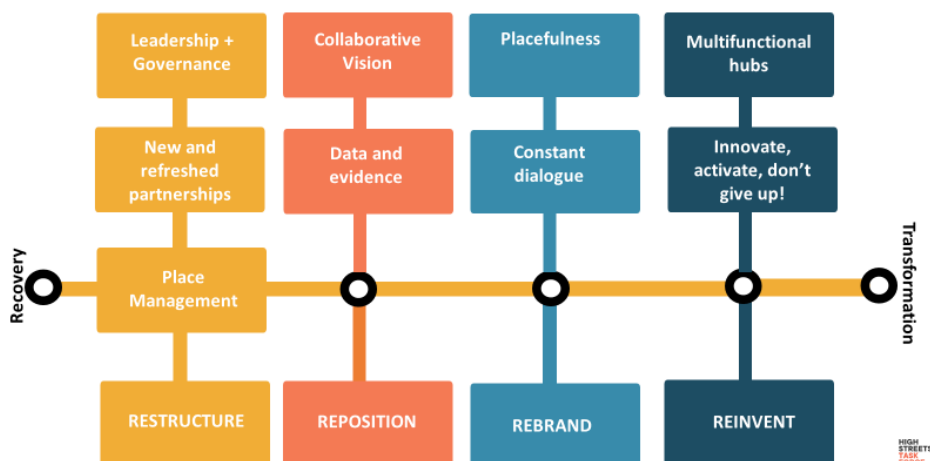


Fig 2: Transformation routemap

It is important to acknowledge the 4Rs are not mutually exclusive but are connected to one another; each is a potential start point on a journey to transformation; and different places will be at different stages on the journey. The Four Rs are one of the centrepieces of the HSTF toolkit for communities.

An editable version of the transformation routemap with instructions can be [downloaded here](#) 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 for planning both short and long-term priorities. Actions under each R may happen simultaneously, consecutively, or repeatedly.

If delivered correctly through effective leadership and collaboration with all key stakeholders, placemaking has the potential to improve the local economy, environment, and society, as well provide cultural benefits. The underlying aim of any placemaking intervention should be to create and promote places that are sustainable, attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy, and friendly. Temporary activation of underutilised or neglected sites can showcase these to potential investors. Reinventing, however, is just one element of the routemap. It is important, therefore, to work through the implications of the recommendations above in terms of the other Rs on the routemap.

The Need for Reinvention

The *Unlocking Your Place Potential Report (UYPP)* written by Taskforce experts, draws on the IPM's 4 Rs Framework and indicates which of the Four Rs is the correct renewal strategy for Whitefriargate:



Fig 1: 4 Rs Framework Outline Summary

Reinventing is prescribed when there is a lack of activity in a place, or there is too much reliance on the existing offer to drive footfall. It may be the case local people are having to travel elsewhere to access the products and services they need or want, rather than use their local centre. Although the focus is on developing a programme of short-term priorities, places also need to consider how they can introduce new activities which will begin to adapt the town centre to meet the needs of future users. It is important, therefore, that local stakeholders share a common understanding of broader structural change affecting the high street.

Putting plans in action: The IPM's 25 priorities

Whereas the 4Rs local stakeholders with a strategic guide to renewal, the 25 Priorities are a framework for activating a long-term vision (see appendices). Each priority is supported by online learning and resources available through the High Streets Task Force website. It also important to note that behind priority there is a subgroup of factors to consider.

Based on background research, pre-existing expertise, our visit to the city centre and Whitefriargate, and of course information provided by stakeholders during the workshop, we have established what we feel the top priorities are, using the 25 Priorities framework. To help make sense of the recommendations, we have grouped them within five thematic areas:



What affects the look and feel of the high street or centre?

4) Experience 5) Appearance 12) Place marketing 20) Crime and Safety 22) Liveability



How does the town centre function?

1) Activity Hours 7) Necessities 14) Accessibility 11) Walkability 24) Functionality



What does the town centre have to offer?

2) Retail Offer 8) Anchors 9) Non-Retail Offer 10) Merchandise 16) Attractiveness 17) Markets 18) Recreational Space



How does the town centre need to change?

15) Diversity 19) Barriers to entry 21) Adaptability 25) Innovation 23) Redevelopment Plans



How is the town centre managed?

3) Vision and strategy 6) Place management 15) Networks and partnership

The recommendations below are organised into quick wins and longer-term actions by the HSTF experts. Each one is linked to supporting resources, good practice case studies, or additional guidance. Ultimately we recommend also benchmarking your long-term strategic plans against the 25 Priorities.

Recommendations

Improving the look and feel of the town centre

Appearance is ranked #5 in the 25 Priorities. It refers to the quality of public realm and aesthetics. This can be negatively affected by cleanliness, quality of lighting, landscaping, design consistency, and the management of under-used spaces. When not addressed, vacant or under-utilised buildings or public spaces can generate poor place perceptions, contribute to a fear of crime, even though this may be largely unsubstantiated, and undermine civic pride. Occasional visitors are less likely to make repeat visitors. Ideally, high streets should be welcoming places, where people feel safe, and are likely to dwell and linger.

We recognise there are plans in progress to draw new residential development into or close to the centre but a highlighted concern related to how to retain current and future residents as users of Whitefriargate. Long-term, the centre will require new services and infrastructure, e.g. health and childcare, to create a more liveable place. An important element to enhancing quality of life is access to quality public realm and green infrastructure. In the short term, indicative interventions include continuing to improve/green access routes/highways, underused public spaces and private surface car parks. It is important to work with developers now on mixed use schemes which will introduce everyday services and access to green infrastructure which will be required by a future population.

General litter and cleanliness are not major problems in Whitefriargate/Hull, and new landscaping and public realm improvements/outdoor seating along the main access routes are achieving positive impacts, especially during the daytime.

Whilst there is a range of quality heritage buildings, a number of building facades in need of improvement and certain parts of Whitefriargate with longstanding underutilised or empty properties all contribute to a poor perception of the area. Private businesses and property owners clearly need to take greater responsibility for their assets within the town centre, facilitated by council support and regulatory powers to encourage/enforce improvements.

We recognise the long-term regeneration plans for Whitefriargate and the business/shopfront grant schemes are beginning to address some of these issues, but in the meantime short-term improvements to appearance are required. Indicative interventions include continuing the greening of empty spaces, shopfront/façade improvements, and additional public art or creative works. During the workshop, participants mentioned the potential of artwork to be displayed on or in vacant premises and small sites that could be animated through artwork/shop window competitions. Other activities might focus on creating temporary attractive art display boards which could be part of themed city wide walking trails and will also screen void properties where access to fit window vinyls or in window displays is not available. Such projects might reconnect with the good practice established during Capital of Culture, and/or connect more strongly with Hull's rich cultural and creative heritage.

It is important first to establish a comprehensive list of potential interventions in terms of public and private property, to underpin the development of a costed placemaking action plan. Individual projects should be low cost, low risk and deliverable within less than 12 months. Once established we would advise trialling and experimenting with a few but visible schemes, and then encouraging specific businesses and community organisations to lead on delivery and take ownership of others.

#1 Improving the look and feel of the town centre

Quick wins	Longer term actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
<p>#1 Complete a comprehensive audit of under-utilised Council owned public space and identify specific creative micro projects , e.g. provide covered seating/tables and lighting to the space adjacent to Trinity Market,</p>	<p>Create a placemaking action plan with stakeholders outlining an extended and viable programme of small-scale and iterative improvements, supported with micro-funding (crowd funding, local authority small grants, contributions from key stakeholders).</p>	<p>Revealing Waterloo: A Placemaking Strategy</p> <p>Examples from the workshop included: https://www.facebook.com/glastonbury.bury https://www.grubmcr.com/</p>
<p>#2 Build on the shopfront improvement scheme and promote the Shop Front Design Guide more widely. Identify best practice and encourage business owners to share tips on window display and basic building maintenance.</p>	<p>Continue and strengthen engagement with property owners, developers and commercial agents to identify and establish initiatives and projects to improve the appearance of buildings.</p>	<p>A number of businesses in the Old Town already offer good examples of window activation and smart shop fronts within a heritage setting, eg Poor Boy Boutique.</p>
<p>#3 Consider building facades or gable ends and pedestrian/cycle link routes for display boards as screens, street art and trails as well as innovative lighting art and additional shutter artwork.</p>	<p>Establish an extensive street and shutter art/window vinyls and murals programme, commissioning local arts organisations to brighten the area. Important for this to be a collaborative rather than top-down exercise.</p>	<p>Examples from the workshop included: Withington Walls Victoria Quarter (New Brighton, Wirral) led by Rockpoint (images on Instagram) Old Town shutter and building artwork</p>
<p>#4 Identify underutilised connecting routes amenable to simple planting schemes and facilitate both formal and informal community or business-led gardening initiatives to support maintenance.</p>	<p>Evaluate the impact of these activities and build a case for more ambitious greening measures e.g along access routes, pocket parks –</p>	<p>Review the Grey to Green scheme in Sheffield to see how an inner-city dual carriageway has been turned into the largest ‘green street’ in the UK – and align long-term highway plans for Hull with permanent greening measures.</p>

Improve the functionality of the town centre

It is useful to think about functionality in terms of both spatial layout of the centre, how activity patterns vary of the day/week/months. Understanding and intervening to address mismatches between footfall, anchors, and opening hours remains the number one priority intervention.

Workshop participants referred to a lack of activity after dark, especially after 5pm along Whitefriargate, and expressed concern that by 7pm the wider city centre begins to empty.

Consequently, there was agreement about a need to extend the activity hours to cover 5-9pm to attract city centre workers, students and local residents. Clearly, people who work or study during the day will have limited opportunity to shop locally if most businesses are closed by 5pm. Encouraging more retailers to open later and on a more consistent basis might create better synergies and linked trips with non-retail, hospitality and leisure businesses. The Taskforce advises a review of local data and trialing of new opening times, which also requires sharing of footfall data, to promote better alignment between modal opening times and key activity hours.

Trialling and experimentation – through pop-ups/themed markets to activate key routes and public squares in the early evening slot can help to gauge when and where best to provide this activity (with a variation in content). There is a need to review locally what the understanding of an evening offer is and what might work for the local catchment e.g., the offer to office, health and education workers is different to what might drive a student night or tempt occasional visitors (at city centre key attractions, Arena events, festivals) and is there sufficient activity on Sunday, eg makers market, a family offer/activities?

Ultimately there needs to be a more consistent and reliable offer during these times of the day so that users have assurance things will be open when expected. Some events have been trialled previously with muted success, and perhaps because lack of consistency, sharing of event programming to assist with business planning or patience to build an audience and encourage dwell time and spend. There is a need to build an expectation that something, even if it is only small scale, is always happening in the centre.

Micro-enterprises and small traders may not have time to seek out or plan business activity or change opening times in alignment with events. It is therefore incumbent on event providers and promoters to do this engagement, eg through direct contact, visiting independent shops and market stalls and setting up a business ambassador network who can promote and provide information on upcoming events/activities and available business support.

In general, Whitefriargate is walkable and accessible from the city centre but there are issues relating to connectivity, wayfinding and signage. Hull has many anchors and an emergent range of tourist attractions but they are disparate and disconnected. A first time visitor to Hull, as we were, whilst acknowledging the strength of the offer and quality of public realm and architectural range, finds the city centre is fragmented and does not feel cohesive. More informative wayfinding and signage from key entry points might encourage greater synergy and linked trips across the city, e.g. unless you are making a specific planned visit, you would not stumble across the Aquarium or independent offer around the Museums Quarter.

Expanding the heritage/arts trails and introducing shop window competitions, seasonal competitions etc will encourage exploration of different parts of the city.

Improve the functionality of the town centre: recommendations

Quick wins	Longer term actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
<p>#1 Analyse insights from your existing footfall data and establish a baseline against which to measure impact of events and to identify key activity hours and days and compare to modal opening hours of Whitefriargate businesses.</p>	<p>Engage with the HSTF to create an Advanced Dashboard for Whitefriargate, Hull.</p> <p>This enables places with access to Springboard footfall data the ability to identify their town type, where it sits in an activity hierarchy, plus several other functions, such as monitoring the daytime and night-time economies.</p>	<p>Developing Place Analysts</p> <p>The training is free, designed to support the best use of data within place management strategies for cities, towns, districts, and high streets. To put yourself forward for this training, please complete our online form.</p> <p>See also: London High Streets Data Service</p>
<p>#2 Use the results of the audit to shape an extended events programme, working with local businesses/Market stallholders and the arts/creative sector to encourage an early evening economy e.g. trialling revised opening times and pop-up stalls/street markets that complement the Trinity Live events.</p>	<p>The Trinity Market offer and seating/events space seems to work well and provide a basis to build or extend the early evening offer e.g. in squares and spaces near to the Market Hall, providing the appropriate infrastructure to accommodate this.</p>	<p>See: Withington Case Study Foodie Friday (Stockport) Art Battle (Stockport)</p>
<p>#3 Implement the improvements to town signage and wayfinding as recommended in the commissioned Wayfinding Brief and including an audit of existing signage (quality, location, and relevance) and information points/boards, and trial new pathfinding routes e.g., using simple planters and basic creative installations to mark potential routes.</p>	<p>Evaluate your trial and construct a longer term a wayfinding action plan, which aligns with wider town centre regeneration plans. Consider community sourced wayfinding suggestions and take on board design considerations from a heritage point of view.</p>	<p>Walking – 25 Vital and Viable Priorities</p> <p>Great Public Spaces: Guide and Evaluation Tool</p>

Improving the town centre offer

The long-term national view is that places can no longer rely on national multiple retailers to drive footfall. New forms of retail experiences, new merchandise, store formats, and a much stronger non-retail offer is now required to drive footfall. Hull retains a strong mainstream offer, but this perhaps drags footfall to the shopping centres around the station. New and revamped visitor attractions are clearly a positive development, and despite retail change, Hull remains a relatively vibrant multifunctional hub. During the workshop participants discussed how a new offer might be introduced through temporary events, pop-up market stalls and activation of vacant units, which might lead to more permanent change and include an offer that might appeal to students and young professionals – a growing catchment in the city centre as a result of recent and ongoing residential development.

Whitefriargate itself possesses strong architectural heritage and has a growing independent offer. However, the offer is still lacking a critical mass to establish itself as an anchor destination. We recognise this might develop in the long term through major regeneration schemes, but in the short term more could be done to enhance the offer.

Continuing to work with property owners/commercial agents and community/arts organisations can help to showcase vacant units to potential tenants and create a vibrant atmosphere.

Working with existing business development support networks, especially in relation to communications about events/ activities and available support, online sales and marketing, can support existing and newly established businesses.

In addition, workshop participants came up with suggestions of how to encourage students and young people into Whitefriargate, working with further education representatives and local businesses on targeted offers and promotions.

Improving the town centre offer: recommendations		
Quick wins	Longer term actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
#1 Create a vacant property action plan, working with property owners, commercial agents and arts/ community organisations to encourage active usage and shop frontages	<p>Deploy flexible, short-term lets, reduced or rent-free periods for start-ups.</p> <p>Engage community groups to occupy vacant units on a temporary basis for free where appropriate.</p> <p>Utilise community asset transfers where necessary.</p> <p>Review management of key architectural assets and establish protocols to enable rapid response for units at risk of becoming vacant or derelict.</p>	<p>A platform for places: Reviving town centres by changing how communities access property</p> <p>Pop-up Retailing Objectives and Activities and Pop-up Shops</p> <p>Case study: Non-retail offer</p> <p>High Streets Taskforce Online Learning: Understanding Futures Users of the High Street</p>
#2 Review how existing city wide events can be maintained and supported, including temporary street markets, live music/open air concerts and linked activities to city centre major events.	Evaluate the potential to add additional activities at different times of the year, and/or extend existing events and festivals to other areas of the city, activating pedestrian link routes.	Glaston-Bury – a music festival taking place over one day in Bury town centre with 200 performing artists across 13 indoor venues and six temp outdoor stages.
#3 Create a targeted action plan to support traditional SMEs and market traders in the town centre.	Further develop the programme of training and support to upskill traditional SMEs in contemporary business practice e.g., digital skills, collaborative marketing etc	<p>Help to Grow</p> <p>Retail Innovation</p>
#4 Work with the University/Colleges and local businesses to provide students with promotional vouchers/special offers and via pop-up stalls	<p>Work with the further education sector to develop the offer to cater for the growing student and young professionals market</p> <p>Link businesses to Freshers Week, franchises on campus showcasing the local offer etc</p>	<p>See for example the work of Positively Putney BID and Roehampton University in arranging welcome events for students.</p> <p>http://positivelyputney.co.uk/student-life-in-putney/</p>

Creating opportunities to change

Hull like many places across the UK, has lost major retail attractor and its future viability will rest on the ability of the city centre to adapt and change and in general become more multifunctional. Great steps have been achieved already and the long terms plans are sensible. With evidence, however, that the UK retail is 40% over-spaced, reactivation of former shops will almost certainly require non-retail uses.

Determining what new activity fills vacant units, ideally would be subject to core market and population data analysis and respond to community needs. However, landlords or letting agents often follow a line of least resistance. More careful creation of new business development can only arise through the gathering of intelligence and a closer working relationship with private owners of property assets, to ensure new tenants contribute strongly to the needs of the catchment area and the vitality and viability of Whitefriargate. A commercial office demand review might be required for what is needed now and in the future – co-working can be a relatively quick fix – if there is the demand.

Long term plans might also consider more creative models e.g., community asset transfer, or the Matrix Hub currently in development and which could potentially accommodate a University business incubator space. Local councils are reminded they have regulatory and statutory powers - where persuasion does not work - to enforce private landlords to act, and CPO always remains an option where resource allow. In the meantime, efforts could be made to open existing vacant units to pop-up or meanwhile use, until any investment plans are finalised. It is useful to have a clear action plan for activating vacant units, especially assets with long term empty units, and to have a rapid response process in place to deal with units which might become vacant soon.

As in Altrincham, and with a landlords register and engagement already established in the area, ultimately creating a sub-group focused on the commercial property sector can reap rewards. These include getting improvements to/repurposing derelict or long term vacant buildings, creating pop up spaces/active frontages, reducing the vacancy rate whilst developing an offer that matches the shared vision, supporting new businesses, sharing information and ensuring new business enquiries aren't lost to the area. A commercial agent already working with the Council may be well placed to be part of this group and facilitate wider membership and action planning.

There appears to be barriers to entry for new businesses/ creative entrepreneurs to trial business ideas. The Matrix Hub, pop up lets in vacant units and Teenage Market might address some of these. A specific focus of this work might be on introducing temporary street market stalls with planters which can screen the long term vacant units along Whitefriargate, whilst also activating the space. The pop up market stalls can showcase existing businesses, trial new business ideas and encourage young entrepreneurs/student involvement.

Creating opportunities to change: recommendations		
Quick wins	Longer term actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
#1 Identify buildings with vacant units suitable for conversion to alternative uses, both short term and long term	Match demand and buildings against Landlord Database to prioritise which buildings are feasible in terms of condition and location.	A New Life for the High Street Levelling up and Regeneration Bill: Recommendations for housing, retail and the high street Homes on Our High Streets Dealing with Empty Shops: A guide for councils
#2. Hold an initial meeting of interested property owners and commercial agents, chaired by an established representative from the sector, to support gaining permission for artwork on shutters and later activating empty buildings	Establish a Landlords and Property Sector Group to develop specific actions to improve the offer, build investor confidence and which contribute to the wider shared vision for the area	See: Altrincham revitalisation Landlords
#3 Review council processes and identify obstacles to community access to council owned property and land.	Remove barriers such as red-tap, unnecessarily long application processes, and licensing fees and deposits, where they might deter community led non-commercial activity.	Barriers to New Entrants Principles for public space design, planning to do better
#4 Reduce barriers to entry for young entrepreneurs and creatives in the town centre e.g., by hosting a Teenage Market	Evaluate potential to attract new creative businesses and young entrepreneurs through free/reduced rents/flexible leases, linked to the activation of vacant units and development of the Matrix Hub.	Creative High Streets Teenage Market National Youth Market Young Enterprise

Improving place management

Defining and agreeing the target audience for Whitefriargate based on a sound evidence base was a priority for workshop participants as was reviewing/developing a shared vision and objectives (building on the Capital of Culture) to engender confidence in the area and develop shared ownership of regeneration and future action plans. Working with local businesses, community organisations, the property and creative sectors will help to maximise synergy with the target audiences, independent offer etc.

The city centre is extensive and Hull City Centre BID covers a wide area. Creating extra capacity via more collaborative working between key stakeholders was a priority for workshop participants along with better co-ordination, consistency and communication of existing and future activities and programmes to improve the Whitefriargate area.

Establishing an overarching independent placemaking partnership for Whitefriargate, to provide further capacity alongside the BID and Council, can create a facilitating vehicle for key stakeholders to activate the area and widen its appeal. This should not necessarily be a formal arrangement, because over time this group will need to adapt and evolve, allowing fresh partners to join and deliver specific outcomes. Ultimately members of the group should act as ambassadors for Whitefriargate and engage in promoting positive messages about the area.

This independent Whitefriargate partnership with a Steering Group/Board of key stakeholder representatives from the various sectors could agree a shared vision and key actions with sector specific subgroups set up, eg a creative and events subgroup to co-ordinate cultural and arts activities and link to city wide events, hospitality to lead on night time economy, retailers to lead on offer, education/University to lead on encouraging entrepreneurship, property/commercial agents to lead on investment and building improvements.

The Steering Group/Board, also involving senior Council representatives, should ensure alignment between vision and strategy and the placemaking programme as well as monitor the effectiveness of interventions e.g., using footfall analysis, surveys of local traders, and measures of visitor satisfaction. The Steering Group/Board in time could begin linking activation projects to other strategic policy goals for Hull to create greater cohesion, e.g. improving health and wellbeing, safety, business support, skills training/updating, sustainability/green economy etc. to ensure that activation reduces deprivation levels. It should also provide strategic steer and advise on the adaptation of placemaking plans in anticipation of a growing residential population in the town centre e.g., augmenting the retail, leisure, cultural and hospitality offer.

Improving place management: recommendations		
Quick wins	Longer term actions	Indicative good practice / supporting resources
#1 Organise a visioning workshop to review and develop a shared vision for the area, agree key actions and begin to establish subgroups to lead on priority themes/activities	Create a dynamic placemaking action plan on annual basis	Saving the High Street – the community takeover
#2 Empower Independent traders to communicate and promote the area and its offer	Advise on additional goods, services or activities might attract people in the future.	We are Withington
#3 Engage younger people to be involved in Whitefriargate projects through targeted work with relevant representatives from the University, local colleges, schools and youth facility providers	Facilitate strengthening the offer for younger people.	How can cities reimagine public space to support children and families?
#4 Facilitate an arts and events group , comprising formed art and cultural providers/groups, events organisers and artists to to co-ordinate arts and events activities/programme	Leads on shutter art, rotating street entertainment/activities, events, art murals etc.	Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda (written IPM evidence)

Appendix 1: Workshop Findings

The future of Whitefriargate: stakeholder perspectives

In the first interactive session, workshop participants were asked to individually identify one broad change that should happen to attract people to the Whitefriargate part of Hull and to ensure this area's future sustainability. Each group was then asked to agree what the most important change should be.

The table below details the views of the stakeholders, aligned with the most appropriate of the IPM's 25 Priority Factors for Vital and Viable Towns, with suggested indicative interventions to address each one. The views expressed obviously only represent those who attended but there was quite a diverse range of stakeholders with different perspectives on Whitefriargate.

The top priority interventions needed to attract people and ensure future sustainability

IPM Priority	Stakeholder comments
ACTIVITY EXPERIENCE APPEARANCE RECREATIONAL SPACE	Outdoor performance space and activation of public areas More outdoor seating/covered areas High quality street art/murals/themed trails Varied events/activities/pop up concerts/live music Creative lighting of outdoor spaces/light based art Activating vacant units: pop up lets/workshops /artist led window vinyls and competitions Street entertainers/musicians Create footfall/attract more people for longer Sticky streets/ sexy signage
MARKETS RETAIL OFFER NON-RETAIL OFFER DIVERSITY	Regular outdoor/street markets Support quality and individuality/independents Creatives/makers events Improve communication with businesses to plan opening hours, staffing and merchandise to match Consistent opening times
VISION & STRATEGY NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS PLACE MANAGEMENT	Establish common direction/links Create a cultural strategy and roadmap More collaboration between stakeholders

IPM Priority	Stakeholder comments
PLACE MARKETING	Encourage more people to do: volunteers/ambassadors Work with University, College and schools to attract an additional audience and use empty spaces/units Address negative perceptions and develop branding
ACCESSIBLE	Better/joined up transport links Sticky infrastructure Greening pedestrian routes/pots/planting

The exercise reveals how the views of local stakeholders align with the Task Force’s recommendation that Whitefriargate pursues a strategy of reinvention. This involves activating and animating the town centre in the short term, but with the long-term goal to become more multifunctional by diversifying the offer. Collaboration between stakeholders to establish and achieve common goals and positive branding was also important as was better transport links.

Activating Whitefriargate: stakeholder perspectives

The second workshop exercise asked participants to highlight what is currently being done well to activate the Whitefriargate area, and what else could be organised quickly to extend this activation programme. The responses are detailed in the table below.

Activities currently done well	Activities to quickly improve Whitefriargate
Linking city centre festivals to Whitefriargate, eg Pride Festival	Better communication of planned events/activities to local people and businesses
Street fruit markets bringing people in	Extended outdoor Market covered space/infrastructure
Existing co-ordinated cultural activities	Fun spaces
Increasing number of events	Collaboration with colleges/schools/University
Improved street furniture and cleaning regimes	Wayfinding and linkage projects, eg parklets/underpass and area lighting schemes
Shopfronts grant scheme	Commissioned artist led pack of activity including window vinyls, signs, street art etc
	More street markets

Some of these ideas are more viable than others, but the recommendations try and reflect as many as possible. The key challenge going forward, however, is which organisations and individuals are going to take responsibility for delivery.

Barriers to activation: stakeholder perspectives

For the final exercise workshop participants were asked to consider what barriers need to be removed to enable the quick wins and longer term actions to happen. Their views are detailed in the table below.

Main Barriers
Lack of confidence to take risks
Lack of effective collaboration/silo mentality/lack of cross sector working
Local authority control/access and permissions/red tape/risk aversion/knowing who the decision makers are to overcome blockages and be more 'can do'
Lack of vision/common agenda to join the dots between different projects/activities
People capacity
Council to trust others more (partners/innovators) – risk taking to try things out

Workshop participants felt that the presentation examples gave some good ideas and confidence to progress with and adapt some of the innovative activities that were successful elsewhere.

Further reading

25 Priority Interventions: e-learning <https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/frameworks/25-vital-and-viable-priorities/>

Parliament, 2019. *High streets and town centres in 2030*. House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Westminster. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcomloc/1010/1010.pdf>

Timpson J. et al. 2018. *The High Street Report*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766844/The_High_Street_Report.pdf

Grimsey Review COVID-19 Supplement Report: Build Back Better. Available at: <https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=48a97424-00b3-4ad9-a7c2-9a544c474082#:~:text=June%2D2020.pdf-.Building%20on%20the%20Grimsey%201%20and%20Grimsey%202%20reviews%2C%20the,in%20a%20post%2DCovid19%20environment.>

The Grimsey Review 2. Available at: <https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=2a3d7ab0-fc51-43aa-9192-488fc34ffded>