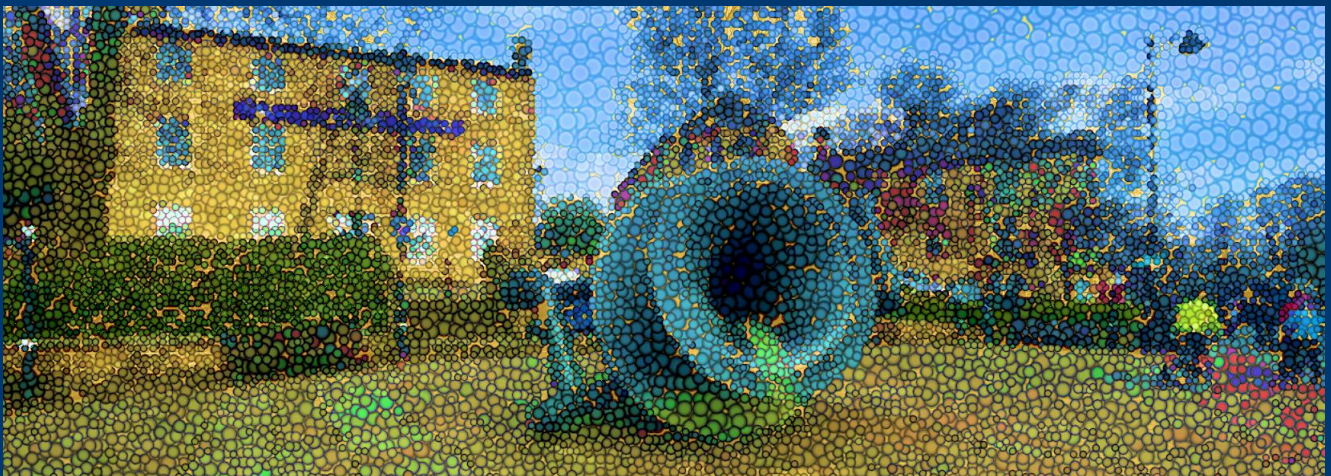


# PLACE MAKING ACTION PLAN RAMSBOTTOM TOWN CENTRE



Professor Steven Millington and Dr Michael Sewell

MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

## CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HEADLINE FINDINGS FROM THE PLACE QUALITY AUDIT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4RS FRAMEWORK: RAMSBOTTOM .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: PLACE QUALITY AUDIT MAIN FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOP FINDINGS - GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE ..</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: WORKSHOP FINDINGS – GROUPED RESPONSES .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: WORKSHOP FINDINGS – INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES .....</b>	<b>42</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Headline findings from the place quality audit:

- The lack of a dedicated town centre management group and a shared vision is hindering the town centre's potential.
- Activity hours and low dwell times are compromising vitality and viability, potentially linked to a poor pedestrian environment.
- While the overall appearance is good, with a strong heritage appeal, targeted small improvements are needed.
- Ramsbottom has a good reputation that needs amplification to sustain visitor numbers and appeal to a wider audience.
- The overall retail and food/beverage offer is good, but limited development space and ageing buildings restrict future adaptation.

### Headline findings form the 4Rs Framework Assessment:

**Reposition:** when there is insufficient data and understanding of the local context, necessitating focused data collection and vision development. Strengths include a positive reputation as a culinary destination and the heritage railway. Weaknesses include a lack of footfall and tourism impact data, and a vision without widespread buy-in. Opportunities lie in commercial leisure provision (e.g. indoor recreational activities such as gyms, or fun activities like Junkyard golf or Flight Club) and tourism potential, while threats include rising rents and competition from other towns.

**Reinvent:** when action is lacking despite the existence of plans and data. Strengths include a range of activities and an established events programme. Weaknesses include limited business opening hours, the temporary suspension of the market, and a lack of creative placemaking. Opportunities include to extend the retail, food and cultural offer based on the new programme of market and the reuse of empty spaces, while threats include nearby retail destinations and the potential loss of the heritage railway's appeal.

**Rebrand:** while the place is seen as improving, public perception may remain negative, requiring enhanced communication and marketing. Strengths include a positive reputation driven by events and food. Weaknesses include a lack of awareness of the offer and negative impact of traffic. Opportunities involve coordinated social media campaigns and building on the creative hub reputation, while threats include becoming indistinguishable from other similar towns.

**Restructure:** when decision-making may be stagnant or ineffective, requiring changes in governance. Strengths include several business networks and council development plans. Weaknesses include a lack of town centre management and coordination, and limited public/development space. Opportunities include high establishing a town centre manager, while threats include absentee landlords and incomplete regeneration projects.

Action Plan priorities:

The report outlines numerous potential short-term interventions under each of the 4Rs framework, benchmarked against the IPM's 25 priorities. Key actions include:

- establishing communication forums and an informal town team.
- conducting a visioning exercise and consolidating business networks.
- engaging property owners and mapping social groups.
- trialling traffic-free routes and temporary parklets.
- reviewing opening times and public transport connectivity.
- improving data collection and establishing a communications subgroup for branding.
- creating itineraries and supporting businesses with online marketing.
- establishing a town ambassador scheme and a single web presence for events.
- reinventing the market offer and encouraging creative interventions.
- sharing good practice so all shops to create high quality frontages and window displays.
- auditing and improving signage and wayfinding.

- supporting heritage engagement and developing an empty shops plan.
- facilitating al fresco trading and resurrecting Ramsbottom in Bloom.
- establishing green space adoption schemes and organising clean-up days.
- engaging businesses in managing commercial waste and trialling business toilet schemes and pop-up play areas.

In summary, this report highlights the strengths of Ramsbottom town centre, but emphasises the critical need for improved coordination, a shared vision, better data utilisation, and proactive placemaking interventions to enhance its vitality and viability in the face of evolving high street challenges.

### **Workshop findings:**

The mapping exercise revealed a consistent understanding of the town centre's spatial structure, with Bridge Street/Ramsbottom Lane identified as the main commercial heart. Key landmarks were identified, and participants desired improvements focused on the reuse of the market space and enhancements to the Civic Hall. The exercise also suggested a lack of a clear social gathering point and potential for utilizing side streets.

Grouped responses prioritised coordinated events, shop front design guide compliance, basic public realm improvements, and coordinated opening times as "do it now" activities.

Individual responses highlighted concerns about resistance to changes affecting heritage but also acknowledged the need for coordinated efforts to improve shop fronts and manage commercial waste. Stakeholders supported cohesive event programming and better signage and wayfinding. The need for diversified offerings and a reinvented market was also noted. A lack of a clear vision for change and the absence of a coordinating body were identified as significant challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

This report aims to identify opportunities to enhance the vitality and viability of Ramsbottom town centre. It is based on an independent review conducted by the Institute of Place Management (IPM). The report identifies potential placemaking interventions for local stakeholders to consider that they think is most viable given local capacity and resourcing constraints. Placemaking encompasses events, festivals, pop-up retail, reuse of vacant shops, or basic improvements to the appearance of the high street, together with the trialing of new activities to diversify or adapt the offer to meet the changing needs of people who visit the town street both now and in the future. It is up to local people to decide what they want to do, but delivery of the IPM recommendation will rest on how well stakeholders communicate and work together. The IPM believes collaboration is vital to the creating resilient places. However, the IPM acknowledges high streets face challenges which also require large scale investment in physical regeneration strategic planning, and how communities may already be engaged in supporting their high street in various ways. To be clear, this report is designed to complement and support existing plans by outlining projects. The evidence for the report is based on:

1. A **Place Quality Audit**, an independent review of Ramsbottom town centre utilising the IPM's **25 Priorities**<sup>1</sup> for restoring vitality and viability in high streets.
2. A **Vital and Viable Workshop** held in Ramsbottom Library on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 attended by representatives from the council, businesses, community organisations. The views expressed obviously only represent this group, but it did include a range of stakeholders with different perspectives and useful contributions were made from all. The workshop required participants to complete three exercises designed to<sup>2</sup>:
  - a. Identify mutually shared attributes of the town centre and aspirations for the future.

---

<sup>1</sup>See High Street UK2020. In short, the framework was developed in partnership between the Institute of Place Management, a network of place professionals, and collaborative partnerships located in 10 towns across the UK.

<sup>2</sup> Every idea supplied by participants is listed in the appendices.

- b. Barriers that need to be removed to enable change to progress.
- c. Short-term placemaking priorities to take forward.

The findings are presented through:

1. The **4Rs framework: transformation route map**<sup>3</sup>, a high-level diagnostic outlining wider priorities and the order in which they might be tackled locally.
2. A **Placemaking Action Plan**, which lists potential short-term placemaking interventions with supporting guidance benchmarked against **the IPM's 25 Priorities**.

---

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the 25 Priorities and 4Rs Framework [click this link](#)

## CONTEXT

The IPM is an internationally recognised research team and professional network based at Manchester Metropolitan University, which has extensive experience of town centre revitalisation including the delivery of the UK Government's national High Streets Task for England from 2019-24, which provided support and guidance to 150 local authorities. To help local communities, the IPM created the [Vital and Viable Programme](#), an approach based on a combination of academic research combined, real-world professional knowledge, and the input from towns across the UK. In 2024, the IPM was commissioned by Bury Council to deliver this programme in Ramsbottom. The Programme is based on two decision-making frameworks. The **4Rs Framework** is a high-level diagnostic tool designed to unlock place potential by identifying the main barriers to transformation. To help communities identify and respond to their local challenges the 4Rs assesses a town centre strengths and weaknesses across four criteria:

- analysis and decision making (repositioning).
- effecting change (reinventing).
- communication (rebranding).
- governance/spatial planning (restructuring).

Whereas the 4Rs provide a strategic guide for activating a long-term vision, the second framework, the IPM **25 Priorities**<sup>4</sup> for restoring vitality and viability in high streets and town centres, focuses on short-term objectives. These include interventions, which are 1) likely to have the most impact, and 2) most likely to be within the control of local stakeholders, provided they work effectively in partnership. The 25 priorities are grouped in way that aim to answer five crucial questions:

- What affects the look and feel of the high street?
- How does the high street function?
- What has the high street got to offer?
- How does the high street need to change?
- How is the high street managed?

---

<sup>4</sup>See: [High Street UK2020](#). The 25 are the top priorities out of wider list of 237.

Clearly not everything can be done at once. The next steps for the people of Ramsbottom will be to prioritise the recommendations in this report and identify who will take responsibility for specific actions. There is an expectation a wide range of groups need to be involved. Delivering and coordinating activity will require effective communication and collaboration between stakeholders. 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.

## HEADLINE FINDINGS FROM THE PLACE QUALITY AUDIT

The aim of the Place Quality Audit is to identify priorities for enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre based on an independent external review. **Key areas examined include the town's visual appeal, functionality, retail and non-retail offerings, and management.** The audit uses a rating system (Red, Amber, Yellow, Green) to indicate performance levels and areas needing improvement:

Table 1

	Higher priority	Lower priority
Impacts negatively on the town centre	Red = requires significant early intervention	Amber = requires targeted interventions
Impacts positively on the town centre	Yellow = good practice but minor improvements needs	Green = good practice should be sustained

The main findings are summarised in **Table 2** below:

Table 2

Criteria	RATING
The look and feel of the centre	Yellow
The functionality of the centre	Amber
Centre offer	Green
The need to change	Yellow
Centre management	Red

In summary, the absence of effective town centre governance and coordination of key local stakeholder is the main challenges. Without this capacity in place, it will be more difficult and sometimes impossible to fix other problems in the town centre.

## 4RS FRAMEWORK: RAMSBOTTOM

Many places have found the 4Rs to be a useful tool for planning both short and long-term priorities. The 4Rs first involves assessing the town centre against each position outlined in **Figure 1**:

### REPOSITION

There is insufficient data and understanding of the local context, requiring focused data collection and vision development. Strategies include consolidating existing economic activity, whilst also targeting new visitor demographics and business sectors.

### REINVENT

Plans and data exist but action is lacking. Reinventing is necessary, involving initiating change through practical interventions. Providing new experiences and offers can enable the town to begin a process of long-term adaptation.

### REBRAND

If a place is improving but public perception remains negative, rebranding is recommended, emphasising enhanced communication alongside marketing. Strategies include using communication channels to listen to and evaluate visitor experiences, together with co-coordinated multi-channel communication to establish and promote the town's identity.

### RESTRUCTURE

Restructuring addresses situations where decision-making is stagnant or ineffective, necessitating changes in governance or significant spatial planning or long-term capital project to resolve.

Figure 1

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. Actions under each R may happen simultaneously, consecutively, or repeatedly. Depending on where you start, transformation will take time to deliver but the framework helps to disentangle what can seem an overwhelmingly complex process. The second stage involves a SWOT analysis organised using the 4Rs framework.

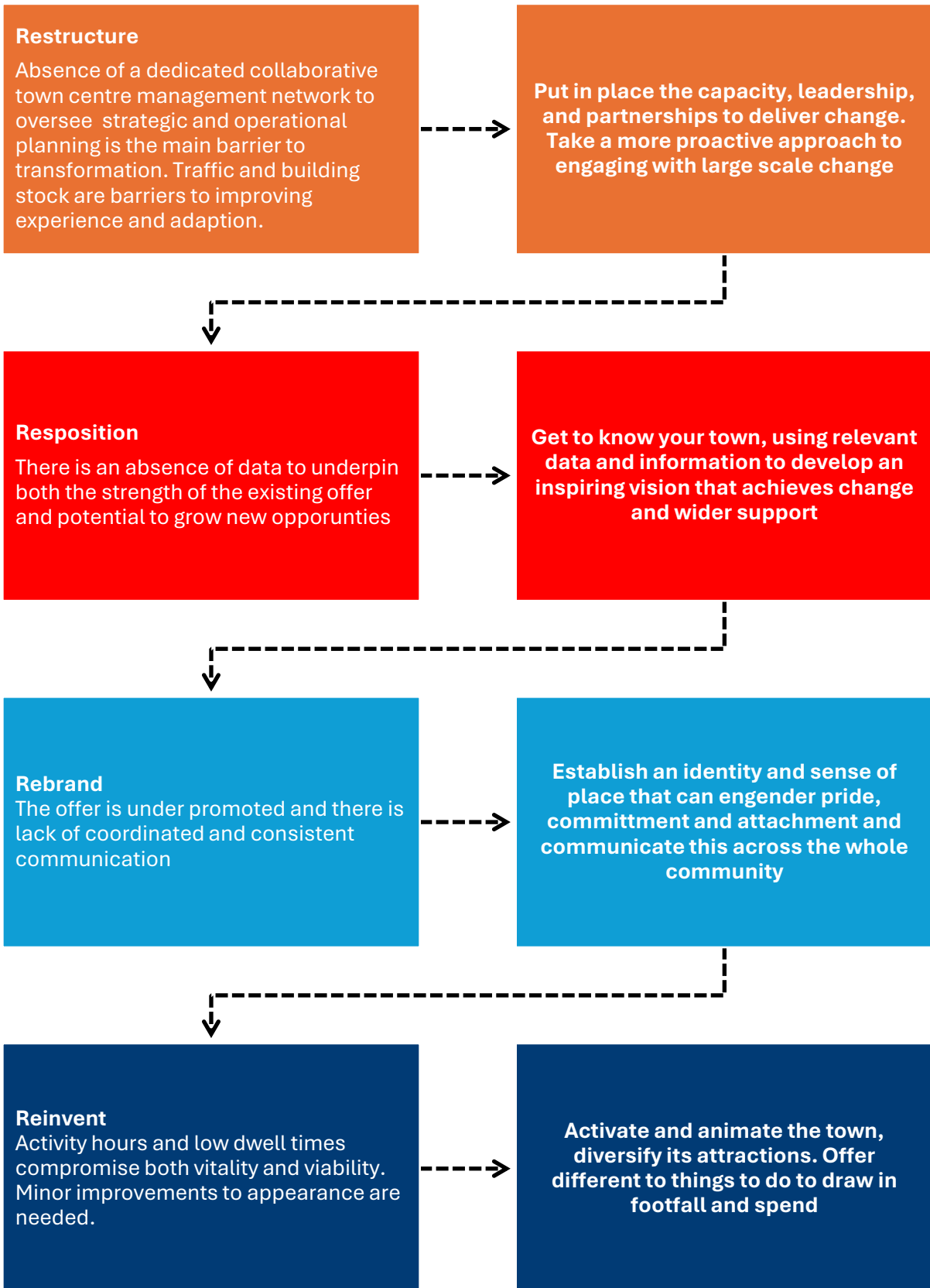


Table 3

<b>Repositioning</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Positive reputation as a culinary destination</p> <p>East Lancashire Railway is a unique attraction in Greater Manchester</p> <p>Pennine location</p> <p>Liveable place with a town centre serving the everyday needs of the residential population</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Absence of reliable footfall data to inform operational and strategic planning</p> <p>Lack of evidence of how tourism impacts on footfall and spend</p> <p>Limited understanding of how everyday anchors drive footfall.</p> <p>The vision for the town centre has not received widespread buy-in</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Leisure and tourism potential e.g. health, active travel, business retreats, music/creativity</p> <p>Co-working / networking space to match post-pandemic working patterns</p> <p>Enticing visitors in Manchester city centre to also explore Ramsbottom and surrounding hills</p> <p>Appeal to households aiming to relocate from within Greater Manchester</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Rising commercial rents and poor operating conditions threaten independents, start-ups, and hospitality</p> <p>Other Pennine towns have more to offer and are more accessible</p>

Table 4

<b>Reinventing</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Range of activities and services, not just retail, including events and a theatre which draw people into the town centre at different times in different days</p> <p>Established events programme with a good reputation attracts people into the town</p> <p>Key start and finish point for multiple walking and cycling trails</p> <p>Several businesses have strong merchandising and a good reputation</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Only one day a week when 100% of town centre businesses are open</p> <p>Temporary suspension of market</p> <p>Despite emerging reputation as a creative destination, the town centre lacks both colour and creative placemaking interventions</p> <p>Traffic limits potential for public events and negatively affects pedestrian experience</p> <p>Under used car parks and vacant stores</p> <p>Limited retail innovation in the town</p> <p>Poor internal connectivity and synergy between different activities and nearby leisure assets</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Plans for the market provide an opportunity to activate the town centre at extend dwell times</p> <p>Empty shop units and under-used car parks provide space of new activities and experiences e.g. to grow and consolidate creative activity</p> <p>Potential to exploit the river front walking route, Bridge Street Gardens, and heritage railway station into a stronger year-round destination</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Nearby comparison retail and leisure destinations (Bury, Manchester, Trafford Centres) and out-of-town retail parks siphon local spend and footfall</p> <p>Other Pennine towns have strong marketing, and placemaking activity – and are easier to access by public transport.</p> <p>Without the heritage railway the town has no significant tourist attraction</p> <p>Loss or poor management of heritage architecture undermine the town's aesthetic appeal</p>

Table 5

<b>Rebranding</b>	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Events and food offer drive a positive reputation for Ramsbottom</p> <p>Traditional town centre, with nearby natural landscape and unique local landmark already attracts both residents and non-local visitors</p> <p>Steam railway is a unique attraction in Greater Manchester</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Lack of awareness of offer</p> <p>Traditional market town image damaged by excessive traffic</p> <p>Absence of clear, consistent and up-to-date marketing messages</p> <p>Weak internal synergies between existing offer and visitor markets</p> <p>Lack of linked trips both in terms of physical wayfinding and itinerary construction.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Coordinated multi-channel social media campaign to raise awareness of offer</p> <p>Strengthening emergent reputation as a creative hub</p> <p>Building on existing reputation to establish the town centre as an active travel hub</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Danger of becoming another Hebden Bridge or New Mills – undermining brand distinction</p> <p>Tourism, retail and hospitality all dependent on external factors beyond local control e.g. levels of disposable income, tourism trends</p>

## Restructuring

### Strengths

Several business networks and community organisations

Council has long term development plans in place to mitigate impact of traffic and encourage active travel and local connectivity

### Weaknesses

Stakeholder coordination / wider buy-in

No town centre management and coordination

Dependence on council to drive change

Limited public space to hold large scale markets or events

Limited development space in the town centre / fragmented landownership

Inflexible commercial units

Public transport access

Limited visitor infrastructure to sustain tourism e.g. hotel bedspaces

### Opportunities

High Street Rental Auctions

Establishment of a town centre manager to lead a town centre network to coordinate activity and promotion

Potential to reconnect to main railway line

### Threats

Absentee land and property owners

Continued resistance to spatial planning

Major new regeneration and infrastructure projects are not completed, and traffic continues to negatively affect visitor experience

Rising operational costs in the retail and hospitality sectors

Table 7

Restructure: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	What other places have done
1. The existing group of stakeholders should establish a communications forum e.g. a simple WhatsApp group would suffice. <sup>5</sup>	Local stakeholders routinely swap information and discuss new ideas in a positive way, providing constructive feedback to one another. The council feeds into this group with timely and clear updates on plans.	<a href="#">Grimsby 2025 Group</a>
2. Establish an informal town team – appoint a non-local authority chair. Your first action is to complete your own self-assessment of the town centre using IPM guidance or other tools e.g. <a href="#">Local Government Association toolkit</a>	A Town Centre Manager coordinates activity, business engagement and the joined-up promotion of events, activities, taking pressure of volunteers by adding capacity and know-how. From a council perspective, one person could manage a group of centres in Bury.	<a href="#">Place Partnerships</a> <a href="#">Best Practice Guide: Partnership Development</a> <a href="#">Saving the High Street: the community takeover</a> See the process undertaken by <a href="#">Stockport Council</a>
3. The informal town team should conduct a visioning exercise to establish a common sense of purpose of the town centre	Local stakeholders construct an action plan with a list of focused deliverables benchmarked against the shared vision. This plan is shared widely as a call to arms to encourage wider support and buy-in.	Review <a href="#">This Must be the Place</a> <a href="#">Alternative High Street</a> Review <a href="#">Great Places Evaluation</a> <a href="#">Learning how to boost pride in place</a> <a href="#">Shrewsbury Big Town Plan</a> Aim to emulate <a href="#">Waterloo Placemaking Strategy</a>
4. Consolidate business networks in the area to form an additional network focused on improving the town centre offer.	A Traders Association works alongside the informal town team to improve opening times, merchandising and shop fronts.	See <a href="#">Withington Village</a> example

<sup>5</sup> Actions highlighted in yellow were identified as top priorities by stakeholders who attended the workshop

Restructure: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	What other places have done
5. Engage property owners and commercial agents and involve them in the town network. Aim to dispel concerns heritage and conservation is a barrier to new business	The property sector is active and engaged in Ramsbottom's town centre networks	<a href="#">Ownership Diversity and Fragmentation: a barrier to resilience</a>
6. Undertake a mapping exercise of social groups across Ramsbottom to identify non-profit, charitable, civic societies, and other social/voluntary groups. Spread the net widely e.g. Rotary Clubs, Women's Institute, horticultural groups and similar organisations can play an important role if allowed to.	The town team establishes several subgroups to lead on areas where individuals have expertise e.g. property, tourism, events and markets, social media, greening, engaging younger people, culture and creativity.	<a href="#">The High Street Report</a> <a href="#">High Street 2030 Achieving Change</a> <a href="#">RIBA Future Place Report</a>
7. Trial and evaluate one or two temporary parklet schemes on side streets to add planting and seating on the high street e.g. align with events	Ramsbottom boasts several parklets which are used for seating, planting, and bike storage.	<a href="#">Creating Parklets for Community and Business Resilience</a> <a href="#">Your Guide to Creating a Pop-up Park on Your Street</a> <a href="#">Parklets Toolkit</a> <a href="#">Five Fantastic Parklet Schemes</a>
8. Trial and evaluate temporary traffic reduction activities e.g. hold a Car Free day	Ramsbottom town centre is resilient enough to handle regular road closures and car free streets several times a year through flexible and dynamic rebalancing of selected roads.	<a href="#">Wavertree Clean Air Day / Car Free Day</a> <a href="#">A dozen effective interventions to reduce car use</a>

Table 8

Reposition: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	What other places have done
9. With data collection methods in place undertake trials in revised opening times e.g. late-night Fridays, or alignment with evening and weekend events.	Town centre retailers and hospitality businesses open at more optimum times to better serve the needs of regular and occasional visitors.	<a href="#">Nighttime Enterprise Zones Report</a>
10. Engage with the network review of buses. Consider better integration of timetables and feasibility of new services. Data is needed to demonstrate the business case for change e.g. providing additional services to support events.	Ramsbottom town centre has better public transport connectivity – more frequent and reliable services. Aspire to a network such as the East Midlands - a service connecting large and small towns and villages up to every 20 minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.	<a href="#">Campaign for Better Transport</a> <a href="#">Annual Bus Statistics</a>
11. With an informal town team in place, identify and share existing data and insights regarding the performance of the high street. Identify key data gaps and establish a plan to gather and disseminate this data. Priorities include footfall and tourism numbers. Other data could include e.g., spend, bus patronage, ELR ticket sales, carpark / hotel occupancy rates.	The town team are using metrics to monitor town centre performance and evaluate impact of events and disruptions. Common KPIs include, footfall, vacancy rate, commercial rental values, visitor numbers. Data insights are shared widely so everyone is in the know. The metrics underpin future investment plans and decision making.	Case study: <a href="#">Manchester Vital and Viable District Centres</a>

## Reposition: Action Plan

First step	Aspiration	What other places have done
12. Until systematic data collection is available consider manual footfall counts e.g. when the centre is busy. Use manual footfall data to review activity patterns in the town centre to underpin the business case for more systematic data collection.	Ramsbottom town captures footfall data every day of the year and the insights are shared to inform operational and strategic decision making.	See <a href="#">Love Loughborough Quarterly review</a>

Table 9

Rebrand: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	What other places have done
13. Establish a communications subgroup to manage, coordinate, and maintain internal and external communications. Identify which individuals are best positioned in terms of skills and capacity to run with this. The relaunch of the market offer provides a good opportunity for a test run in better coms.	Ramsbottom has a suite of multi-channel communications under a single umbrella brand e.g. LoveRamsbottom. This encourages local groups to share event information and actively promote offers in the town centre aligned with seasonal events. Communications go out daily so that residents and visitors are assured something is always going on in the town and they know where to go to access up-to-date and accurate information.	<a href="#">Rebranding the High Street</a> <a href="#">Pitlochry</a> <a href="#">Welcome to Caseville</a> <a href="#">Visit Wells</a> <a href="#">Decentralised place branding through multiple authors and narratives: the collective branding of a small town in Sweden</a>
14. Review how Ramsbottom is branded and align with the vision for the town. Agree a common set of messages and protocols for promoting Ramsbottom in a clear and consistent way. See for example <a href="#">Our Bolsover Story</a> . Establish a unifying emblem.	Local stakeholders are using a common logo or symbol in place marketing communications, creative interventions – to badge events and businesses in a common way	<a href="#">Place marketing and branding guide</a> Watch: <a href="#">Personalities of Historic Places</a> <a href="#">Heritage and Place Branding Case Studies</a> <a href="#">Place Brand Co-Creation through Storytelling: Benefits, Risks and Preconditions</a>
15. Review how town centre businesses and attractions are reviewed on TripAdvisor and Google. Identify the most positive reviews and celebrate these businesses in regular communications. At the bare minimum local stakeholders should follow each other on social media, like / share each other's posts, leave positive reviews, and agree to use consistent hashtags.	Visitors leave plentiful positive reviews as a matter of course, because business owners actively encourage them.	Places which have actively used TripAdvisor in their place branding <a href="#">Derry/Londonderry</a> <a href="#">Margate</a> <a href="#">Are, Sweden</a>

Rebrand: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	What other places have done
16. Establish a limited life subgroup to create itineraries to be used in wider promotion – trial with East Lancashire Railway – a simple map of places to eat in the town centre	Visitors to the Ramsbottom routinely follow pre-prepared itineraries which increases footfall and spend for local businesses. Visitors are offered incentives - special offers or discounts at selected business.	<a href="#">Calder Valley Line Itineraries</a>  <a href="#">Calver Valley Partnership Prospectus</a>  see <a href="#">Sowerby Bridge to Halifax trail</a>
17. Audit which businesses are online and what channels they use to communicate with customers. Compile into a register and identify gaps. and encourage local businesses to take up training and business support in online marketing and digital communications.	All town centres businesses are active and adept on social media to promote offers and events. Businesses feel supported in building their skills and capacity in online marketing and presence. The town team organises expertise support to help them.  Local traders lead a communications channel. and ensure consistent and clear messaging to promote local business and events.	<a href="#">Altrincham – the modern market town</a>  <a href="#">Cockermouth Shops</a>  <a href="#">Discover Frome</a>  <a href="#">Hebden Bridge</a>  <a href="#">We are Withington Facebook Group</a>  <a href="#">Wigtown Booktown</a>
18. Establish a town ambassador scheme, starting with the town team. Create for example, a top ten interesting facts about Ramsbottom and share widely.	All front-line staff across the town, including taxi drivers and bus drivers can speak positively about the town centre and what it has to offer. The town team organise ambassador training sessions each year to maintain standards and grow the network.	<a href="#">Durham Ambassador Training Course</a>
19. Establish a single point of truth web presence for community notices and events – a cohesive advanced events program for the town centre	All the various websites promoting the town centre are brought together under a managed umbrella brand. The webpage is regularly updated and contains contemporary and accurate information.	<a href="#">Grimsby 2025 Group Blog</a>  <a href="#">Love Belper</a>

Rebrand: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	What other places have done
20. Trial a temporary lighting installation to bring attention to Ramsbottom e.g. creative lighting scheme at the Peel Monument.	Everyone travelling up the Irwell Valley, by road or rail know Ramsbottom e.g. a Hollywood sign overlooking the town or smaller interventions at key entry points stating 'love', 'joy', 'gratitude' like Todmorden Kindness	<a href="#">Darwen tower lighting</a> <a href="#">Haslingden Halo</a> <a href="#">Todmorden Kindness</a>

Table 10

Reinvent: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	See what other places have done
<p>21. Reinvent the market offer. The Council, traders and town team should consider how markets can fill gaps in the town centre offer, provide space for new business and young entrepreneurs, and provide opportunities to trial new products and services – priming the town centre for the future, aligned with markets at different times e.g. night markets</p> <p>A quick fix would be to trial existing franchises e.g. Makers Market, Teenage Market, NMTF Youth Market.</p>	<p>Ramsbottom town centre hosts markets once/twice a week offering food, craft, and entertainment.</p>	<p><a href="#">Organising a community event – Government Guidance</a></p> <p><a href="#">Street market toolkit</a></p> <p>Case Study: <a href="#">Foodie Friday</a></p>
<p>22. Organise a Plinth Rating Workshop. Consider key entry points to the high street, gable ends, passageways – sites amenable to potential intervention.</p>	<p>Ramsbottom town team establishes a programme of crowd-sourced micro-commissions for creative interventions on shop fronts, blank walls, and gable ends - in-keeping with the identity of the town centre e.g. shutter art. Identify 10 potential projects to start with. Consider a consistent palette of colours and materials to create a consistent quality and cohesive visual. Use the scheme to promote and celebrate local figures.</p>	<p><a href="#">Funchal</a> – shop doors scheme</p> <p><a href="#">New Brighton Case Study</a></p> <p><a href="#">Withington Walls Case Study</a></p> <p><a href="#">Guide to Organising a Plinth Rating Workshop</a></p> <p>Example of process: <a href="#">Stockport Council</a></p>
<p>23. Establish the business case for a shop front scheme</p>	<p>Ramsbottom town team, Bury Council and property owners take a coordinated approach and to acquire funding towards a matched-funded shop front improvement grants based on revised design guidance.</p>	<p><a href="#">Trafford Shop Front Improvement Scheme</a></p> <p><a href="#">Shop Front Grant Guidance example</a></p> <p><a href="#">New Life for Historic Cities</a></p>

<b>Reinvent: Action Plan</b>		
<b>First step</b>	<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>See what other places have done</b>
24. Encourage businesses to display creative displays which vary with seasonal and religious events, Valentine's Day, Eid, Easter, Remembrance Day, Christmas + Fringe, Beer and Harvest festivals.	Local businesses are rewarded with a certificate for keeping up standards (gold, silver, bronze). Local business are celebrated for having the best shop front and the best window display.	<a href="#">The Look Company: Retail Window Displays: A Comprehensive Guide</a>  <a href="#">The Art of Window Design</a>
25. Audit existing signage (quality, location, and relevance). The town team should collectively walk the high street using commonly used routes. Identify a list of challenging sites and crossing points for themselves, directions to buildings where the public can you the toilet. Consider impact of proposed 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, cycling infrastructure in and to the high street, and sites for potential traffic calming measures	The town team conducts their own trials of temporary walking routes and signage and monitor impact e.g. on footfall and user satisfaction. Note this could involve creative signage, street art, heritage trails, banners, flags, green trails etc rather than conventional street signs.  Trials inform the creation of a community led wayfinding action plan, which aligns with wider town centre plans.	<a href="#">Active neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester</a>  <a href="#">The Pedestrian Pound</a>  <a href="#">Walk Inverness: Wayfinding How to Guide</a>  <a href="#">Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access</a>  <a href="#">A tour of Manchester's Hidden Building Art</a>
26. Bury Council and town team review how to support heritage in Ramsbottom. Consider how younger people engage with heritage to start with.	Ramsbottom has a dedicated subgroup of business, council and civic interests to review and encourage positive engagement in the town's heritage.	<a href="#">Case study: Breathing Life Back into the Heart of a Market Town</a>  <a href="#">How to engage young people in Heritage</a>
27. 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.	By Summer 2026 Ramsbottom has undertaken a trial to encourage and facilitate street trading, pavement cafes/bars where practical	<a href="#">Advice for the hospitality sector on outdoor dining</a>  <a href="#">Bury Council Street Trading Regs and Costs</a>  See: <a href="#">Bristol City Council High Streets Page</a>

Reinvent: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	See what other places have done
<p>28. Resurrect Ramsbottom in Bloom. Start by contacting e.g. Edenfield &amp; District Horticultural Society for guidance. Undertake a green audit of the town centre to identify an action plan to guide 150 micro-gardening interventions and trial a community planting day</p> <p>Focus on main entry points and walking routes used by both occasional and regular visitors to access the high street.</p> <p>Establish 'green corridors' using a range of micro-interventions e.g. temporary planters and façade gardens</p>	<p>Ramsbottom has a green network of informal planting groups who take on forgotten spaces and grot spots, teamed up with existing local expertise.</p> <p>This can be supported by <a href="#">Bury Council's Right to Grow</a> initiative.</p> <p>Ultimately: Win <a href="#">Britain in Bloom</a> Best Town Award</p>	<p><a href="#">Guerilla Gardening</a></p> <p><a href="#">Improve your street</a></p> <p><a href="#">Great Public Spaces: Guide and Evaluation Tool.</a></p> <p>See the other: <a href="#">Bury in Bloom</a> (Bury St Edmonds)</p> <p><a href="#">Rochdale in Bloom</a></p> <p>See: <a href="#">Wem Floral Planter Costing</a></p> <p><a href="#">Green and Blue Infrastructure: best practices and case studies</a></p> <p><a href="#">Façade Garden Manual</a></p>
<p>29. Establish an adopt a green space scheme to encourage a wider range of groups to become involved in their maintenance.</p>	<p>Local businesses and community groups are trained in how to maintain existing planters and pots. Large employers are committed through Corporate Social Responsibility to provide volunteers to help with town planting. The town team also costs a tender for a local garden maintenance firm / volunteer group e.g. Ramsbottom Civic Pride to take on regular maintenance.</p>	<p><a href="#">RHS Container Maintenance Guidance</a></p> <p><a href="#">South Gloucester Guide to Greening the High Street</a></p> <p><a href="#">Pocket Park Guide</a></p> <p><a href="#">Trees in Hard landscapes</a></p>
<p>30. Organise a call for action to grow volunteer capacity e.g. hold an annual big clean-up day – or a Spring clean with concerted effort from the council, business and community. Equip volunteers with high vis jackets and schedule litter picks when the town is busy – to bring</p>	<p>All footpaths and public spaces in the town centre remain clean and litter free. All the litter bins are decorated by artists</p>	<p><a href="#">Edinburgh Communal Bin Review Project</a></p> <p>Watch: <a href="#">Friends of Queensbury High Street Litter Pickers</a></p> <p><a href="#">Decorated waste bins example</a></p>

Reinvent: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	See what other places have done
attention bring attention to issues of litter and inspire more pride in the environment		<a href="#">Community Can Art Guide</a>
31. Engage with businesses to manage commercial waste. Consider waste reduction, collection times, outside commercial waste-bin positioning, trialling of shared-bin enclosures behind shops. Start with a mapping exercise of rear access and how to obtain funding for small grants for enclosures.	Ramsbottom establishes a “green badge” waste compliance award.	See: <a href="#">Bath and Somerset guidance for small businesses</a>
<p>32. Start to develop an empty shops plan, working with the council, commercial agents and property owners/developers and encourage agents and property owners to allow meanwhile or pop-uses. Establish a wish list of potential uses and users based on discussion with existing stakeholders (arts, charity, community led, pop-ups events.</p> <p>Refer to: <a href="#">The Benefits and Pitfalls of Pop-up Shops</a> and the <a href="#">Pop-up Guide</a></p> <p>Undertake a <a href="#">STAR audit</a></p> <p>In addition, engage with land owners of nearby fields to help expand existing events and facilitate new events near to the ton centre</p>	<p>Ramsbottom has an exemplary empty shops plan which encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a shop becomes empty. the owner allow for the clearance of interior rubbish, removal newspaper on windows on window, new creative vinyls added</li> <li>• Funding available to “white box” a unit to reduce barriers to new entry</li> <li>• Agents helping to curate curating new uses which complement the existing offer rather than replicate it.</li> <li>• A business development guide for new starters and induction led by the town team</li> <li>• Rent free / low rent periods for new starters</li> <li>• Flexible leases</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Dealing with empty shops: a good practice guide for councils</a></p> <p><a href="#">Meanwhile Foundation   Home</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Vacant Shops Academy</a></p> <p><a href="#">Repurposing Retail Space</a></p> <p><a href="#">Alternative High Street</a></p>

Reinvent: Action Plan		
First step	Aspiration	See what other places have done
33. Trial a business toilets scheme. Ask existing shops and cafes would they be willing to take part in a trial? In addition, establish clearer signage to existing free toilet facilities e.g. Ramsbottom community church.	It is easy for people in the town centre to find a toilet to use.	<a href="#">Publicly Accessible Toilets after COVID</a> <a href="#">Engaged: A toilet on every high street</a>
34. Trial pop-up games/play areas using simple materials e.g. see <a href="#">Encouraging Exploration and Play in Underused Public Spaces: An Activity Trail</a>	<p>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.</p> <p>Use guidance from <a href="#">Voice, Opportunity, Power: Youth Engagement Toolkit</a></p>	<a href="#">Re-imagining urban spaces to help revitalize our high streets</a> <a href="#">How cities can reimagine public spaces to support children and families</a>

## APPENDIX 1: PLACE QUALITY AUDIT MAIN FINDINGS

Table 11

What affects the look and feel of the centre?	
Experience (top priority)	Rating
The centre feels safe	Yellow
It is a good place to simply hang around	Orange
Staff encountered were welcoming and offered good service	Green
Environmental factors affected our experience	Red
Appearance (top priority)	
Litter and commercial waste / graffiti is prominent	Green
Hard landscaping / public realm is well-maintained	Yellow
Soft landscaping/greenery planting are prominent and of high quality	Yellow
Ground floor frontages are welcoming and well-maintained	Green
Underused / vacant sites are managed	Orange
Public art/sculpture/ murals are clear make a striking contribution to the town	Orange
Overall, the centre is visually appealing	Yellow
Place marketing (median priority)	
The town is well promoted through official channels (local authority, DMO)	Yellow
Social media communication about the town is strong and positive	Orange
Event information is easy to find and up to date	Yellow
The offer has a strong and positive reputation – place identity is clear and distinct	Yellow
Signage and guides clearly encourage visitor flow between anchors, attractions and shops.	Red
Crime and safety (lower priority)	
Recorded crime levels	Green
Crime data is monitored and communicated to stakeholders	Yellow

Perception of crime is disproportionate	
Clear and obvious signs of low-level crime / ASB	
<b>Liveability (lower priority)</b>	
There are ample non-retail everyday services, pharmacist, dentist, personal services serving current and potential residential catchment	

Table 12

<b>How well does the centre function?</b>	
<b>Activity hours (top priority)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Opening hours clearly align with catchment needs	Red
There is something to do after shops close	Yellow
Footfall is consistent and the town appears busy	Yellow
The centre is open when the catchment needs it	Red
<b>Necessities (top priority)</b>	
Car parking quantity and quality	Yellow
Quality of public toilets / access to toilets	Orange
There are lots of places for people to sit outside	Orange
Places to secure bikes are clear and visible	Orange
<b>Accessibility (lower priority)</b>	
The centre is accessible by range of modes: road / bus / train / tram / other	Orange
Getting to and from Ramsbottom is easy	Orange
<b>Walkability (top priority)</b>	
It is easy to walk/wheel into the centre	Orange
It is easy to walk/wheel across the centre e.g. pavements are well maintained/obstacle free	Orange
There are lots of car-free spaces	Red
It is easy to cross roads and visit other shops	Red
<b>Functionality (lower priority)</b>	
There is ample non-retail employment	Yellow
There are ample retail services	Yellow
There are ample residential uses in and close to the centre	Yellow
The centre offers tourist / leisure / recreation opportunities	Yellow

Table 13

<b>What does the centre have to offer?</b>	
<b>Retail offer (top priority)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
The centre has a strong comparison offer	Yellow
The centre has a strong convenience offer	Green
The centre has a mix of luxury / discount products	Yellow
There are clearly businesses with both physical and online presence	Yellow
<b>Anchors (top priority)</b>	Light Blue
Large and medium supermarkets	Green
Transport interchange	Red
Major employment centre	Orange
Significant health / education and other services	Yellow
Tourist / heritage attraction	Yellow
Natural landscape	Yellow
<b>Non-retail offer (top priority)</b>	Light Blue
Restaurants, entertainment, other non-retail uses	Green
Diverse tenant mix (brands, independents)	Green
<b>Merchandise (top priority)</b>	Light Blue
General quality of window displays	Green
General quality of display of goods on offer	Green
Overall visual marketing is attractive	Green
<b>Attractiveness (lower priority)</b>	Light Blue
Centre primarily serves local catchment	Green
Centre attracts significant non-local visitors	Yellow
Low vacancy rate	Yellow
<b>Markets (lower priority)</b>	Light Blue
Regular markets have a good reputation and drive footfall	Red

Diverse range of markets	Red
<b>Recreational space (lower priority)</b>	Light Blue
You can easily walk to adjacent high quality open and green space from the town centre	Red
There are ample uncommodified places where people can enjoy spending time without spending money	Yellow

Table 14

<b>How does the centre need to change?</b>	
<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Rating</b>
The centre has a good range of independent and branded stores	Green
The centre has ample leisure activities	Orange
The centre appeals to diverse audiences	Yellow
<b>Barriers to entry</b>	
Commercial rents are too high	Green
Extremely low vacancy rate limits new entrants	Yellow
Landowner / commercial agents do not engage	Red
Support for new entrants is clear and accessible	Red
<b>Adaptability (lower priority)</b>	
In general, units are outdated / difficult to adapt for alternative uses	Orange
Property owners are clearly willing to adapt properties in alignment with market trends / easily allow properties to be re-let/repurposed	Orange
<b>Innovation (lower priority)</b>	
Clear evidence of pop-ups / festivals / events	Yellow
Clear evidence of temporary and meanwhile use	Red
Retailers are clearly willing to adapt	Yellow
<b>Redevelopment Plans (lower priority)</b>	
Planning blight is clear and obvious	Orange
Contemporary regeneration plans are in place to address physical blight	Yellow

Table 15

<b>How well is the centre managed?</b>	
<b>Vision and strategy (top priority)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Long term redevelopment plans are current	Green
The vision for the town centre clearly addresses the main local challenges	Yellow
The vision has widespread appeal and buy-in	Red
<b>Place management (top priority)</b>	
Structures exist to manage daily operations specifically in the town e.g. BID, town team etc.	Red
Town centre has clear delivery and activation plans in place	Red
<b>Networks and partnerships (lower priority)</b>	
A range of formal/informal partnerships or networks are involved in managing and delivering change in the town centre	Red
Traders' association is active and working with the council	Red
Communication between key stakeholders is clear and consistent	Red

## APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOP FINDINGS - GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE

The purpose of the mapping exercise is to understand how different groups perceive, experience and navigate Ramsbottom town centre. Participants were asked to draw a mental map of Ramsbottom town centre from memory, including landmarks, pathways, and significant areas. Subsequently participants labelled their maps to identify elements they had a strong emotional connection to, before adding labels to represent changes they would like. Finally, participants were asked to compare maps to identify any significant similarities or differences. Through this exercise it becomes possible to identify shared attributes of the town centre, together the type and positioning of new interventions. All three maps demonstrate a consistent understanding of the town centre in terms of scale, spatial structure and limits. In summary key pathways and navigation routes include:

- Bridge Street / Carr Street
- A576 Ramsbottom Lane
- Kay Brow/Railway Street
- Square Street
- Crow Lane / Factory Street
- Garden Street

The boundaries and edges of the town centre were marked by:

- Railway / River Irwell
- Nuttall Park entrance /Fed Ex
- The Library
- Market Chamber/Civic Hall – with the Leisure Centre as an outlier.

Bridge Street/Ramsbottom Lane are clearly seen the main commercial heart of the centre. Some minor streets were mentioned, but in much less detail, suggesting they are rarely used by the participants themselves. The railway and river clearly form a natural and psychological barrier indicating the limit of the town centre. Other edges, however, are less clearly defined.

**Table 16** below lists key landmarks ranked by how many maps they feature on. The following features were marked on each map:

- Civic Hall
- Leisure centre
- Library
- Nuttal Park
- Railway station
- Specific local businesses
- St Pauls Church and Gardens
- Theatre

These elements might be considered iconic points of reference or landmarks or participants in the workshop considered meaningful in a Ramsbottom context.

Table 16

Feature	Number of maps	IPM Priority
Civic Hall	***	Appearance, Redevelopment plans
Leisure centre	***	Non-retail offer
Library	***	Non-retail offer
Nuttal Park	***	Recreational space
Railway station	***	Non-retail offer
Specific local businesses	***	Retail and non-retail offer
St Pauls Church and Gardens	***	Non-retail offer
Theatre	***	Non-retail offer
Brewery	**	Non-retail offer
Bridge Street Gardens / Peel Bridge	**	Appearance, recreational space
Football and cricket grounds	**	Recreational space
The Hills	**	Anchor
Market Place / the Urn	**	Walkability
Cluster of supermarkets	*	Retail offer
Methodist Community centre	*	Non-retail offer
Peel Monument	*	Place marketing
New Jerusalem Site	*	Walkability
The Rabbit Hole	*	Non-retail offer

**Table 17** below lists improvements participants wanted to see happen in the town centre. Here is less consensus, however, one area of agreement concerns the re-use of the market space. Secondary priorities refer to the Civic Hall, pedestrian crossings and the use of a vacant plot off Market Place.

Table 17

Feature	Number of maps	IPM Priority
Flexible use of Market North and East car parks / reuse as a market	***	Markets
Civic Hall as a music venue / improvement	**	Non-retail offer
Safer crossings on Bridge Street	**	Safety, Experience
Vacant plot adjacent to Civic Hall as a garden spend	**	Recreational space
Bike stand outside library	*	Necessities
Brewery	*	Non-retail offer
Co-Op Hall as a music venue	*	Non-retail offer
Communal nature area at the bowling green	*	Recreational space
Footbridge over Irwell to connect to Nuttall Park	*	Walkability
Hollywood style sign on the hill overlooking the town	*	Place marketing
Improved bus stops	*	Accessibility
Metrolink tram stop	*	Accessibility
Nuttall Park Entrance	*	Walkability
Outside seating in Market Place	*	Necessities
Retain brick works chimney	*	Place marketing
White Rabbitt	*	Non-retail offer

In summary, the mapping reveals how the town centre lacks a clear focus on obvious point for social gathering or interaction. The use of side streets, neglected

plots, and public realm lying off the traffic dominated Bridge Street/A576 axis, may provide potential sites of new activity, open space, and wayfinding. The views of local business, tourists, and younger people, however, might add interesting detail for reflection.

## APPENDIX 3: WORKSHOP FINDINGS – GROUPED RESPONSES

The final workshop exercise tasked participants to identify potential placemaking projects. However, groups were asked to consider the changes they wanted to see from the first exercise and the constraints identified in exercise 2. Groups were asked to consider two criteria; how quickly could the activity be organised and what the anticipated impact might be:

<p><b>NOT WORTH IT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated events programme</li> <li>Compliance with shop front design guide</li> <li>Basic improvements to public realm</li> <li>Coordinated opening times on event days</li> <li>Commercial waste improvement</li> </ul>	<p><b>DO IT NOWs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New bus routes as part of Bee network</li> <li>Collective approach to change opening times</li> <li>Shop front refurbishment and window displays</li> <li>Improved signage and wayfinding</li> <li>Public realm improvement</li> <li>Physical interventions to improve town identity</li> <li>Organise to protect the chimney</li> <li>Bring the market back</li> <li>Improved stakeholder communications</li> </ul>
<p><b>FORGET IT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metrolink line</li> <li>Sports and leisure quarter</li> <li>Better street lighting</li> <li>Heritage interpretation boards</li> <li>Enterprise centre</li> <li>Civic centre</li> <li>Purpose built marketplace</li> </ul>	<p><b>DO IT LATER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More car-free spaces to support local business</li> <li>Edge of town parking with clear walking routes</li> <li>More planning enforcement and conservation officer staff</li> <li>Protect Conservation Area</li> <li>Raise awareness of guidance</li> <li>Utilise railway</li> <li>Improve bus service across</li> <li>Use the current network review to get better buses</li> </ul>

**Table 18: participant priorities**

The table helps to establish what the group priorities are. For example, despite several participants drawing attention to heritage, there appears to be acknowledgement of the challenges regarding the viability or feasibility of achieving quick wins. That said, some priorities relegated to not worth it, perhaps should be given higher priority, for example, basic improvements to public realm. The findings help to organise the recommendations. For instance, the establishment of new bus

routes should really be a long-term aspiration, however, there is an immediate opportunity to contribute to a network review. The action point, therefore, would be to quickly collate what the ask might be and present this as part of the Review.

## APPENDIX 4: WORKSHOP FINDINGS – INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES

Table 19: Look and Feel of the Town Centre - participant comments

Themed Priority	Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
<b>Appearance</b>	Whereas the audit reveals the town centre requires a programme of iterative improvements to shop fronts and buildings, there is a concern change is limited by heritage / conservation guidelines or a lack of capacity to enforce existing guidance. However, stakeholder views overlook existing good practice in town and overestimate local council capacity, power and responsibilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fear of resistance to big changes in appearance =change of heritage or character.</li> <li>2. Conservation area historic buildings – preventing colour on buildings</li> <li>3. Whilst also lots of positives, the Conversation Area limits some of what can be done (but also protects the town from poor development)</li> <li>4. Take a coordinate approach to shop frontages heritage sites</li> <li>5. Employ more planning enforcement and conservation officer staff</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Bury planning to reprint the Shop Fronts Design Guide to be issue to all shop owners and new arrivals in shops to advertise best practice with the revamped guide. Comes out of the UDP</li> <li>7. Protect the town centre Conservation Area into the long term</li> <li>8. Better conservation of town's heritage by making guidance available to businesses who are moving in, raising awareness</li> <li>9. Planning to enforce the guide's best practice criteria and be active in this policy</li> <li>10. Enforce the traditional window arrangement on all shopfronts and Bridge and Bolton Streets</li> <li>11. Approach all businesses to ask them to improve shop fronts and commercial waste</li> <li>12. Shop front refurb programme inc. mural and shutters</li> <li>13. Make sure all shops have colourful window displays (empty shops too)</li> </ol>
<b>Appearance (public realm)</b>	Workshop findings corroborate the IPM audit to suggest a programme of minor improvements targeted at specific sites.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Public appreciation of flowers, trees, lights</li> <li>15. Appearance of Ramsbottom – flowers, lighting, cleanliness</li> <li>16. Footpaths are clean and litter free</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Guerilla gardening on the bits of green space near the town centre which currently don't do much (allotment waiting list)</li> </ol>

Themed Priority	Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
<b>Place marketing</b>	Stakeholder views resonate with the audit to suggest coordinated and regular communication is needed to promote existing activity.	18. Cohesive advanced events program across all assets	19. Hollywood signs overlooking town and at entrance points stating 'love', 'joy', 'gratitude' like Todmorden Kindness 20. Handover civil hall social media to volunteer groups? 21. Public appreciation of sport champions, market events
<b>Crime and safety</b>	The only safety issue raised aligns with the audit concern about traffic and pedestrian welfare.		22. Slightly wider pavements on Bridge St (but not so wide to need a one-way system) – reason to improve pedestrian safety

Table 20: Improving town centre functionality - participant comments

Themed Priority	Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
<b>Activity Hours</b>	Participant views align with the audit findings.	23. Collective working with business e.g. opening times	24. Coordinated opening times – even just on event days as a starting point 25. Late night opening on Bite Night
<b>Necessities</b>	Whereas parking and street realignment feature prominently in the IPM background research and audit, only one participant mentioned parking in the session		26. Better street lighting 27. Edge of town parking with wonderful routes, colourful paths into the centre
<b>Accessibility</b>	Aligning with the IPM audit, public transport access is acknowledged as a barrier, but stakeholders appreciate change will be long term.		28. Metrolink line 29. Utilise railway 30. Bus service across borough and into Manchester, cross boundary service barrier 31. Use the current network review to get better buses 32. New direct bus links as part of Bee network with services into the evening for Manchester, Tottington, and Radcliffe
<b>Walkability</b>	Participant views align with the IPM audit findings in relation to the absence of pedestrian only space and poor wayfinding.	33. Improved wayfinding and signage 34. Increase the amount of pedestrianised areas for use at all times e.g. markets, outdoor café, eateries 35. Emergency vehicle access	36. Wayfinding via back streets (both sides of Bridge Street) 37. Introduce some one-way roads, some more pedestrianisation. Public space that gets the sunshine, other than church gardens 38. Signboards with town map showing key points of interest and amenities – cafes,

Themed Priority	Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
			pubs, shops, walking routes, parks, railway, bus stops

Table 21: Improving the centre offer - participant comments

Themed Priority	Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
<b>Retail/non-retail</b>	Participants acknowledge the need to diversify the town centre offer, whilst recognising their suggestions might be unfeasible or long-term		39. Sports quarter combining new leisure centre, football and cricket clubs. 40. Enterprise centre 41. Civic centre
<b>Markets</b>	Several participants mentioned the market offer and the opportunity to reinvent the offer.	42. Bring back Ramsbottom market	43. Purpose built marketplace 44. Brand spanking new market with a diverse offer

Table 22: creating opportunities for change - participant comments

Priority	How does the centre need to change?  Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
<b>Diversity, Barriers to Entry, Adaptability, Innovation and Redevelopment Plans</b>	Although the local authority plans for the town centre have led to much discussion locally, and participants had an opportunity to represent their views here, no one directly spoke about how the centre needs to change. This lack of vision is a challenge.		

Table 23: improving town centre management - participant comments

Priority	Summary of issues	General Stakeholder comments	Specific stakeholder ideas
<b>Vision and strategy</b>	Rather than discussing what a future vision might look like, participants largely referred to resistance to change. This aligns with both other findings from the workshop and the IPM audit regarding the absence of a collective vision that has secured wider buy in.	<p>45. People not always liking change</p> <p>46. People don't like change, stuck in the past 'that won't work' attitude.</p> <p>47. Lack of will / resistance to change</p> <p>48. Fear of change – always doing the same – shared vision</p>	
<b>Place management</b>	Again, the challenges raised by participants chime with the IPM audit, reflecting the absence of a town centre manager, who might provide the necessary coordination, signposting, and connectivity said to be lacking.	<p>49. Council / government legislation, road closures</p> <p>50. There is no forum for different organisations to communicate and cooperate. No coordination / facilitator to kickstart and service this</p> <p>51. Coordination</p> <p>52. Loss of town centre coordinative</p>	<p>53. Preventing developing creative outside event space – parking issues, permits, infrastructure, access to creative funding</p> <p>54. Set up a joint management board</p>

<p><b>Networks and partnerships</b></p>	<p>The challenges raised by participants reveal further the absence of cross-sector collaborative networks in Ramsbottom. The capacity and knowledge to do more activity probably does exist locally, but as it stands there remains too much silo working.</p>	<p>55. Lack of collaboration to do anything Cooperation – lack of leadership</p> <p>56. Difficult to get money that isn't fenced for specific time-limited projects like walking and cycling</p> <p>57. Skills and confidence</p> <p>58. Volunteer problem</p>	<p>59. Financially support the Heritage Society's Policy of erecting information plaques and boards about the town</p> <p>60. Librarians connected, museums too?</p> <p>61. Organise protection for [?] chimney to stand for the future.</p> <p>62. Create overview group / notice board</p> <p>63. Collaborative contact: business, railways, volunteer groups, schools and churches</p> <p>64. Coordination groups and meetings for events with more involvement</p>
---	---	--	--