Placemaking Programme

Action Plan

Cockermouth Town Centre

August 24

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Introduction: the main challenges

This report identifies potential short-term placemaking interventions for consideration by local stakeholders in the development of a place activation plan for Cockermouth town centre. Drawing together evidence provided by local stakeholders including the council, together with High Streets Task Force experts, this report outlines potential quick wins with links to supporting resources. This encompasses events, festivals, pop-up retail, reuse of vacant shops, or basic improvements to the appearance of the high street or town centre, together with the trialing of new activities to diversify or adapt the offer to meet the needs of future users. The Task Force recognises many places face challenges which require large scale investment in physical regeneration, and they will already have long-term plans in place. We also acknowledge how community stakeholders are often already engaged in the revitalisation of the high street. To be clear, this report should complement existing plans and activities by providing ideas for short-term activation and meanwhile activity, whilst places also tackle more strategic goals. The intention is to provide stakeholders with a list of options and guidance, which they should discuss and prioritise, taking forward what they consider to be most viable given local capacity and resourcing.

Allerdale and then Cumberland Council began working with the High Streets Task Force (HSTF) in 2022. Based on discussions with the council, the subsequent *Unlocking Your Place Potential Report* (UYPP) outlined how the HSTF could provide further support for the high street, which included a recommendation to host a Placemaking Workshop led by HSTF Experts from the IPM. This took place on 22nd July 2024 in the Trout Hotel, attended by representatives from the council, businesses, community organisations. The views expressed obviously only represent those who attended but this group included a diverse range of stakeholders with different perspectives and useful contributions were made from all. The workshop involved participants in completing three group exercises, the 1) future changes participants want for the town centre, 2) barriers to making change happen; and 3) potential quick wins. We have captured and grouped every idea supplied by participants in Appendix 2: Workshop Findings. From this evidence, we have identified the following priorities:

Look and feel	• Improve the appearance of the public realm and built environment • Improve the marketing of Cockermouth
Functionality	• Align opening times with current working and shopping patterns • Review how car parking might better support local business • Explore how to improve bus services • Improve wayfinding
Offer	• Diversify the retail offer • Establish more opportunities for live entertainment
Change	• Lower barriers to entry to empty stores and buildings • Create plans to redevelop the Wilko site • Trial new pop-ups and markets
Management	• Develop a collective vision for the town centre • Improve stakeholder communications and coordination • Strengthen partnerships and networks

Clearly not everything can be done at once and the next step will be to prioritise the recommendations in this report and identify who will take responsibility for leading the delivery of specific actions. There is an expectation business and community groups will take greater responsibility for leading, coordinating and delivering activity, facilitated by local government when necessary. Delivering activities will require effective communication and collaboration between stakeholders and it is important to coordinate activities more effectively. Using data and evidence to prioritise the allocation of resources, and evaluating the impact of activities, interventions, and experiments will strengthen the value and satisfaction for all. In short, the council and local stakeholders need to work together to deliver some, it not all, the actions outlined in this report within a short timeframe (typically 1-2 years).

About the High Streets Task Force and Report Authors

The High Streets Task Force
The 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 September 2024.

The report authors
Professor Steve Millington is a Senior Fellow an a director of the Institute of Place Management, based at Manchester Metropolitan University. His academic career spans over 20 years, during which he has worked on several projects including the IPM's Vital and Viable programme and the placemaking programme for the High Streets Task Force for England. He is co-editor of two books, *Cosmopolitan Urbanism* and *Rethinking the Cultural Economy* and has written many articles about placemaking.

Joe Barratt is a Junior Fellow of the Institute of Place Management and a board member of the government's High Streets Task Force. Having co-founded The Teenage Market, which gives young people a free platform to display their creative talents at market events across the UK, he is now responsible for championing the role of young people in placemaking and place decision making, helping to inspire council leaders and other place management organisations (such as BIDs) to work with young people and include them in governance structures. There are additional recommendations to consider from Sonia Cubrilo's Partnership Development Workshop. Once complete this will mark the end of the direct support offered through the High Streets Task Force, which closes on 30th September 2024. However, online resources, training and support modules will remain available through the website[1].Thank you for participating in the High Streets Task Force Programme. With your permission, Institute of Place Management would like to check in with you in a few months' time to evaluate how the delivery of your transformation plan is progressing.

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[1] https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/

Recommendations

In creating this Action Plan, Taskforce experts draw on wider research and evidence compiled by the Institute of Place Management (IPM), based at Manchester Metropolitan University. The overarching theme of this report is **Reinventing**, which forms one stage in a larger routemap to place transformation developed by the IPM (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The 4Rs help people to develop their plans for the high street by distinguishing between the processes of: Repositioning (analysis and decision making), Rebranding (communication), Restructuring (place management and planning), and Reinventing (effecting change). Effecting change involves creating activities to increase footfall and spend, attract a more diverse mix of visitors, or encourage people to stay longer by creating a more appealing place. They message is local stakeholders need to get with activity they can control, rather than wait for the outcomes of other long-term proposal and projects.

Whereas the 4Rs provide stakeholders with a strategic guide for activating a long-term vision, to help stakeholders identify and respond to their local challenges, the recommendations draw on the IPM's 25 Priorities, which are organised into five basic questions:

What affects the look and feel of the high street?
4) Experience 5) Appearance 12) Place marketing 20) Crime and Safety 22) Liveability

How does the high street function?
1) Activity Hours 7) Necessities 14) Accessibility 11) Walkability 24) Functionality

What does the high street have to offer?
2) Retail Offer 8) Anchors 9) Non-Retail Offer 10) Merchandise 16) Attractiveness 17) Markets 18) Recreational Space

How does the high street need to change?
15) Diversity 19) Barriers to entry 21) Adaptability 25) Innovation 23) Redevelopment Plans

How is the high street managed?
3) Vision and strategy 6) Place management 15) Networks and partnership

This framework is used to organise the evidence gathered from the workshop, town tour, and background research. The tables below, therefore, summarise the views of all participants, aligned with the most appropriate of the five themed priorities.

1: Improving the look and feel of the town centre

Appearance: in general shop fronts and public realm are in a good state. This standard will need to be maintained and there is always room continuous improvement

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
1. Undertake a ground floor assessment of the town centre e.g. for guidance see Plinth Rating Manual and start to approach business and property owners and ask them to undertake basic repairs, cleaning, and painting, including tidying up interiors of vacant units.	Establish regular checks (1-2 times a year) Reward local businesses with a certificate for keep up standard (gold, silver, bronze) and / or hold a best shop window display competition Begin to establish the business case for a future shop front schemes to enable shops to be refreshed. Encourage display of creative window vinyls (especially on empty units) which might vary with seasonal and religious events, Valentine's Day, Easter, Remembrance Day, Christmas.	Ripon Civic Society Awards The Look Company: Retail Window Displays: A Comprehensive Guide The Art of Window Design
2. Identify a list of "blank spaces" e.g. doors, blocked window frames, gable ends, passageways which could be improved through artistic interventions and simple decorative lighting	Establish a programme of micro-commissions to create new murals and creative interventions Install a lighting scheme on Main Street and trial temporary lighting in darkened spaces which will make town centre feel safer after dark Create a walking trail of local murals and art works (which includes local businesses and attractions) e.g. temporary lighting scheme on the brewery Aim to cocreate a Design Guide. Consider a consistent palette of colours and materials to inform future interventions and physical development to create a consistent quality and cohesive visual character within the town's heart	A Public Art Strategy for Exeter Meanwhile city: How temporary interventions create welcoming places with a strong identity IPM Case Study: Pickle Illustration) Street Art and Community in Oxford Why Delightful Public Spaces Matter See Funchal – shop doors scheme Placemaking through lighting installations The role of lighting in supporting town centre regeneration and economic recovery

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
3. Identify a list of sites and spaces amenable to micro-gardening / greening / tree planting, including existing trees in need of maintenance	Establish a green corridor between Sainsburys and Lidl Establish an adopt a green space scheme to encourage a wider range of groups to become involved in their maintenance Undertake bee-friendly weeding along Main St/Station St Encourage all businesses and property owners to install baskets and/or planters outside their premises	Improving Access to Greenspace Pocket Park: Product Urban Design Trees in hard landscapes Guides for creating parklets Green and blue infrastructure: Best practice and case studies Façade Gardens
4. Organise a call for action to grow volunteer capacity e.g. hold an annual big clean-up day – e.g. a Spring clean with concerted effort from the council, business and community and/or run a community planting day and start establishing an informal planting groups to take on forgotten spaces and grot spots.	Establish monthly clean up sessions – such as highly visible volunteer-led litter picking to bring attention to issues of litter and inspire more pride in the environment Education and awareness is important – fostering a pride in the town centre. A zero tolerance policy – bag it and take it home. Engage local business with commercial and packaging reduction awareness	Pride in Place: Tackling Environmental Incivilities From Neighbours to Neighbourhood: Learning how to boost Pride in Place Great Public Spaces: Guide and Evaluation Tool Friends of Queensbury High Street – Litter Pickers

Place marketing: whereas Cockermouth is an attractive town with a lot to offer, more could be done to promote existing businesses and events to both local and visitor audiences		
Potential quick wins	**Longer term ambition**	**Supporting resources**
5. Establish an ongoing communications forum to coordinate and promote existing activities and events. At the bare minimum local stakeholders should follow each other on social media, like / share each other's posts, leave positive reviews, and to agree to use consistent hashtags.	Create online content and share good news and events on a regular (daily) basis e.g. identify and celebrate local businesses and promote offers and occasions e.g. flower shops ahead of Valentine's, Mother's Day Consolidate a list of all activities and events in the town centre and establish a single point of truth for all events. Again, this needs to be updated on a regular basis to keep people informed of when and where events start / finish, with links to further information.	Best practice guide: place marketing and branding Digital, cultural, and social connectivity Decentralised place branding through multiple authors and narratives: the collective branding of a small town in Sweden Grimsby Retailers in Partnership CIC We are Withington
6. Establish a limited life working group to coordinate how the town centre is promoted on a more strategic level.	Review how Cockermouth is represented on existing visitor websites such as TripAdvisor. For guidance: see Place Sentiment Analysis to establish also how well the town centre is represented to external audiences. Agree a common logo or symbol for the town for use in place marketing communications, creative interventions – to badge events and businesses in a common way e.g. daffodil as a unifying emblem Consider investment in tourist promotion e.g. setting up volunteer run tourist office, establishing a funded wider marketing campaign Encourage local businesses to take up training and business support in online marketing and digital communications.	Rebranding the High Street Place Brand Leaders Telling your story Personalities of Historic Places (video) Heritage and Place Branding Case Studies How can I engage with and make the most of heritage?

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
7. Establish an informal ambassadors group to act as town guides and direct visitors. e.g. create a simple 10 point checklist of interesting facts and basic knowledge about Cockermouth and give out to frontline staff e.g. shop workers, hospitality, taxi drivers, street cleaners, festival volunteers– encourage all to talk up the town.	If successful, establish a formal ambassador network with training and support e.g. Blue Badge Guides	Welcome Host	Welcome to Excellence

Ambassador Networks and Place Branding

Institute of Tourist Guiding |

2: Improving the functionality of the town centre

Activity Hours: The number one priority for all places is to review local activity data (e.g. footfall) and compare when the centre is active to the main opening times of local business to ensure businesses and other services are available at optimum times for regular users of the town centre. Drivers of footfall not only include shopping, but also employment, transport, health, education and other anchors which require people to visit or pass through a specific location. Stakeholders in Cockermouth identified opening times as a priority.

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
8. Collate relevant data about the town centre e.g. footfall, spend, visitor numbers, numbers, bus patronage, carpark surveys, hotel occupancy etc	Share insights of footfall analysis to inform trials in new opening times and the scheduling of events e.g. trial late night Fridays with supporting promotion and events. Workshop suggestions include limited trials e.g. one Sunday a month, one early evening opening night and so on. Use this data to inform scheduling of events and markets e.g. could gaps in opening time be filled with pop-up provision?	Review evidence from the Task Force's annual review of footfall What does a future proof high street look like?
9. Use manual footfall data to review activity patterns in the town centre e.g. when is the centre busy	Invest in reliable footfall counting technology or establish regular methods for capturing sample data to monitor not only town centre performance, but also regular and seasonal pattern of activity.	Establishing a footfall baseline Manual footfall counting guidance Footfall Signatures

Necessities: review parking regime and provision		
Potential quick wins	**Longer term ambition**	**Supporting resources**
10. Undertake a parking assessment (number of carparking spaces in or adjacent to the town centre, costs and time restrictions, occupancy rates).	Engage parking operators in partnership meeting and trial a pay on exit system and monitor impact e.g. increased dwell time	Parkopedia People, places and parking process: A multi-level review of parking provision in town centres Innovative Practices in Parking Provision Guidance on Parking Provision in Town Centres
11. Initiate an active travel campaign to encourage more people who are able to, ditch the car and walk or cycle to the high street – especially for short journeys - taking pressure off existing parking demand	Trial temporary walking and cycling routes – as during Lockdown, but monitor the impact on traffic, trade and visitor experience. Reward visitors who arrive by active or public travel e.g. discounts at local businesses to take pressure of existing parking spaces.	Gear Change: a vision for cycling and walking Defining the 15 Minute city Campaign for Better Transport Living Well Kirklees Sustainable and Active Travel on Kensington High Street
12. Trial temporary traffic reduction activities e.g. hold a Car Free day	Consider introducing regular car free Sundays and flexible traffic management such as restricting access or reversing routes to support other uses (markets and events) within the town centre	Wavertree Clean Air Day / Car Free Day A dozen effective interventions to reduce car use in European cities: Lessons learned from a meta-analysis and transition management Car reduction

Walkability: Cockermouth is a compact centre, but better wayfinding might encourage regular and occasional visitors to make more linked trips, increasing their dwell time and spend in the town.

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
13. Complete an audit of existing signage (quality, location, and relevance). Collectively walk the town centre using commonly used routes and identify a list of challenging sites and crossing points. Consider the impact of the traffic routing system, the positioning and routing of buses and bus stops, the use of car parks and pedestrian access to and through them, the amount and quality of pavements and cycling infrastructure.	Trial temporary routes and signage and monitor impact e.g. on footfall and user satisfaction. Note this could be creative signage, street art, heritage trails, banners, flags, green trails etc rather than conventional street signs. Suggested routes: ▪ Signs to car parks ▪ Links between Main Street and Market Place ▪ Main Street to Memorial Gardens Evaluate your trial and construct a longer term a wayfinding action plan, which aligns with wider town centre plans. Where appropriate establish permanent wayfinding solutions. Note this could be creative signage, street art, heritage trails, banners, flags, green trails etc rather than conventional street signs.	Active neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester: Qualitative insights into resident experiences The Pedestrian Pound Walk Inverness Wayfinding 'How To' Guide Signage guidance for outdoor access: a guide to good practice Vision for Thriving Gainsborough 2024 | Shrewsbury: Big Town Plan A tour of Manchester's Hidden Building Art

Accessibility: There is a concern the current bus services do not adequately serve residents or visitors from nearby towns and villages.		
Potential quick wins	**Longer term ambition**	**Supporting resources**
14. Engage bus operators in a discussion about better integration of timetables and feasibility of new services. Better data is needed here to demonstrate the business case for change e.g. additional services to support events	Recent government policy to enable local government to take more control over bus franchises presents a long-term opportunity. Consider wider initiative to encourage public transport use e.g. offers or discounts for visitors arriving by bus in local shops and restaurants, or combined tickets e.g. visitors arriving by train at Penrith can purchase discounted North Lakes rover tickets. Integrate tourist offer with bus routes e.g. identify walks and attractions visitor can access from various stops between Keswick and Cockermouth e.g. see the Calder Valley trail	Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership The Changing Shape of Bus Demand in England Public Transport Information about the new Buses Bill Campaign for Better Transport

3: Improving the town centre offer

Retail and non-retail offer: although Cockermouth town centre has a good range of independent shops and a strong convenience offer, basic and discounted items appear to be unavailable e.g. children's clothing, underwear. The town centre might also offer activities to complement the retail offer and provide more things to do for both regular and occasional visitors

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
15. Undertake a review of the retail offer e.g. visit shops and identify noticeable gaps in provision. It maybe goods are available locally, but people are not aware.	A shorter term solution to explore temporary and pop-up provision to fill gaps in retail choice e.g. market stalls. Longer term will involve engagement with commercial agents to curate new shop tenants so that they complement the existing offer. For example, could a discounter be attracted into the former Wilko building Alternatively aim to establish a community managed shop to fill basic needs.	Community Shops Retail Choice Everyday Places Explore Indie Independents Business Hub
16. Establish a small programme of live musicians/buskers at weekends	Establish a regular programme of music events. Specific ideas include a brass band competition	Planning for Entertainment Related Sound The role of music and cultural infrastructure in creating better future cities for all of us
17. Establish clear protocols for any business wanting to develop al fresco trading opportunities. Make these protocols simple and remove costs to encourage activity to start up.	Next summer undertake a trial to encourage and facilitate street trading, pavement cafes/bars where practical	Advice for the hospitality sector on outdoor dining Street-trading

4: Creating opportunities to change

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" style="background-color:orange">Barriers to entry: there are not many empty units in the town centre, however, it is useful to have clear protocols in place to deal with units as and when they become vacant to ensure these stores are presentable and in a state where new tenants can move in quickly.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential quick wins</td><td>Longer term ambition</td><td>Supporting resources</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The council should review Conservation Area guidance and make it as transparent as possible to commercial agents and local stakeholders to dispel concerns this is a barrier to new business</td>
<td>Explore funding options through various heritage grants available to ensure new businesses complement the town e.g. window displays, signage etc.</td>
<td>Urban Conservation

Case Studies Architectural Heritage Fund

New Life for Historic Cities

Local Heritage Listing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Town centre stakeholder group should establish clear protocols for dealing with empty units e.g. window vinyls, removal of interior rubbish, removal of e.g. newspapers on windows</td>
<td>Establish a small funding scheme to help new businesses move in and set up. E.g. Telford and Wrekin Council offer £10k grants which has reduced their vacancy rate to 3%.

Assess whether property owners will reduce rents / flexible lease terms for new enterprise to enable start-ups establish themselves, platform and peppercorn rent, subdivision of larger units</td>
<td>Ownership diversity and fragmentation: A barrier to urban centre resilience

Unlocking Value

Dealing with Empty Shops: A guide for councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Establish a wish list of potential uses and users based on discussion with existing stakeholders (arts, charity, community led, pop-ups events

Develop a relationship with commercial agents and encourage them to become of the local network</td>
<td>Task agents with curating new uses which will complement the existing offer rather than replicate it. The Council might help with making it easier to enable use change e.g. retail to hospitality

Encourage agents and property owners to allow meanwhile or pop-uses

Identify potential meanwhile users in advance e.g. artists, charities, event organisers who might temporarily activate empty shops e.g. Taste Cumbria</td>
<td>The benefits and pitfalls of contemporary pop-up shops

Meanwhile Foundation | Home

A platform for places: Reviving town centres by changing how communities access property

Open Doors Pilot Programme

meanwhile city: How temporary interventions create welcoming places with a strong identity</td>
</tr>
</table>

Redevelopment plans: the Wilko's site presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment and add additional functionality which might reduce dependency on retail to drive footfall

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
21. Undertake a town-wide consultation on the future of the Wilko's site	Consider non-retail users e.g. residential, visitor, accommodation, public space, health/education facilities, community hub, or even simply creating open space off-road for events and markets.	Repurposing Retail Space Alternative High Street Love Wavertree Buxton Library of Things The Haven Community Hub (Westcliff-on-Sea) Caistor and District Community Trust: Breathing life back into the heart of a market town The Sustainable Temporary Adaptive Reuse (STAR) toolkit: A solution for underused and vacant buildings

Innovation: there is a need to trial new products and services which might help prime the town centre for future needs or attract wider audiences		
Potential quick wins	**Longer term ambition**	**Supporting resources**
22. Identify a programme of creative or innovative interventions through temporary, pop-up and meanwhile uses. Review protocols and costs to enable use of public realm and enable street closures.	Suggested ideas include: • Food, pop-up eateries in Market • Use Wilko for indoor markets • Host a Teenage Market • Market on riverside car park • Antiques fair • Valentine's Day events Establish guidance for event organisers with aim to create a programme of sustained cultural activity by simplifying processes and costs.	Festive Cheer: the local impact of Christmas markets Organising a voluntary event: a 'can do' guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) A guide for the planning and organisation of community festivals Bristol City Council Advice for High Streets Placemaking Training Video
23. Trial pop-up games/play areas using simple materials e.g. see Encouraging Exploration and Play in Underused Public Spaces: An Activity Trail	Provide more activities for children and families e.g. community games, market/fashion show, youth market. Establish dedicated leisure and social spaces for younger people based on need. Use guidance from **Voice, Opportunity, Power: Youth Engagement Toolkit**	Re-imagining urban spaces to help revitalise our high streets How listening to kids leads to better urban design How cities can reimagine public spaces to support children and families I Live Here Too: Why young people want a stake in the future of their neighbourhood

5: Improving place management

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" style="background-color:orange">Visions and strategy: local stakeholders need to develop a strong and collaborative vision for the town centre to address perceived negative, lack of buy-in and apathy</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential quick wins</td><td>Longer term ambition</td><td>Supporting resources</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Reconvene the partnership network and conduct a visioning exercise which begins to establish a common sense of purpose of the town centre</td>
<td>Construct an action plan with a list of focused deliverables benchmarked against the vision. This should be shared widely to encourage support and buy-in.</td>
<td>Aim to emulate Revealing Waterloo: A Placemaking Strategy

A Vision for High Street Regeneration

Design Council- Visioning Best Practice Guide</td>
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<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" style="background-color:orange">Place management: local stakeholders need to improve communication between themselves</td></tr>
<tr><td>Potential quick wins</td><td>Longer term ambition</td><td>Supporting resources</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Agree a single communications forum for local stakeholders to swap information and discuss new ideas in a positive way e.g. a simple WhatsApp group might be a start.

Establish a communications subgroup to manage and maintain internal and external communications.

Establish a single point of truth – an online calendar and events boards which brings together all events, activities and promotions</td>
<td>Establish and maintain regular (daily) external communications using a range of online channels – with clear and consistent messaging

Regularly review social media channels and online platforms to gather intelligence from wider audience about their experience of the town centre

Ultimately Cockermouth would benefit from the appointment of a town centre manager or equivalent, to alleviate stakeholder concerns about time, resource, capacity and knowledge constraints. This role would include coordinating stakeholder activity and supporting joined up promotion of events and activities in the town centre.</td>
<td>People, Culture, Place

Developing strategies for effective town centres

The High Street Report

This must be the place</td>
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</table>

Networks and partnerships: there is a need to extend and strengthen existing networks and partnerships and increase capacity to deliver activities and add greater resilience to the network.

Potential quick wins	Longer term ambition	Supporting resources
26. Review all the place-based anchors in Cockermouth and ask them to join the town centre network. Consider: business, property, transport, education, faith based institutions, health, other public services – together with a range council representatives of differences. Wider business engagement, however, is a priority Undertake a mapping exercise of social capital across Cockermouth to identify third sector, non-profit, charitable, civic societies, and other social/voluntary groups. Spread the net widely e.g. Rotary Clubs, Women's Institute and similar organisations can play an important role if allowed to.	Establish two-tier network – a smaller steering group that meets regularly and provides oversight – and wider town network which meets occasionally. Across these two networks establish several subgroups who are tasked with delivering specific workstreams. E.g. 1. Social media and promotion of the town centre 2. Events, markets, and festivals 3. Green town network, planting, litter picking 4. Improving shop fronts 5. Ambassador network The steering group should consider more strategic issues including potential funding streams – working with the Council to deliver major projects – whilst providing oversight of short-term and ongoing place activation activities. Ideally the steering group should be chaired by a non-council representative.	Future Place: Unlocking the potential of places Best Practice Guide: Partnership Development Best Practice Guide: Developing Delivery Plans See: High street 2030 Saving the High Street – the community takeover Vital and Viable Factor: Community Power Networks and Partnerships with Councils Task Force report shows local partnerships are key to unlocking high streets potential	High Streets Task Force Place Partnerships High Street Accelerators

Appendix 1: the 4Rs Framework

The 4Rs are not mutually exclusive but are connected; each is a potential starting point on a transformation journey, and different places will be at different stages. The Four Rs are a centrepiece of our community toolkit. An editable version of the transformation routemap with instructions can be downloaded here. Depending on where you start, this 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 as 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.

Appendix 2: Workshop Findings

First, workshop participants were asked to individually identify one broad change that should happen to attract people to the centre and to ensure its sustainability. Each group was then asked to agree what the most important change should be. For the second exercise, participants were asked to consider what barriers need to be removed to enable change to happen. Here there were fewer responses, but in summary, participants revealed their frustration about the speed of change or decision-making, together with some reflection on the need for improved collaboration and cooperation between different stakeholder groups a call for more community involvement. The final workshop exercise asked participants to highlight activities that can be done quickly to animate the centre. All 172 responses are detailed in the tables below. A range of positive ideas were suggested, with notable clusters. The priorities are:

Look and feel
- Improving the appearance of the public realm and built environment
- Improving the marketing of Cockermouth

Functionality
- Aligning opening times with current working and shopping patterns
- Reviewing how car parking might better support local business
- Improving bus services
- Improving wayfinding

Offer
- Diversifying the retail offer
- More live entertainment

Change
- Lowering barriers to entry
- Redeveloping the Wilko site
- Trialling new pop-ups and markets

Management
- Developing a vision for the town centre
- Improving stakeholder communications and coordination
- Strengthening partnerships and networks

The look and feel of the centre

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
Appearance (private shop frontages)	In general, the shop frontages in the town centre are very well maintained in comparison to other centres. It is important to maintain these standards and pursue a programme of continuous improvement.	1. Keep up with decoration of shop fronts	2. Every shop should clear weeds/litter daily 3. Paint the blank solid doors as Funchal – local historical scenes 4. Spruce up the Main Street – empty shops in particular 5. Window displays
Appearance (public realm)	The town centre is well-kept in comparison to other centres. Evidence from site observations and the workshop suggests the need for an iterative programme of micro-improvements and the need to maintain existing operational standards in relation to repair and litter removal.	6. Public realm 7. Tidy up mess areas 8. Street clean more often	9. Spruce up the Main Street 10. Town tree lighting during winter months 11. Light up trees Oct-March 12. Street art 13. Artwork around the town (map of murals)
Appearance (planting and greenery)	Again, Cockermouth is to be congratulated for its efforts to introduce greenery and flowers in the town centre. More could be done to embed planting across the centre and ensure ongoing maintenance.	14. Plant flowers and greenery	15. Trees need cutting 16. Green up the lane between Sainsburys and Lidl 17. Adopt planting areas 18. Bee-friendly weeding along Main St/Station St
Place marketing	Whereas Cockermouth is an attractive town with a lot to offer, more could be done to promote the existing offer and events to both local and visitor catchments.	19. Promotion of what Cockermouth has to offer – profile 20. Find a way to consolidate a list of all activities in the town 21. Coordination of place promotion	22. Build a daffodil logo 23. Tourist office 24. Funding to market the town nationally to attract visitors and generate income

Improving centre functionality

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
Activity Hours	Evidence from the workshop reveals a strong feeling activity hours need to change to reflect contemporary working and shopping patterns, and the needs of visitors from elsewhere.	25. More footfall through 26. Change opening hours to meet demands of customers 27. Opening hours 28. Extended opening hours – publicised late night opening	29. More Sunday / varied opening hours 30. Rota system for Sunday opening 31. One or two nights late night opening 32. Cockermouth at night once a week 33. 7 day opening 34. Review business opening times 35. More to happen at weekend 36. Trial different opening times and days to make it easier for people who work Mon-Friday to access shops over the weekend 37. One late night a week – not just around Christmas time 38. Trial one Sunday a month opening or one evening per week
Necessities	Several participants referred to issues regarding the operation of the town's car parks.		39. Pay on exit 40. A park and ride facility just outside of town. Pay on exit parking. Making parking more accessible / less restrictive / better signage 41. Electric charging points 42. Increase free parking to 2 hours

Accessibility	There is a concern that the current bus services do not adequately serve residents and visitors from nearby settlements within the local catchment.	43. Transport links to smaller villages 44. Transport is an issue for events held in the evening or later in the day. More accessible and connectivity to the outskirts of Cockermouth 45. Transport – accessibility and connectivity – limited buses through the day and evening – rural villages effected with bus cuts 46. Improved public transport at peak times or for events	47. Businesses work with local bus operator to have a day a week which picks up from local villages – bus and lunch deal? Initiatives 48. Engage public transport providers
Walkability	Traffic dominates the town centre. There is a sense that improvements to wayfinding may encourage more to walk and improve people's experience.	49. Improved wayfinding 50. Wayfinding – signage 51. Wayfinding 52. Improve local wayfinding	53. Signs to car parks 54. Car park signage 55. Link Main Street and Market Place 56. Seating on Main Street 57. The map by the toilets is upside down 58. Signage from Main Street to Memorial Gardens 59. Computer screen maps to locate businesses and places – designed to fit town heritage 60. Volunteer town guides to direct visitors 61. Link pop-up street art and wayfinding 62. To create open, traffic free spaces along the High Street (Main Street, Station Street, Market Street) 63. Traffic calming gateway to town centre to provide a sense of destination.

Improving the centre offer

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
Merchandise	Whilst there is a range of shops in the town centre and reasonable convenience offer, workshop participants reported challenges in accessing basic items, which may drive spend to other centres.	64. Shop offering	65. Lower cost items e.g. children's clothing
Non-retail offer	Workshop participants reported the need for activities other than retail to happen in the town centre – with a particular focus on live music to activate the place and entertain people.	66. An offering other than shops 67. More of an experience i.e. spend the day 68. Improve outside entertainment areas 69. More events	70. Live entertainment on the street at weekends 71. Encourage cafes and bars to use pavements where practical 72. Allocate a space for buskers, musicians, at weekends 73. Encourage quality buskers (maybe give them a guaranteed bung) 74. Regular programme of small events 75. Brass band competition

Creating opportunities for change

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
Barriers to entry	Although there are not many empty units in Cockermouth efforts could be made to activate them through pop-up or meanwhile activity.	76. Planning constraints as Cockermouth is a Conversation Area 77. Empty shops	78. Empty shops – use for artist space at Taste Cumbria 79. Use empty shop fronts for exhibitions
Redevelopment plans	Whereas clarity is needed on the redevelopment of the Jennings' site, in the town centre itself there are limited sizeable redevelopment opportunities other than the Wilko's site.	80. More accommodation 81. Money to take back into public ownership areas/ building that are redundant or neglected	82. Lack of open spaces along the high street which poop-up attractions can utilise 83. Wilko Site – replace with apartments / residential 30-50 unts
Innovation	Trial new creative or innovative interventions through temporary, pop-up and meanwhile use, which might help prime the centre for future needs or attract wider audiences.		84. Food, pop-up eateries in Market Place or similar area 85. Use Wilko for indoor markets, traditional traders market, Teenage Market – weather proof 86. Teenage Market 87. Trial a Teenage Market with empty shops / car park spaces 88. Market on riverside car park (teen, music, crafts) 89. Antiques fair

Improving place management

Themed Priority	How does the centre need to change? Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
Vision and strategy	Cockermouth town centre needs a stronger collective vision.	90. Cynicism – no buy-in – negativity 'can't do attitude' 91. What stops change? Fear, inertia, it's not my agenda, capacity to change 92. Resistance to change 93. No big picture, no blue sky, no vision – collective 94. Collaboration – buy-in	95. Success – we are not as much of a basket case as to make action imperative
Place management	Stakeholder communication and coordination needs improving.	96. Sharing of information about the planned events 97. Cohesion – no collaboration between stakeholders plus the town should be the focus, not group individual or organisation	98. Town manager
Networks and partnerships	Cockermouth needs to strengthen networks and partnerships involved in the delivery of activity in the town centre.	99. Lack of volunteers 100. Lack of single forum … 101. Forum – task work group 102. Establish group to coordinate activity 103. Community committee 104. Money 105. Resources – money and time and risk appetite 106. Money and resources (capacity) 107. Underdeveloped partnerships – knowing and playing to strength	108. Community events to encourage negative business to take part 109. More engagement to encourage businesses to take part 110. Do a 'give a day' to the town – volunteers from business and community to give time to weed, paint and plant 111. Approach larger business to get involved e.g. Cumberland Building Society