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MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny District Centres Subgroup

Date: Tuesday, 11 September 2018
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: Room 132, Level 1, Town Hall

This is a supplementary agenda containing additional information about the business of the meeting that was not available when the agenda was published.

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

Access to the Town Hall

Public access to the Town Hall is via the access ramp next to the Lloyd Street entrance. Members of the public should report to the reception desk.

Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny District Centres Subgroup

Councillors - Shilton-Godwin (Chair), Connolly, J Hughes, Kirkpatrick, Madeleine Monaghan and H Priest

Agenda

4.	**Pilot Project - Update and Policy Approaches** Report of the Strategic Director, Development This report provides the Subgroup with an update on progress with the four District Centre Pilot projects that are being progressed by the Institute of Place Management (IPM) at Manchester Metropolitan University, with the support of the Council. The Place Management Pilots are a key aspect of the work programme overseen by the District Centres subgroup, and are considering new opportunities to engage local stakeholders and enhance the quality of Manchester neighbourhoods. The report summarises the outcomes of the Northenden Place Management Pilot (which has reached final report stage), provides an update for Gorton and Harpurhey (which are at pre-report stage) and sets out the proposed next steps for the Chorlton pilot.	Pages 3 - 78

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

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This agenda was issued on **Monday, 3 September 2018** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 6, Town Hall Extension (Mount Street Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

Manchester City Council
Report for Information

Report to:	Economy Scrutiny Committee District Centre Subgroup – 11 September 2018
Subject:	Vital and Viable Neighbourhoods / Place Management Pilots - Progress Report
Report of:	Strategic Director, Development

Summary

This report provides the Subgroup with an update on progress with the four District Centre Pilot projects that are being progressed by the Institute of Place Management (IPM) at Manchester Metropolitan University, with the support of the Council. The Place Management Pilots are a key aspect of the work programme overseen by the District Centres subgroup, and are considering new opportunities to engage local stakeholders and enhance the quality of Manchester neighbourhoods.

The report summarises the outcomes of the Northenden Place Management Pilot (which has reached final report stage), provides an update for Gorton and Harpurhey (which are at pre-report stage) and sets out the proposed next steps for the Chorlton pilot.

Recommendations

To note the report and to provide any comments on the work to date.

Wards Affected: Chorlton, Chorlton Park, Gorton and Abbey Hey, Harpurhey, Northenden

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Background documents (available for public inspection): None

1.0 Background

1.1 Previous reports to this subgroup have set out the work programme the council has endorsed, which aims to consider the most effective policy approach the council and its partners can take to promote successful centres in Manchester. The work programme has been developed alongside the Institute of Place Management (based at Manchester Metropolitan University), a body with particular interest in the study and promotion of place management techniques.

1.2 A core aspect of the work programme comprises Place Management Pilots in four of Manchester's centres (Chorlton, Gorton, Harpurhey and Northenden). These are exercises that bring together a centre's stakeholders, bring to their attention key evidence relating to activity and character of the centre and agree the actions that could be most beneficial for the centre's performance. There are aspects of this process that are clearly aligned with the Our Manchester approach. The council has a key role to play, but the degree to which an ongoing programme of activity can be agreed and delivered is a function of the level of commitment from other stakeholders. This report sets out the approach taken to the Place Management Pilot and explains the progress made in each centre.

2.0 Manchester Place Management Pilots – Update

Approach to the Place Management Pilots

2.1 Although each centre is different and will warrant a different management approach, there has been a common overall format to the Place Management Pilots, reflecting the IPM's experience in other locations. The Place Management Pilots comprise an initial assessment by the IPM, a stakeholder workshop and a final report of recommendations. The initial assessment considered footfall data, collected through counters installed in each of the centres, and an audit undertaken through a site visit.

2.2 For the workshop, it was considered important that an appropriate range of stakeholders were invited. Consideration was given to representatives of local businesses (in particular, local traders and land owners), active community groups, service providers and residents. Lists of invitees were prepared through engagement with the council's Neighbourhood Teams and local members. The workshop itself would take place over the course of two hours. It comprises an initial presentation of the IPM's academic research into place management of centres. The two key pieces of research are the High Street 2020 project (focused on understanding the issues that can determine a centre's success) and Bringing Big Data to Small Users, which sought to bring information regarding centre performance (in particular footfall) to local people so that they are able to make informed decisions on collective place management. This section provided background for workshop attendees, and began generating thought and discussion over the centre's performance.

2.3 Next, attendees were asked to work in groups to identify key characteristics and strengths of the centre, which would then be fed back to the wider group. This gave a good sense of the overall range of perceptions of the centre, including the key strengths and opportunities that could provide a basis for action to improve centre performance.

2.4 The final section of the workshop urges attendees to consider their role in effecting the changes identified. There is a tendency to assume a lack of control across stakeholders, but the IPM research suggest found that, particularly where stakeholders can work effectively as a collective, considerable influence can be exercised at the local level. For example, footfall data may reveal that the centre has visitors at times when most premises are closed. Whilst single traders may feel unable to effectively influence trading hours, acting as a group the traders are the only stakeholders able to address this issue.

2.5 Following the workshop, the IPM prepare a report for the centre. This summarises the assessment undertaken by the IPM and the outcomes of the workshop. It also includes a set of recommendations for further action. Based on a conceptual framework developed through the High Street 2020 project, these are organised around the ideas of:

- Repositioning – realigning a centre's function based on an understanding of its market position;
- Reinventing – focusing on changing perceptions and image for a centre;
- Rebranding – using measures around branding and public relations to engage more effectively with a centre's catchment; and,
- Restructuring – seeking to change the physical and governance characteristics of a centre.

2.6 At the present time, the workshops have been held in Northenden, Gorton and Harpurhey. The report for Northenden has also been prepared, and is available as an appendix to this report. The pilots for Gorton and Harpurhey are at a less advanced stage and reports for these centres are not yet available, but will be brought to the subgroup (and shared with attendees) once they are. Work is currently ongoing to organise the workshop in Chorlton, and it is hoped that it will be possible to hold this before Christmas.

Northenden Place Management Pilot

Place Management Pilot Workshop

2.7 The first Place Management Pilot took place in Northenden. The workshop was held on the evening of 6 March 2018 at the Britannia Hotel on Palatine Road.

2.8 The event was attended by 30 people. Attendees included:

- Council members (three members, although one was yet to be elected at the time of the workshop);

- Council officers from the Neighbourhood Team, Policy Partnerships and Research and Work and Skills;
- An officer from TfGM
- Local residents;
- Local traders;
- Representatives of the Northenden Civic Society;
- Representatives of the Northenden Neighbourhood Forum.

2.9 The discussion at the workshop highlighted a range of views about the centre, including assessments of the key issues. It was apparent that a substantial amount of activity already took place to promote the centre and activity within it. It was also clear that many local stakeholders take considerable pride in the centre.

Northenden Place Management Recommendations

2.10 Following the workshop, the IPM prepared a report that summarises its own assessment of the centre and the views expressed through the workshop. The report also includes a set of recommendations for future actions that could enhance place management in Northenden, including ‘quick wins’ and longer term measures. The recommendations can be reviewed in detail through the report (appendix A), but are summarised here.

Theme	Overview of recommendations
Repositioning	Quick win – improve local understanding of the footfall data. Build on green space to differentiate Northenden, and look to improve evening and leisure economy to provide convenient offer for local community.
Reinventing	Quick win – improve signage linking the centre to nearby green space and riverside. Improve awareness of green resources, including Trans Pennine Trail. Use of planters and In Bloom events to improve appearance of Northenden. Organise community events to make use of the green space (the recent example of the Northenden Boat Race is evidence that there is already a significant level of activity in Northenden).
Rebranding	Quick win – develop branding/marketing focusing on Northenden’s location on the banks of the Mersey. Encourage stakeholder engagement to develop a stronger Northenden brand (using the existing Heron brand as a starting point). Online emphasis could help manage costs.
Restructuring	Quick win – establish community stakeholder group to oversee centre activity and governance Capitalise on engaged stakeholders. Organise regular stakeholder meetings, and use these to share footfall data.

Gorton Place Management Pilot

Place Management Pilot Workshop

2.11 The workshop for the Gorton Place Management Workshop was held in Gorton Library on the evening of 14 March 2018. The workshop was attended by 10 people, including:

- Members of the council (two local members attended)
- Council officers from the Neighbourhood Team, Policy Partnerships and Research and Work and Skills;
- An officer from TfGM
- Local traders;
- Local community representatives

2.12 The report for this pilot is yet to be finalised. However, points that were made during to workshop related to the lack of a clear centre within Gorton, partly due to the significant presence of Hyde Road, and the emergence of an increasingly diverse local catchment, which could present an opportunity for services within the centre.

Harpurhey

Place Management Pilot Workshop

2.13 The workshop for the Harpurhey Place Management Pilot was held on the afternoon of 25 July 2018 at the Manchester Youth Zone. For this workshop, it was felt that the stakeholder focus should be on centre operators, including the centre management company, traders and local public services. However, a separate event was organised to engage the wider local community (particularly residents). The workshop was attended by 12 people, including:

- Council officers from the Neighbourhood Team, Policy Partnerships and Research, Libraries, the Harpurhey District Office and Community Safety;
- Local Traders
- The Manchester Youth Zone
- Northwards Housing

2.14 As with Gorton, the final report for Harpurhey is not yet available. Some of the initial views expressed at the workshop, though, recognised that the range of local services were well- matched to the local catchment, and highlighted the value of co-locating public services (the library, college, youth zone and council office) with the commercial activity in the centre, generating both visitors and a base of workers to generate footfall.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The three place management pilot workshops carried out to-date have illustrated the diversity of Manchester's centres. Whilst Northenden is clearly supported by a local community with considerable interest in its centre, there is probably a need to consider how a wider range of stakeholders can be brought in to support and shape activity in Gorton. Although attendance at the Harpurhey event was lower than had been hoped, the strong representation from traders illustrated the importance of this particular group in creating effective local governance structures.

3.2 Local governance has been an issue for all centres, and is a point that should be considered as a wider policy challenge. Manchester has a significant number of centres – there are 17 identified in the current Local Plan but also many more alongside these. The council does not have the resources to support governance structures for all centres, and it is unlikely that there will be adequate local capacity across stakeholders to support formal governance arrangements in any but the largest centres. There is, therefore, a challenge to the council to consider how activity can be best supported at the local level.

3.3 The engagement of those who attended the workshop was key to their success, as wider commitment from stakeholders is essential for effective place management. Other than for Harpurhey, it was not always easy to get interest from landowners (who are often not local), and large corporate businesses were also more difficult to engage. Extending the pull of place management exercises to cover these stakeholders is a key challenge. As the next steps are considered for the pilot centre, it may be useful to focus on securing early outcomes that can highlight the value of the approach to all stakeholders, thereby encouraging wider involvement in the process.

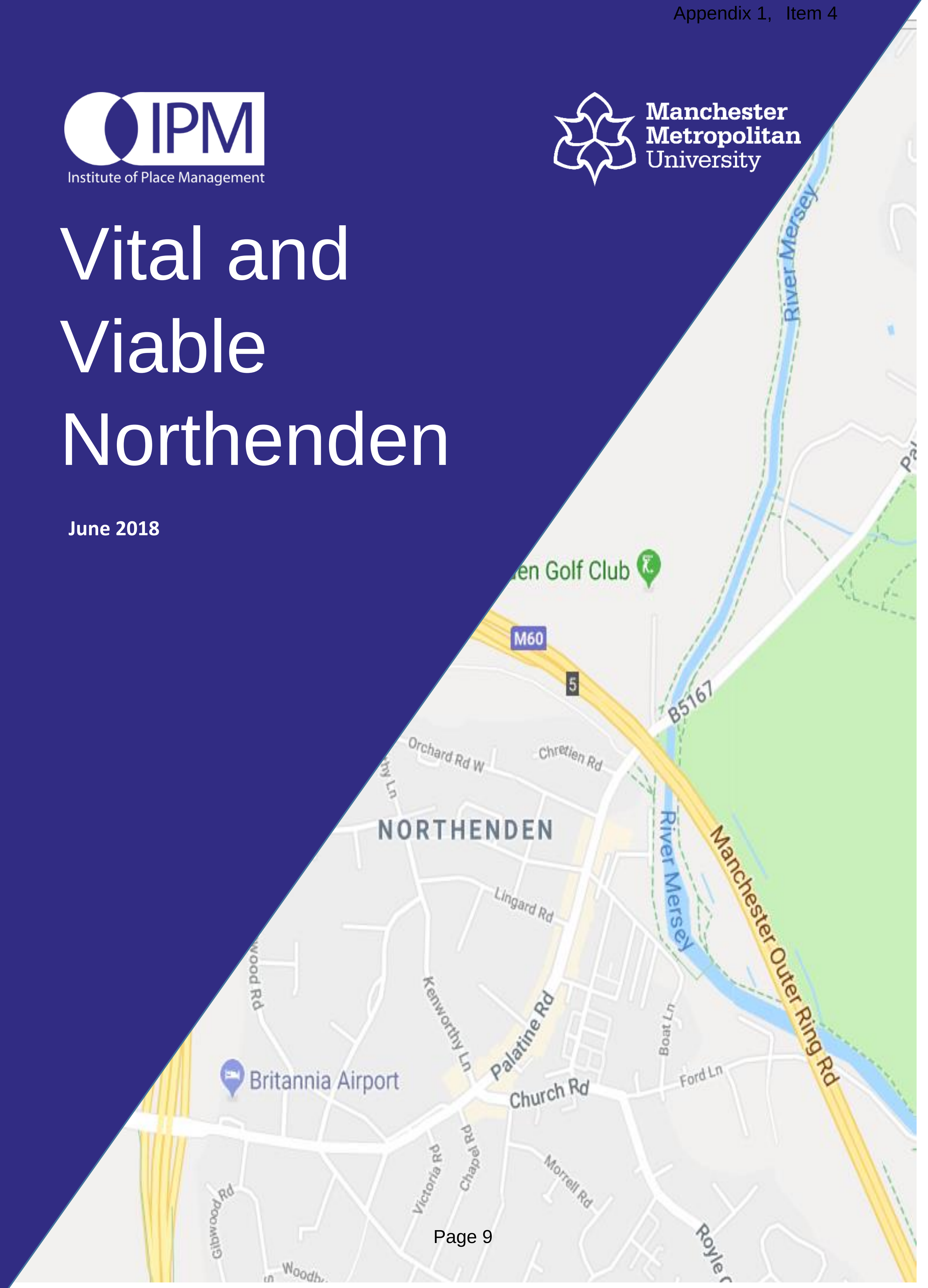
3.3 As the reports for each centre are produced, there will be a range of actions proposed for each centre. Following publication of each report, it is proposed that the council will review recommendations and consider whether any short term actions should be implemented. Once the reports for all four pilots are available, it is suggested that the council reviews all recommendations and determines key general policy and practice to be considered across the city.

Institute of Place Management

Manchester Metropolitan University

Vital and Viable Northenden

June 2018



Foreword

There are a number of structural developments currently impacting traditional retail and district centres in the UK, such as the growth in out-of-town and online retailing. However, whilst much research focuses on reversing the fortunes of city and town centres, the project on which this report is based revolves around better understanding how to improve the vitality and viability of Manchester's smaller district centres- including Northenden.

Based on secondary data, a primary audit of Northenden, meetings with Northenden's Neighbourhood Team, a workshop with 30 local stakeholders, and footfall data, this report explores Northenden's activity patterns, in relation to the IPM's 'footfall signature types'. It also outlines the centre's key strengths and weaknesses by drawing upon the IPM's 'Top 25 Factors'. It concludes by detailing what stakeholders in Northenden can do going forwards to improve its vitality and viability, in relation to the IPM's '4Rs' framework.

About the Institute of Place Management

The Institute of Place Management is the professional body for people involved in making, maintaining and marketing places. As part of Manchester Metropolitan University, the Institute of Place Management is dedicated to supporting people who serve places, providing them with unbiased research, continuing professional development, qualifications, conferences, events and networking opportunities.

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Table of Contents

Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres: Northenden Report

1. Introduction

The Institute of Place Management (IPM) based at Manchester Metropolitan University, and Manchester City Council (MCC) are currently leading a project to improve the vitality and viability of district centers across Manchester. Footfall data is also being provided by project partners Springboard to track the activity levels of 10 district centres in Manchester. And so, for the first time, activity and performance across the whole city can be analysed. *The Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres* project, which began in 2016 and will continue into 2018, has the following key aims:

1) To inform the Terms of Reference and Work Programme of the District Centres Subgroup.

2) To develop a long-term vision and strategy for neighbourhood centres across Manchester, in full partnership with MCC and district centre stakeholders, that is rigorous and based upon the latest academic and performance evidence.

This work will, in turn, have a measurable impact upon:

a) The sustainability of Manchester's existing centres as places that serve the needs of their catchment communities; and

b) The liveability of neighbourhoods that are currently, or at risk of being, underserved in terms of access to district centre services.

As part of the project, the IPM and MCC are also working more closely with a range of stakeholders (including residents, councilors, local traders, neighbourhood teams, and other key individuals) within four place management pilot centres. This approach is to help foster stakeholder collaboration, and ensures any interventions that have most impact on vitality and viability are prioritised and can be implemented locally. Northenden has been selected as one of these centres. This report details the outcomes of our work with Northenden, including analysing its current strengths and weaknesses, in addition to looking at what stakeholders in the centre might be able to do to improve its vitality and viability.

The report is structured as follows:

- It first details the issues currently impacting traditional retail centres in the UK.
- Second, it discusses the challenges of defining what a district centre is, before more specifically addressing Manchester's district centres.
- Third, the report details key findings stemming from the IPM's *High Street UK 2020* (HSUK2020) and *Bringing Big Data to Small Users* (BDSU) projects, which underpin our analysis of Northenden's performance.

(the above sections are useful for providing a context and background to the analysis of Northenden which follows)

- Fourth, the key insights about Northenden emerging from the *Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres* project are outlined, drawing on centre audits, footfall data, meetings with the neighbourhood team, and a workshop with local stakeholders.

- The report concludes by proposing several recommendations regarding how Northenden's vitality and viability can be enhanced, in relation to the IPM's '4Rs' framework (*reinventing*, *repositioning*, *rebranding*, *restructuring*).

2. Challenges impacting traditional retail centres

As many of our traditional retail centres and high streets have been market places for around a thousand years, it is perhaps easy to think that they are places of constancy and that the challenges they are facing today are unprecedented. It is certainly the case that the challenges are significant; but traditional retail centres have always faced change, and the majority have proved to be resilient in their response. Many have overcome disruptive change from industrial development, the impact of new transport modes, and rapid population growth. Though most city, town, and district centres are still retail centres, they are also increasingly looking to their other traditional roles as places of entertainment and leisure, as civic, educational and service centres, of employment and business, and as places to live to ensure they have a sustainable future.

There are a number of critical trends that are currently impacting traditional retail centres in the UK. Population growth in the country as a whole is significant, having risen from 52.4 million in 1960 to just over 66 million in 2017, and forecast to reach 72.7 million by 2040 (ONS, 2018). This creates demand for the services that town centres offer; but some of that demand is now being met elsewhere. Since the 1970s, we have seen much retail expenditure head to out of town locations. Despite various attempts by central government to restrict new development of out of town centres through planning policy, some 4.6 million square metres of new out of town floorspace was built in the first decade of this century. This, coupled with changes to our shopping habits, has contributed to a developing issue of over-supply which we are now beginning to see affect our traditional centres, leading to vacant primarily A1 usage units (average GB retail vacancy fell from 14% in 2012 to 11% in 2017, though is now beginning to rise again - Local Data Company, 2017). This recent trend is likely to continue over the coming years, with retail vacancy increasing, simultaneous with a fall in demand for this space. As a result, reduction in space or a change in usage are the likely outcomes.

In terms of changing shopping habits, as well as out of town retailing attracting expenditure away from town centres, the UK is also the world-leader in adapting to online retail. According to the Centre for Retail Research (2016), some 16.8% of UK retail spend was online in 2016. The growth in this has been very rapid. In 2002 it was just 1.6%, and is forecast to reach 21.5% in 2018. It is perhaps no surprise, therefore, that the share of retail expenditure in town centres which fell below half in 2000, continues to decrease, having fallen below 40% in 2014 (Parliament, 2014). The growth of online retailing has been having a profound impact on the presence of multiple retailers in town centres. Various commentators have suggested that a multiple retailer needed to be in over 250 town centres in 2000 to have a national presence but can now exist in just 70.

Away from pure retail, other impacts are also being felt on the High Street. Around one fifth of all pubs in the UK have closed since 2010 (CVS, 2017); and though the rate of closure appears to have slowed, there are concerns about the impact the recent business rate revaluation will have on many pubs. And it is a combination of these factors that have driven a general rise in retail vacancy across the UK.

Despite vacancy levels beginning to rise over the last twelve months, the fall in retail vacancy between 2012 and 2017 suggests some cause for optimism. Branded coffee shops continue to expand across the UK, growing by 6.9% in 2016 alone (Allegra, 2016) and, on current trends, will overtake the number of pubs by 2030. This has contributed to an overall growth in leisure in town centres in 2016, and likewise service retailing is increasing (hairdressers, nail bars and the like) as is convenience retailing (Local Data Company, 2016).

Whilst much focus has been assigned to reversing the fortunes of city and town centres, surrounding these larger places are smaller district centres like Northenden, on which local communities rely. And it is these smaller centres at the centre of the Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres project to which we now turn our attention.

3. District centres

3.1. What are district centres?

District centres lie at the heart of the Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres project. Yet understanding what a district centre actually is has always been a difficult task for planners and academics. This is since they “generally lack the historical associations of market towns, and often have a less clearly defined and established role” (DoE, 1998: 5). Usually, researchers based their assumptions on subjective sub-divisions of these centres, taking into account various measures (e.g. business trade, retail turnover, size, catchment, merchandise, uses, assortment, and floorspace) (Guy, 1998; Reynolds and Schiller, 1992). Schiller and Jarrett (1985) argued that district centres are less specialised than regional and town centres, as they tend to be the main weekly shopping centres that supply convenience and durable goods. Whilst the diversity of these centres led Reynolds and Schiller (1992) to classify them into minor and major, depending on the number of variety stores in the centres. However, with the closure of many shops due to the effects of retail decentralisation, many district centres declined to a residual status serving less mobile local residents, and offering a top-up or emergency shopping function for the remainder (Thomas and Bromley, 1995).

In PPG6, a district centre was defined as "groups of shops, separate from the town centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore, and non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants" (DoE, 1998: 18; also see DoE, 1993, 1996). However, this definition can also apply to large food stores with other unit shops and in-store services that can potentially perform the role of a district centre, even though these were not recognised as such (Lowe, 1998). One significant outcome of such policies, was the advent of the corporate food store in district centres, which was considered by some academics as a vital anchor in maintaining the quality and range of shopping in district centres (Thomas and Bromley, 2002, 2003; Wrigley and Dolega, 2011).

In the NPPF, a minor adjustment was made to the existing PPG6 definition, highlighting the importance of local public facilities (such as a library) in district centres, and the social community focus that these centres provide (DCLG, 2012; Gransby, 1988). However, the ambivalence of what a district centre is, and how it differs from the traditional town centre, still remains, as the report clearly states that:

> "A town centre is an area defined on the local authority's proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance".

What is not under question from the above, is the importance of district centres in planning policies and sustainable development. District centres, just as any other type of centre, need to steer away from mono-functional, retail-oriented representations, and emerge as multi-functional ones, supporting leisure and recreation, employment, tourism, heritage, culture, housing, employment, education, health and wellbeing, as well as retail (Millington et al., 2015), thus becoming resilient to anticipated future economic changes (DCLG, 2012). As such, there is a clear requirement for centres to adapt to ensure that they meet this challenge.

3.2. Manchester's district centres

In the City of Manchester, planning and strategic approaches towards district centres have mostly followed the directives of national planning policy, such as PPS4 and NPPF. Core strategies for the City have identified that district centres provide "the focus for local accessible shopping facilities and a full range of community services, with the City's neighbourhood centres primarily serving local residents' day to day needs" (MCC, 2009). Whereas economic development remained the main driver behind district centre strategies, other documents stressed the importance of a sense of community, and the creation of successful neighbourhoods that attract and retain people from diverse communities, and in which people feel secure and supported. The majority of Manchester's residents seem to have similar opinions about what a district centre should be:

> "Regarding the role of district centres, a very high percentage (90%) of respondents stated that local areas should provide nearby residents with the core goods and services to support a sustainable centre. This would help reduce the use of transport, alleviating the need for unnecessary travel to shops and services further afield. Also, assist in the building and expansion of local communities, to support the City Council's Community Strategy" (MCC, 2009: 3–4).

The Core Strategy (see MCC, 2012) identified 17 district centres in Manchester, which varied in the quality and range of facilities and services they provided; but comparison goods functions were associated with bigger district centres (e.g. Chorlton, Wythenshawe, and Cheetham Hill). Furthermore, there is also a clear distinction between district centres led by convenience retail anchors such as superstores (e.g. Hulme and Sportcity), and those that have a broader range of retailers and services, making them more attuned to the traditional notion of a district centre. At that point, different retail functions, as well as public investment for health and community centres, were proposed as areas for improving the City's centres, with an attention on community empowerment and inclusion. Manchester's Community Strategy documents have also been consistent with these directives; however, they have also emphasised how place-specific factors, such as cleanliness, safety, green spaces, and public services (i.e. libraries, sports, and cultural facilities), are critical to the fabric of successful district centres. Manchester City Centre and its district centres are places to shop, work, eat, drink, enjoy leisure activities, access services, and increasingly to live. They are also a key economic asset, with the City Centre recognised as the primary economic driver for the City Region. Essential to delivering Manchester's community strategy vision of a successful city that attracts and retains successful people, is ensuring that everyone has access to a range of shops, community facilities, services, leisure, and culture opportunities that meet their needs in a sustainable way. Accessible district centres and local centres are thus important in creating a sense of place and focus, and in turn to creating neighbourhoods of choice.

4. HSUK2020 project: Factors impacting vitality and viability

There are two main research projects conducted by the IPM underpinning the Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres project, and the analysis of the centres within it, the first of these being High Street UK 2020 (HSUK2020). And this project will now be briefly outlined.

In 1994, the government commissioned the publication of a research report called *Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge* (HMSO, 1994). This report led to changes in national planning policy, which then placed a clear focus on town centres first for future development. The report defined vitality and viability in respect of town centres. They are both concerned with life: the first (vitality) being about whether a centre feels lively and the second (viability) whether a centre has the capacity to attract the investment needed, not only to maintain the fabric of the place, but also to allow for adaptation to changing circumstances. The terms vitality and viability were used in national planning policy, used by local authorities and local partnerships, and much discussed by researchers. A wide range of initiatives were also undertaken in town centres across the country with the aim of promoting vitality and viability.

In 2014, as part of the ESRC-supported HSUK2020 project, the IPM undertook a comprehensive literature review to identify factors contributing to centre vitality and viability (see Parker *et al*., 2017). This produced some 160 factors and these were discussed with a number of stakeholders from ten UK town centres who were partners in the project. This meeting identified additional factors, some of which were found in the wider literature, and some of which had not yet been researched. In total, the study identified 201 factors that impact on town centre vitality and viability. However, as they stood they had no sense of priority or importance. And so 22 leading town centre experts drawn from practitioners and researchers were asked to rank them using two scales: how much a factor impacted on town centre vitality and viability, and how much local control could be exercised over a factor. This then led to the 'Top 25 Factors' impacting vitality and viability, detailed below:

1. ACTIVITY HOURS	Ensuring the centre is open when the catchment needs it. What are the shopping hours? Is there an evening economy? Do the activity hours of the centre match the needs of the catchment?
2. APPEARANCE	Improving the quality of the visual appearance. How clean is the centre?

3. RETAILERS	Offering the right type and quantity of retailers. What retailers are represented?
4. VISION & STRATEGY	Having a common vision and some leadership. Do stakeholders collaborate? Is the vision incorporated in local plans?
5. EXPERIENCE	Considering the quality of the experience? Measuring levels of service quality and visitor satisfaction. What is the image of the centre?
6. MANAGEMENT	Building capacity to get things done. Is there effective management – of the shopping centre(s) and town centre?
7. MERCHANDISE	Meeting the needs of the catchment. What is the range and quality of goods on offer?
8. NECESSITIES	Ensuring basic facilities are present and maintained. Is there appropriate car-parking; amenities; general facilities, like places to sit down and toilets etc.?
9. ANCHORS	The presence of an anchor which drives footfall. This could be retail (like a department store) or could be a busy transport interchange or large employer.
10. NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS	Presence of strong networks and effective formal or informal partnerships. Do stakeholders communicate and trust each other? Can the council facilitate action (not just lead it?)
11. DIVERSITY	A multi-functional centre. What attractions are there, apart from retail? What is the tenant mix and tenant variety?
12. WALKABILITY	The 'walkability' of the centre. Are linked trips between areas possible – or are the distances too great? Are there other obstacles that stop people walking?
13. ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE	An entertainment and leisure offer. What is it? Is it attractive to various segments of the catchment?
14. ATTRACTIVENESS	The 'pulling power' of a centre. Can it attract people from a distance?
15. PLACE ASSURANCE	Getting the basics right. Does the centre offer a basic level of customer service, is this consistent? Or do some operators, or parts of the offer, let this down?

16. ACCESSIBLE	Each of reach. How convenient is the centre to access? Is it accessible by a number of different means, e.g. car, public transport, cycling etc.?
17. PLACE MARKETING	Communicating the offer. How does the centre market and promote itself? Do all stakeholders communicate a consistent image? How well does the centre orientate visitors and encourage flow – with signage and guides etc.
18. COMPARISON/CONVENIENCE	The amount of comparison shopping opportunities compared to convenience. Is this sustainable?
19. RECREATIONAL SPACE	The amount and quality of recreational areas and public space/open space. Are there places that are uncommodified? Where people can enjoy spending time without spending money?
20. BARRIERS TO ENTRY	Refers to obstacles that make it difficult for interested retailers to enter the centre's market. What is the location doing to make it easier for new businesses to enter?
21. CHAIN VS INDEPENDENT	Number of multiples stores and independent stores in the retail mix of a centre/High Street. Is this suitably balanced?
22. SAFETY/CRIME	A centre KPI measuring perceptions or actual crime including shoplifting. Perceptions of crime are usually higher than actual crime rates. Does the centre monitor these and how does it communicate results to stakeholders?
23. LIVEABILITY	The resident population or potential for residential in the centre. Does the centre offer the services/environment that residents need? Doctors, schools etc.
24. ADAPTABILITY	The flexibility of the space/property in a centre. Are there inflexible and outdated units that are unlikely to be re-let or re-purposed?
25. STORE DEVELOPMENT	The willingness for retailers/property owners to develop their stores. Are they willing to coordinate/cooperate in updating activities? Or do they act independently?

You can read more about the IPM's HSUK2020 project on the IPM blog here, or alternatively in the Journal of Place Management and Development's open access special issue here.

5. The BDSU project: Footfall signature types

The second key study underpinning the Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres project is Bringing Big Data to Small Users (BDSU). It is a collaborative research and development project funded by Innovate UK, led by retail intelligence specialists, Springboard, and involving the IPM, Manchester Metropolitan University, Cardiff University, MyKnowledgeMap, and other key partners. Springboard have provided footfall data for more than 100 town and city centres, dating back as far as ten years, that looks at footfall changes on an hourly basis. Footfall measures the number of people passing a particular point or points in a centre. It has been recognised in national planning policy statements as the prime indicator of town centre vitality since 1994.

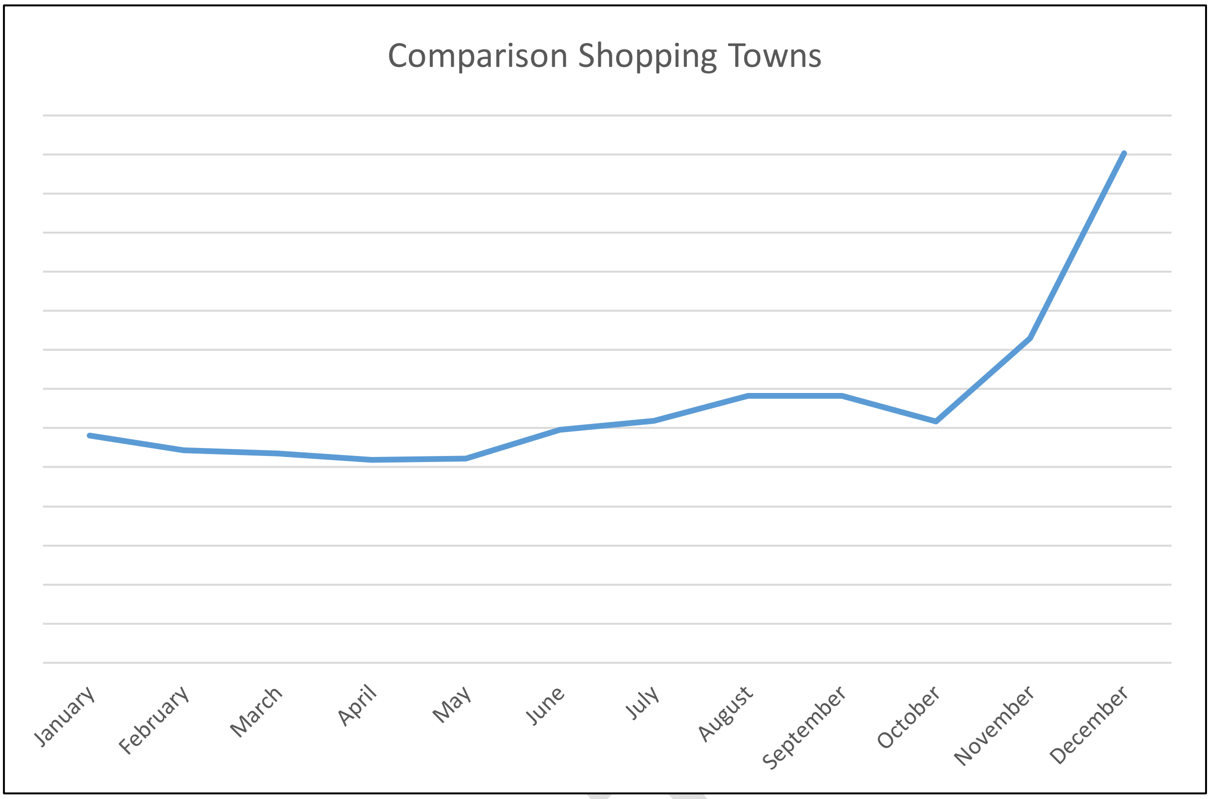
Analysis of this data has identified four basic patterns that have profound significance in thinking about the future of traditional retail centres. The patterns show usage of a centre by month over a twelve-month period. Whilst it had traditionally been assumed that most centres show an increase in footfall in the pre-Christmas period and that this is the busiest time of year, the patterns show that this is not true of all centres. And, even where it is the case, the significance of the upturn in activity has in many cases been over-estimated. It is important to stress that the patterns reflect actual usage of a centre, and that footfall is not the same as retail sales, as people may be in a centre for many other reasons than to shop.

The project has identified that all centres fit within these four pattern types, though some do so more closely than others. It is evident that some towns are changing and are transitioning from one town type to another. The significance of the town types is that data analysis shows that the more closely a town is used in line with one of the patterns, the more resilient its footfall is. Footfall in centres has been reducing as a whole, and the research suggests that will continue as we look to 2020. But towns that have footfall patterns more closely related to the four patterns are seeing footfall decline less rapidly than centres with more hybrid patterns, as they have a clearer offer and image.

The four key footfall signature types identified in the project are detailed below:

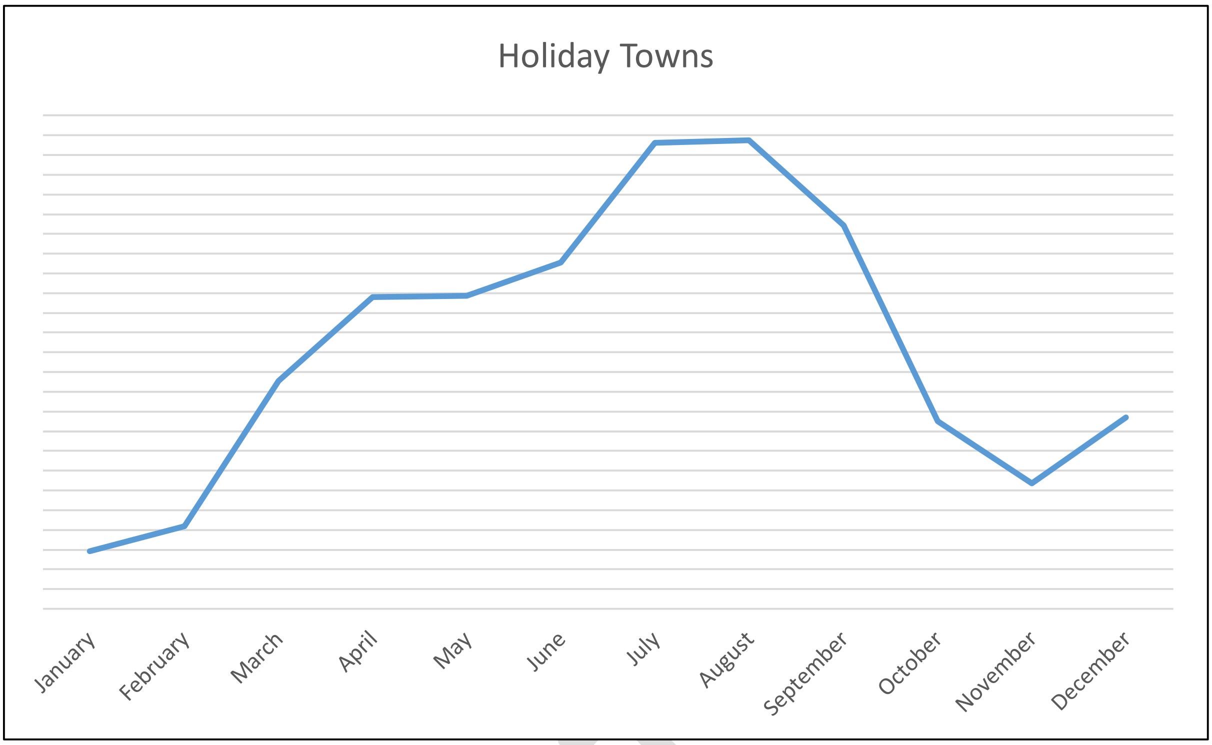
Comparison shopping towns

Comparison shopping centres tend to be located in larger town and city centres, and their monthly town signatures can be identified by a footfall peak in December, coinciding with the Christmas preparation period (as seen in the figure below). Here you will typically find a range of department stores, major variety stores, and a solid line-up of fashion and other comparison retailing. They draw people from a wide catchment area, though visits may be relatively infrequent. As such, they need to be accessible by a choice of means of transport with good links to the region they serve. These centres compete with other similar centres and with other retail channels.



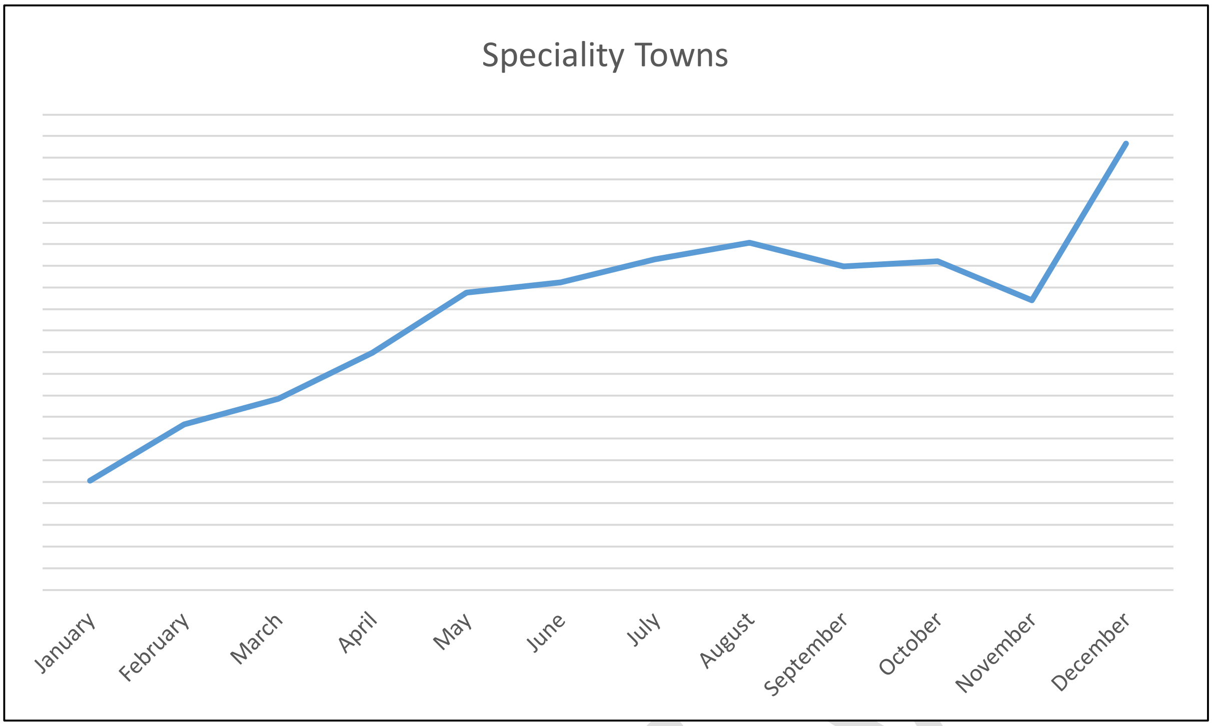
Holiday towns

In holiday towns, the peak pedestrian flow is in the summer months (as seen in the figure below). Although these are usually coastal resorts, this pattern is also found in some inland places with strong visitor appeal. Their anchor is usually not retail but perhaps a natural feature like a beach or the countryside. The retail offer in the town is very much geared towards tourists and does not serve the local community very well, as reflected in the lack of use out of season. These centres need to maximise trade in the peak months, through extended opening hours and increased trading areas, but in the future, they need to look at extending the visitor season and providing more for local communities.



Speciality towns

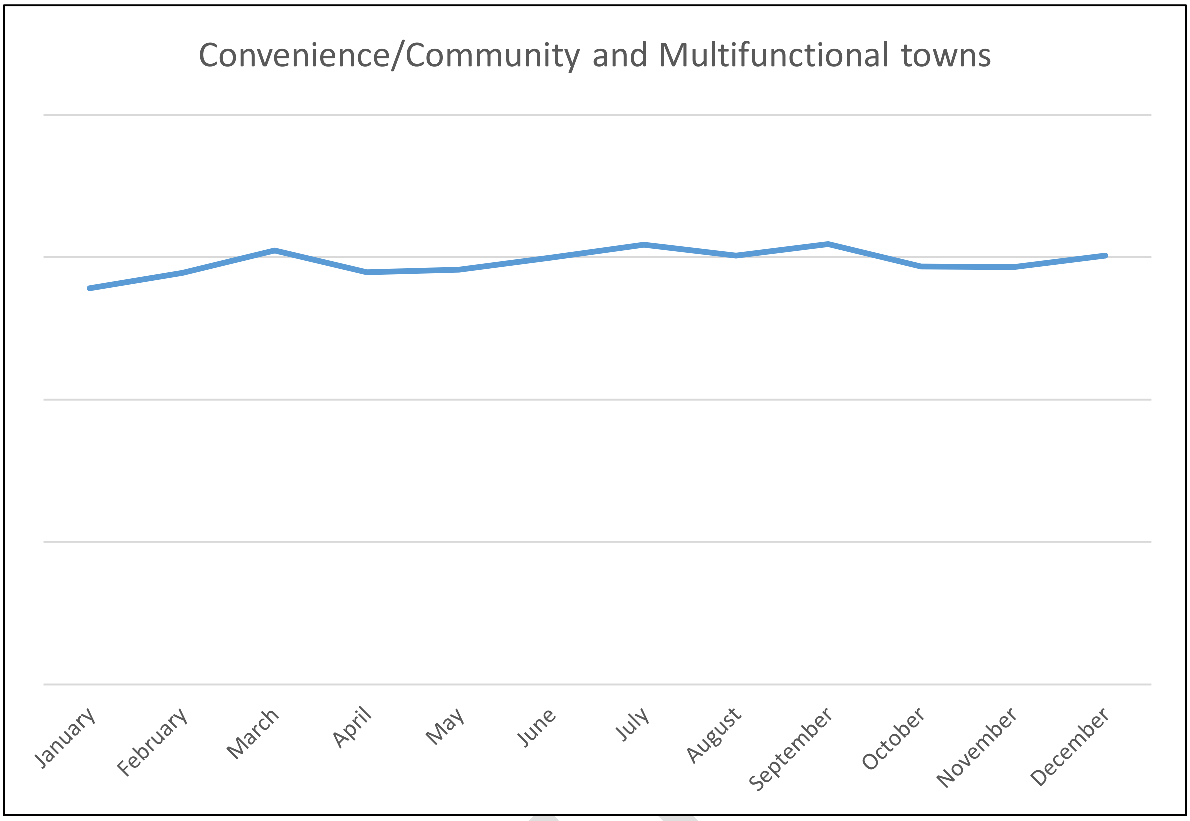
Speciality towns have a notable Christmas shopping peak, but they also attract visitors through the spring and summer (see figure below). They offer something unique and special that appeals to visitors from a wide area, in many cases including overseas visitors. Their anchor is not retail but perhaps a distinctive cathedral, museum, city walls, or unique quarter. Speciality towns primarily organise themselves to protect and promote their identity and positioning. It would appear that people spend longer on their visits to these centres and this may be supported by a strong retail and leisure/hospitality offer. This means these centres do also provide well for their local communities. They need to focus on how they make themselves more special and distinctive, whilst still meeting the needs of their catchment.



Convenience/community towns and multifunctional centres

The largest group of centres identified by usage, termed convenience/community towns and multifunctional centres, have a fairly steady footfall profile throughout the year (see figure below). And centres of this kind are focused on their local community. Their anchor might be food retailing, employment, access to public transport, or a strong resident base. They are places that offer a convenient mix of goods and services. Centres with a relatively low volume of footfall through the year need to think about how they are locally connected and focus efforts on improving convenience for people in the immediate area. This may be through ensuring trading hours meet local needs, through introducing new offers such as parcel collection from retail units or lockers, pop-up retailers and restaurants or regular markets which bring in new product lines and services on an occasional basis, home-working and small business facilities, a very strong customer service approach focused on maintaining customer loyalty, or other things that enhance convenience and respond to community need. Centres with a higher annual footfall may be quite large and have a strong retail offer but they have steady footfall flows because they are multifunctional centres. Their employment base, hospitality offer, culture and entertainment, strong service offer, and central housing all ensure that footfall remains steady through the year. They also need to think about connectivity, but perhaps at a regional level, and about ensuring they can support the range of activities that take place in the centre.

Understanding what type of centre you are is a basic first step in determining how best to go forward. It also ensures that decisions you make are rational, and hence have a better chance of success. The 25 priority factors for vitality and viability (as discussed in the previous section) will apply to all centres; but the interpretation and implementation of these factors depends to a large extent on knowing what kind of centre you are.



6. Investigating Northenden's vitality and viability

To understand more about how the trajectory and development of centres can be changed in line with the 'Our Manchester' philosophy, the IPM has been working with stakeholders in four of Manchester's district centres. A rationale for centre selection was developed between the IPM and MCC, along with a suggestion of four centres that would benefit from the research programme. The four suggested centres- Chorlton, Gorton, Harpurhey, and Northenden- were then approved by the District Centres Sub-committee.

The work we have undertaken that has led to this report was not an in-depth study of Northenden. We were not commissioned as consultants to undertake extensive local research, or spend time really getting to know the town. We have, however, read various background documents provided by MCC, undertaken a primary audit of the centre, had meetings with Northenden's Neighbourhood Team to learn a bit more about the centre, and also ran a development workshop with 30 local stakeholders.

We will now discuss what we learned about Northenden from this work, before moving onto presenting some recommendations about what the centre could do to further enhance its vitality and viability going forwards.

6.1. Primary centre audit

To enrich our understandings of Northenden's performance, and help inform the recommendations that appear at the end of this report, members of the IPM research team undertook a primary audit of the centre based upon the 25 factors identified in the HSUK2020 project (Appendix 1), in addition to updating MCC's retail use list (Appendix 2).

From this audit, we were able to identify Northenden's key strengths and weaknesses in terms of those factors which have the most impact on its vitality and viability. Five factors for which Northenden is performing well, and five for which there is room for improvement, are detailed in the table below:

FACTORS WHICH ARE A STRENGTH IN NORTHENDEN	FACTORS WHICH ARE A WEAKNESS IN NORTHENDEN
Factor 8. Necessities - Northenden has a good range of convenience retail provision, providing the basics. It also possesses a large number of service oriented units such as hairdressers, beauty salons, estate agents, a vets, dry cleaners, and a funeral business (see Appendix 2). - On-street parking is available both in front of the stores (potentially private parking) and on the adjacent residential roads for up to one hour. - There was signage on Palatine Road pointing towards a car park. - There are benches along Palatine Road for people to sit down. - There was a cash point located on Palatine Road, but no banks.	**Factor 11. Diversity** - Whilst Northenden possesses a lot of convenience-centric retail provision, it is lacking in speciality retailers – what you may deem non-essential. As such, whilst fulfilling the needs of the local population, there is little to encourage visitors from further afield. The lack of pubs/a small number of bars adds to this problem. - There were notably no banks in Northenden (just a stand-alone cashpoint). - There is a lack of entertainment and leisure provision.
Factor 12. Walkability - The centre is located primarily on Palatine Road, which is easily walked end-to-end in around 10 minutes, and linked trips are also easily made between units. - The pavements on Palatine Road are wide, clean, and flat so very accessible. - Whilst the centre is eminently walkable, its position along a busy road (Palatine), is a drawback. Some parking issues were evident, but nothing to cause concern.	**Factor 13. Entertainment & Leisure** - There appears to be a lack of entertainment and leisure offerings. - The Northenden Community Library hosts a book club every Tuesday and also Toddler groups, whilst the community church hosts pregnancy yoga sessions (clear signage about this located outside the church at time of visit). - There appears to be a lack of community events and festivals in the centre.

Factor 19. Recreational space	Factor 16. Accessibility
- There is ample greenspace and riverside surrounding Northenden which could be a competitive advantage for the centre (but, apart from a sign on Palatine Road, there doesn't seem to be much active promotion of it to attract people into the centre).	- It seems that the main way to access Northenden is via car, since Palatine Road was very busy and congested at the time of visit (Monday morning). - There is on-street parking available and signage pointing to a car park. - Public transport options into Northenden from Manchester City Centre, for example, are limited (no tram routes, the nearest train station Gatley is quite a walk away from the centre. But there is a frequent bus route- number 41). - A Trans Pennine Trail cycle path is accessible into Northenden - Once in the centre, walkability is good due to wide and flat pavement but there were no apparent cycle lanes.
Factor 22. Safety/crime (perceptions)	**Factor 17. Place marketing**
- Since the centre is clean with no noticeable litter or shattered glass on the pavements, and no apparent anti-social behaviour, perceptions of safety were good during the visit.	- The well-respected restaurants in the centre, e.g. Alexandros Greek and Mi and Pho, have very positive reviews on Trip Advisor, and presumably are promoted by word of mouth. - There were some advertisements of community events within the centre on a noticeboard on Palatine Road - There is little promotion of Northenden as a place, or of the greenspace and riverside surrounding it.
Factor 23. Liveability	**Factor 20. Barriers to entry**
- There was signage pointing towards Northenden primary school - There is a doctors' surgery - Well Pharmacy is located on Palatine Road - There is ample greenspace surrounding Northenden.	- The Northenden Hive (located on the ground floor of the 'High Rise' building) has closed (there is a 'to let' sign on the glass fronted building) – as such small businesses/start-ups have lost an opportunity to develop. - The centre seems to all be primarily located down Palatine Road, and since there are not many vacant units, this could make it difficult for new entrants.

Retail use type audit

	2015	2018	Change
A1 - Shops	40	41	plus 1
A2 - Financial & Professional	15	12	minus 3
A3 - Café & Restaurant	8	13	plus 5
A4 - Bar/Pub	5	4	minus 1
A5 - Hot Food takeaway	12	12	no change
B1 - Office	1	0	minus 1
C3 - Residential	8	8	no change
D1 - Non-Resi Institutions	3	3	no change
D2 - Assembly & Leisure	1	1	no change
Sui Generis	12	14	plus 2
Vacant Building	10	7	minus 3
Vacancy Rate (%)	9	6	down 3%
Total Business Units	116	115	minus 1
Business Turnover (against previous use list)	30	34	plus 4

The research team also updated Northenden's 2015 retail use type survey during the audit visit. Results of the survey are shown in the table above. Overall, the performance over the last three years (since the last audit) has been positive. A1 provision has remained consistent, contributing to Northenden's strength in the 'necessities' factor category. Café/restaurant numbers have increased, whilst sui generis usage has risen by two units. Overall, Northenden's retail vacancy has decreased by 3%- a positive change at a time when many centres are seeing a rise in vacant units.

6.2. Footfall data

As part of the Vital and Viable Neighbourhood Centres project, project partners Springboard have so far installed footfall counters in eight of Manchester's district centres (with negotiations underway in two further centres). A footfall counter has been capturing around the clock footfall data in Northenden since January 2018.

Unlike a planning classification, activity data demonstrates exactly how people are using a centre, and what its main function is (i.e. comparison shopping, speciality, holiday, or convenience/community). It also enables the development trajectory and management plan for a centre to be responsive to changes in consumer behaviour and other developments.

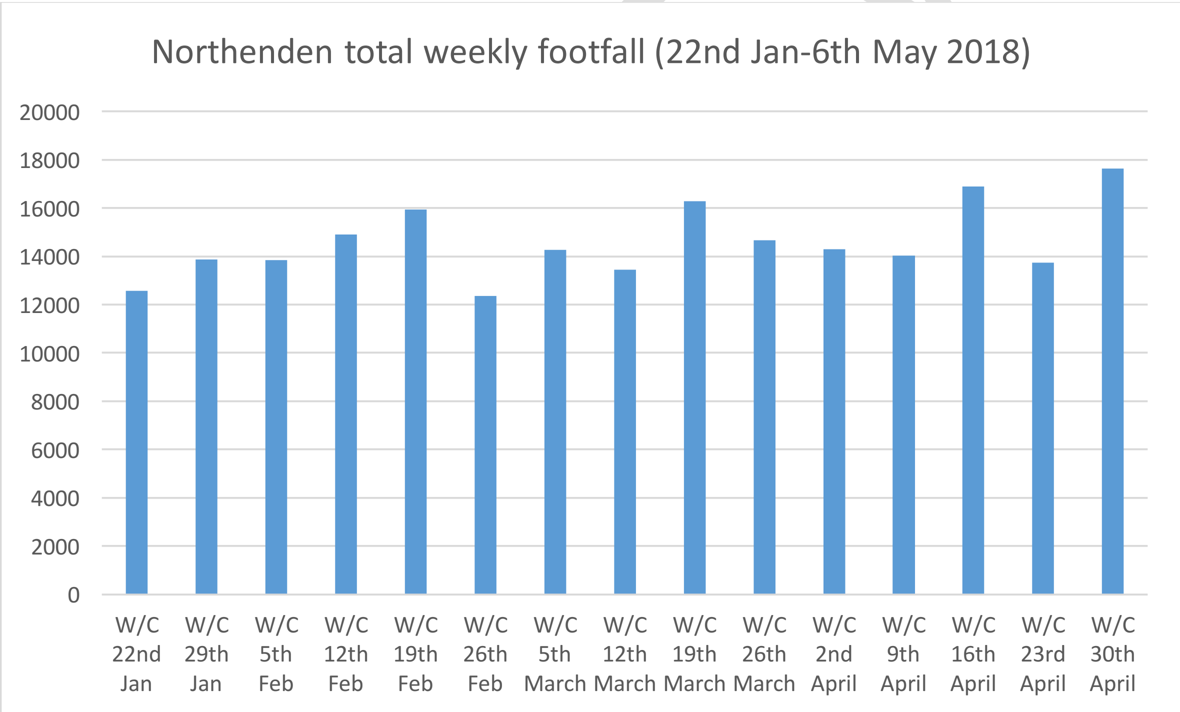
Automated footfall monitoring provides data on the volume of customers in a centre, and is critical for practitioners in the evaluation of whether strategies and initiatives to drive increases in footfall are effective. The dynamic nature of footfall means that this data delivers the most immediate response to any initiative, and so enables practitioners to be able to readily identify the impact of initiatives on the success of the centre.

In addition, recording footfall in this way removes the reliance on secondary or associated indicators such as public transport or car parking usage, which often are limited in their effectiveness due to paucity of data or a less than direct correlation to customer activity.

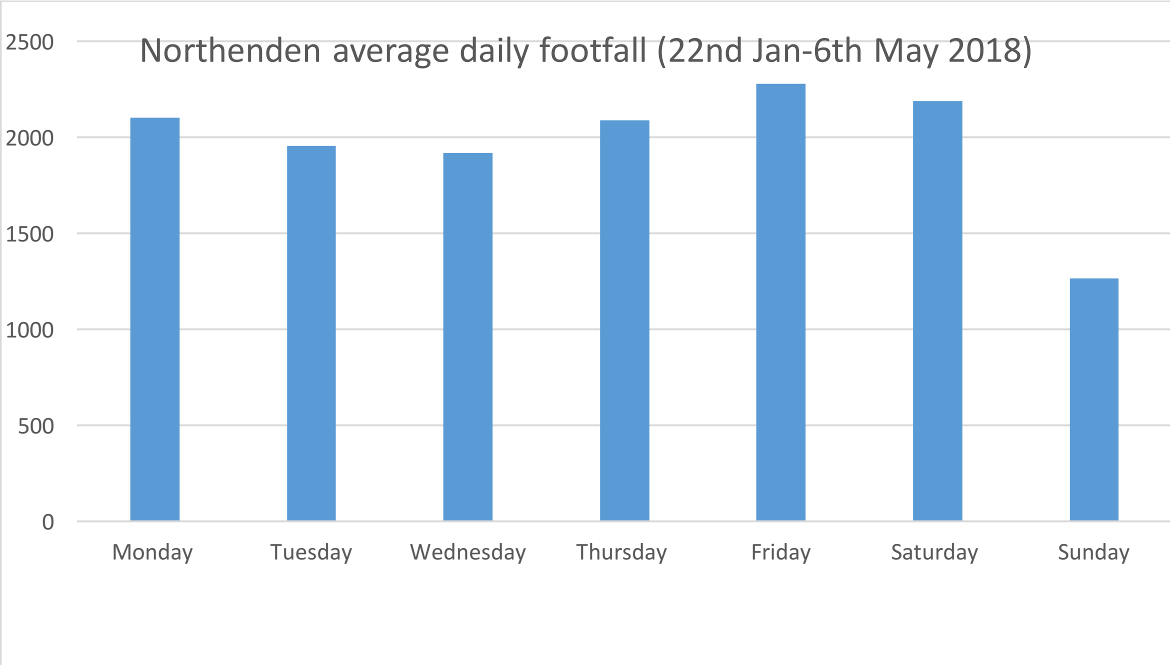
Footfall monitoring has a number of key applications and supports a centre by:

- **Demonstrating its success in attracting customers** into the centre
- **Providing an objective measure of performance**, lessening reliance on anecdotal evidence as a measure of success
- **Detecting early warning signs of change**, so that relevant strategies can be implemented
- **Evaluating the success of marketing and promotion** by identifying the additional footfall generated during an event or as a result of a promotion
- **Attracting event sponsorship** by having clear evidence of the success in attracting more visitors to the centre
- **Establishing the contribution of development and public realm improvements** in increasing visitor numbers, both in the short and longer term
- **Providing data required to attract new occupiers and investors** into the centre
- **Providing data to existing businesses** in order to support business retention in the centre
- **Providing data to deliver efficiencies in resource allocation**, e.g. cleaning, policing, ambassadors
- **Identifying over or under-performance** by benchmarking against national and regional averages and peer groups to establish whether increases or decreases in footfall are in-line with general trends.

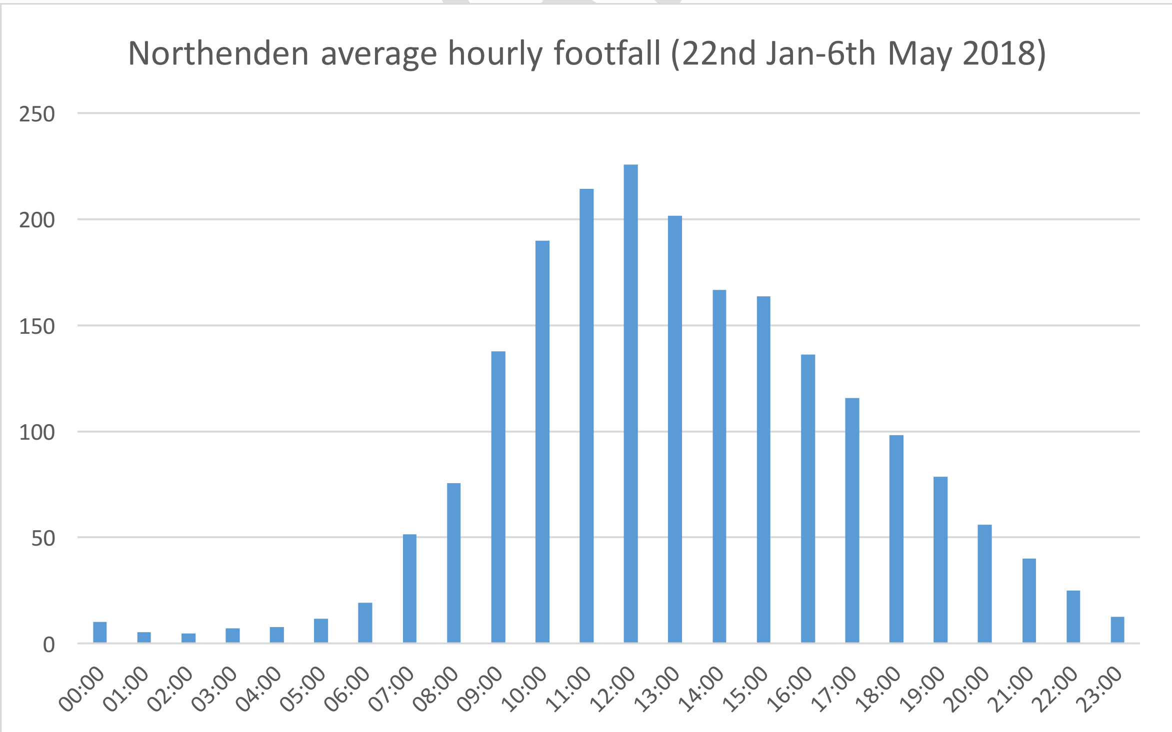
Northenden's counter is located at 372-374 Palatine Road, as seen in the image below. This counter, installed in January 2018, has been recording footfall 24 hours per day. As such, we currently have four months' data that we can use to decipher how the centre is being used. Furthermore, as the data set grows, the longitudinal nature of the information collected will allow us to develop an enhanced picture of how the centre is performing throughout the year, and against previous years. As such, the location of the counter (and the count itself) is of less importance than the usage trends and patterns it allows us to draw out. This insight will be invaluable for tracking the success of any interventions which are put into place. A summary of the data collected to date is set out below.



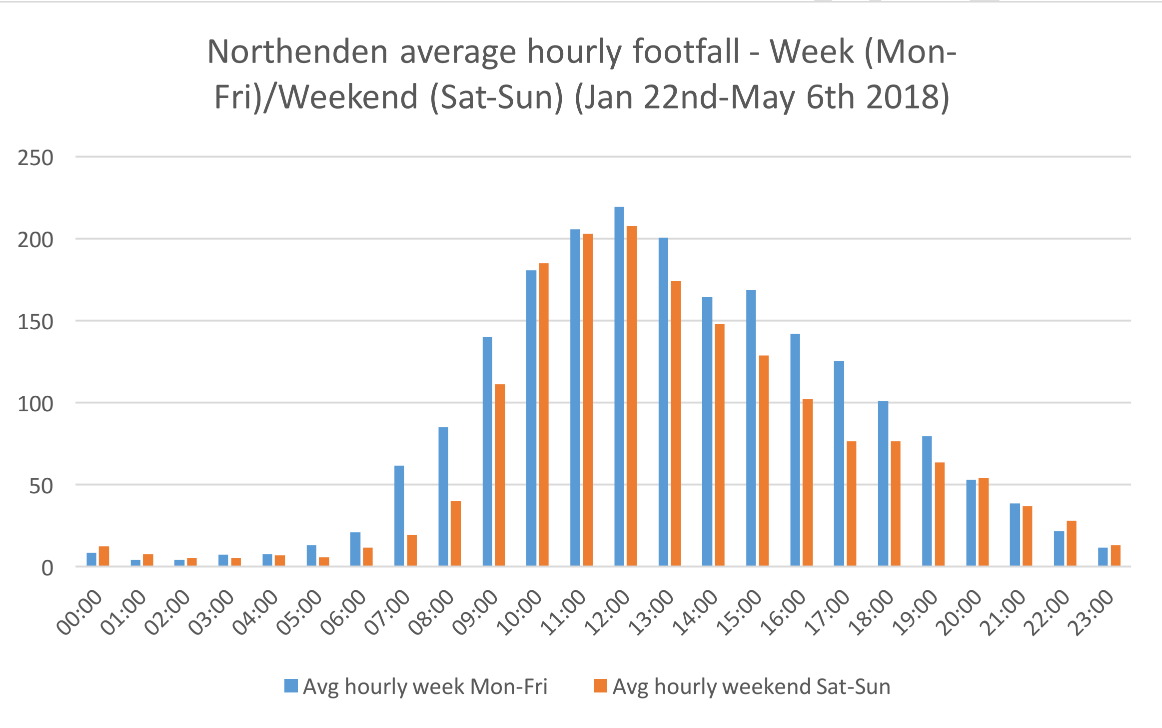
The above graph shows the total weekly footfall figures from the week commencing January 22nd 2018 to the end of the week commencing 30th April 2018. The range varies from a little over 12,000 (w/c 22/1) to just under 18,000 (w/c 30/4) movements per week. Whilst there have been gentle weekly fluctuations, we can see that there is relatively little deviation away from the average weekly footfall of approximately 14,500 movements per week. Despite the counter being installed for only 15 weeks, we are already beginning to see a pattern of relative consistency from week to week. With reference to our town signature types, the centre is displaying characteristics of a typical convenience/community centre, which fits with our assumptions and the views of the local stakeholders.



If we delve into a little more detail and look at the average daily footfall recorded over the period of measurement thus far, again we can see a broadly consistent pattern. Monday to Saturday sees footfall at a consistent level of between just under 2000 movements to around 2300. Sunday is the clear outlier, recording an average of approximately 1250 movements. This significant reduction is indicative of a large proportion of the retailers/businesses in the centre being closed.



Going into further detail, the counter's 24 hour recording allows us to break down the data into average hourly footfall. We can see that the footfall builds during standard business operating hours (9am-5pm), reaching a peak around midday, before gradually tailing off towards the evening. This is largely in-line with what we would expect to see in a convenience centre. What is perhaps surprising, or an avenue for development, is the evening economy. We can see that from 5pm onwards, footfall tails off quite steeply, such that at 8pm (which one would consider peak-time for evening economy operators), Northenden is experiencing a similar level of footfall to that counted at 7am. For a centre with a healthy number of takeaways, restaurants, and bars, these figures are disappointing, and point to a deficiency in the centre's ability to attract visitors in the evenings. However, we must caveat this by noting that as the counter is in a fixed single location, there is a possibility that evening activity is more heavily focused in an area of Northenden that the counter does not capture.



If we look at the split between footfall recorded during the traditional working week (Monday-Friday), and the weekend (Saturday-Sunday), we can see that each follow a similar pattern. Whilst there are less visitors earlier at the weekend than in the week (as one might expect with those travelling to work taken out of the picture), after around 10am we can see a broad consistency in footfall. Weekdays experience higher movements in the late afternoon (again, likely attributable to school/business closure around this time bringing more people into the centre), with movements levelling out around 7pm onwards. Again, bearing in mind the weekend is typically a time when people will go out in the evening, one would expect to see a higher level of footfall around this time at the weekend than in the week, but instead we see parity.

What this initial analysis of footfall in Northenden tells us, is that the centre is likely to fit the convenience/community town type signature. Nevertheless, we need at least one year's worth of data to allocate a signature type. It appears that the centre is being used as a functional requirement for those that visit, which is of course in keeping with the characteristics of a centre of this nature. What is perhaps disappointing, is the evident lack of significant footfall during the evenings. Given the multitude of businesses in operation in Northenden for whom the evening economy would appear to provide their prime source of custom, this is surprising. Whether this is pointing to a level of apathy amongst Northenden residents towards the centre's evening offer, whether more needs to be done to inform people of what is available, or whether the offer is not meeting the local catchment's needs, there is clearly room for improvement in this area – irrespective of the counter location.

Overall, the centre is performing largely as we would expect, with peak hours of operation during typical business hours. As we move forward, developing a longitudinal data set will allow us to build a more accurate picture of how the centre is performing throughout the year. Significantly, it will allow the impact of any interventions to be measured against previous periods, informing future activity as a result. This data-driven approach to the implementation of measures to drive more footfall to the centre will enable stakeholders to make better-informed decisions, which can only be good for the future of Northenden.

6.3. Meetings and workshop

To learn more about current issues and developments within Northenden, the IPM held meetings with the Neighbourhood Team in January 2018. From this meeting, we learned that there are two well-respected restaurants in the area, which are very successful and help to drive footfall into the centre. At the time of the meeting, the pop-up Northenden Hive was also in operation running rent-free, which also created some buzz in the centre (this has since closed). However, although it is a busy centre, Northenden perhaps lacks a critical mass of non-retail provision that would encourage non-essential visits, as such it lacks the vibrancy of some nearby district and neighbourhood centres. Tensions between the daytime and night-time economies were also identified, as well as some stakeholder tensions between the passionate residents and the more (it would appear) apathetic retailers and land owners. In terms of future possibilities, we found that The Makers Market are potentially interested in coming to Northenden in the future, and the ground floor of the vacant glass-fronted building on Palatine Road (the 'High Rise') could offer some new development opportunities.

To further enrich our understandings of Northenden, we conducted a two-hour workshop with 30 key local stakeholders, including residents, business owners, and local councilors, at the Britannia Hotel on 6th March 2018 (you can read about the event here). The workshop gave stakeholders an opportunity to meet each other, and voice their opinions on what makes Northenden a great place to live, and the opportunities to make this even better. In small groups, attendees were asked to come up with the top three things they felt impacted Northenden's vitality and viability (whether negatively or positively). And their answers are detailed in the table below.

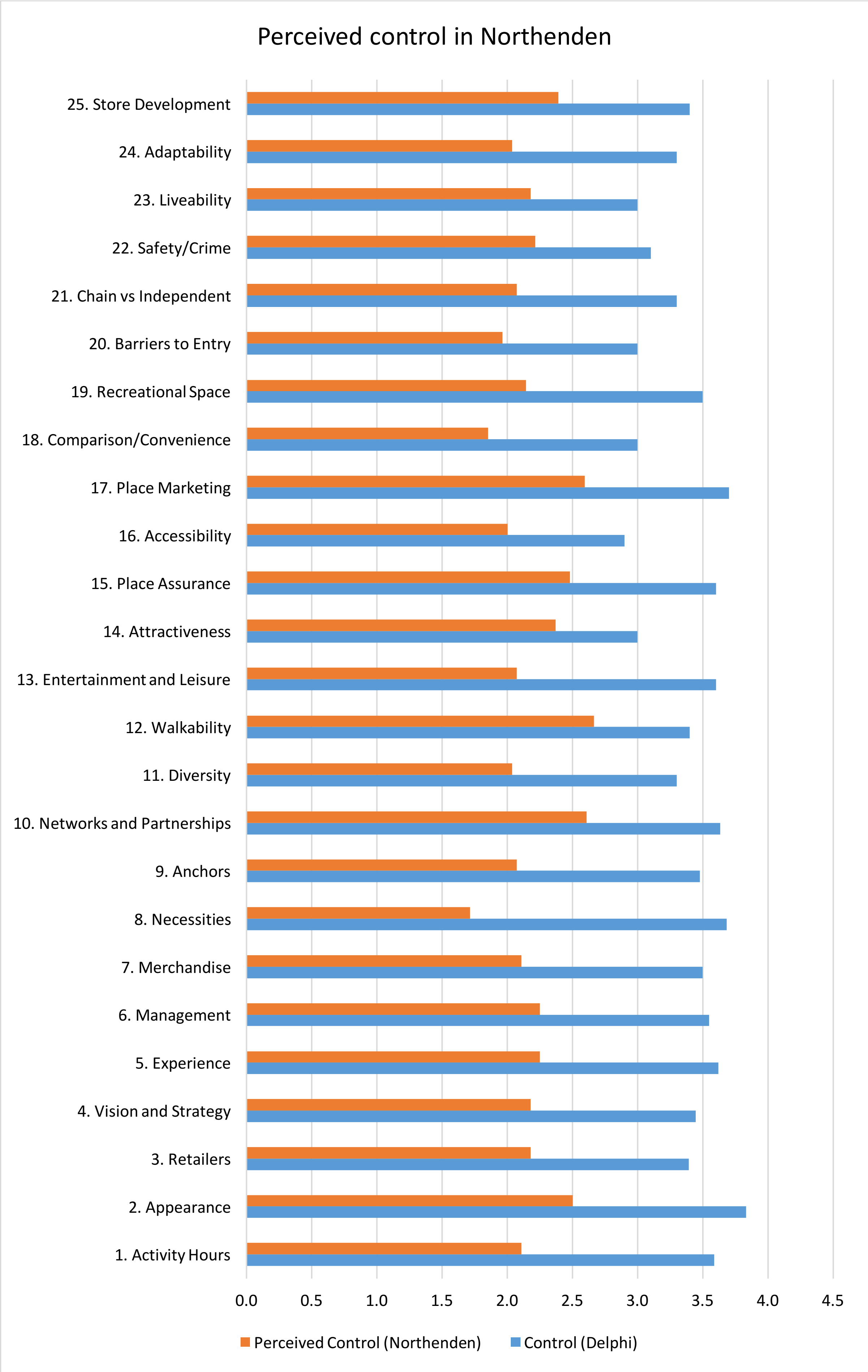
We can see that, in terms of Northenden's key positives, stakeholders identified that there was great potential to make more of its surrounding greenspace and riverside. They also felt that there was good community spirit and civic activity in Northenden, good accessibly via the Trans Pennine Trail, and there were options available for affordable housing.

However, in terms of areas to improve upon, stakeholders identified that Northenden's retail and restaurant offer was not diverse enough, some of the units looked a bit outdated and unkempt, there are congestion and accessibility issues, a lack of places for young people to go, and it sometimes felt unsafe to be in the centre at night.

Top three factors activity

	TOP FACTORS
GROUP 1	1. Lack of diversity in shops and restaurants. Northenden needs a better mix of shops/services/nightlife. More attractive restaurants. 2. Need to promote the identity of Northenden based on its strengths (e.g. greenspace and riverside). 3. Congestion and accessibility issues. Northenden very much a linear route, vast majority of activity based on single through-road.
GROUP 2	1. Need to promote the identity of Northenden based on its strengths (e.g. greenspace and riverside). Building on what Northenden has got. 2. Lack of evening economy and don't feel safe at night. 3. Lack of places for young people to go.
GROUP 3	1. Good community spirit and civic activity. 2. Good accessibility in terms of the Trans Pennine Trail, river, bus routes. 3. Good options available for affordable housing.
GROUP 4	1. The appearance of the premises in the centre could be improved upon. 2. Parking and traffic congestion issues effects visits to the centre. 3. Need to draw upon Northenden's history.

The workshop also included a task whereby stakeholders were asked to rank the 25 factors from the HSUK2020 project in terms of how controllable they felt they were. Akin to when this task has been conducted in other centres in the UK, we found that stakeholders in general felt that they had less control over these factors impacting vitality and viability than they might in reality have (see figure below). This is significant, as informing people of their capability to enact change is just as important as advising them how to enact it. We will now move onto discussing interventions that stakeholders could collaboratively make in Northenden to make it an even better place to work, live, and spend time.


Perceived control in Northenden
25. Store Development
24. Adaptability
23. Liveability
22. Safety/Crime
21. Chain vs Independent
20. Barriers to Entry
19. Recreational Space
18. Comparison/Convenience
17. Place Marketing
16. Accessibility
15. Place Assurance
14. Attractiveness
13. Entertainment and Leisure
12. Walkability
11. Diversity
10. Networks and Partnerships
9. Anchors
8. Necessities
7. Merchandise
6. Management
5. Experience
4. Vision and Strategy
3. Retailers
2. Appearance
1. Activity Hours
0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 3.5 4.0 4.5
Perceived Control (Northenden)
Control (Delphi)

7. Recommendations: What can Northenden do?

It became clear from the meetings with the Neighbourhood Team, and the workshop with local stakeholders, that there is a strong community spirit in Northenden, with passionate people living and working there with the capacity to collaboratively enact change in the centre.

Our starting point for any advice is that decisions should be made based on evidence. Too many centres have followed what others have done without understanding whether the action taken is appropriate in their town. This has often resulted in wasted investment, had little or no impact on overall vitality and viability, and led to widespread disillusionment.

We recommend that Northenden should take into account the top 25 factors that impact on a centre's vitality and viability (as discussed in this report) and start by tackling the weaknesses identified in Section 6.1. We recommend that action plans are drawn up to deal with each of the factors identified. Each of the factors we have identified can be influenced to a considerable extent locally. It may be, however, that the mechanisms and partnerships needed to bring about changes need strengthening. The timescale needed to make these changes should also be considered. If many of the weaker areas will take years to achieve, then much momentum for change could be lost and the centre may decline before it improves. We think, therefore, that it is also important to identify some 'quick wins' that will address areas of concern, but which can engender wider engagement and enthusiasm. Quick wins could come from a more active place marketing presence (especially via social media), the use of pop-up/temporary retail provision - such as Makers Markets - to improve the diversity of the offer community events to add more entertainment and leisure opportunities, improved signage, and fostering more stakeholder collaboration.

Based on the key findings discussed in this report, we will now present several recommendations regarding what stakeholders in Northenden could do to enhance its vitality and viability. We will present this advice in relation to the IPM's '4Rs' framework, which was explained in the workshop, and includes *repositioning*, *reinventing*, *rebranding*, and *restructuring* as the four main areas in which a place can improve its performance.

7.1 Repositioning

- **Reviewing and interpreting footfall data is key**
- **Facilitating knowledge exchange around the data recommended (opening up data to wider audience)**
- **Make efforts to reposition town, building on convenience by improving leisure/evening economy offer**
- **Build on green space provision/riverside location as means of differentiation**

Repositioning is a strategy that relates to clearly identifying and communicating a place's market position (Millington and Ntounis, 2017; please click here to read more about repositioning). It can be used to counteract decline, and enables centres to identify potential competitive advantages. The starting point is understanding forces of change, and the value of unique responses that reposition centres. Such responses should build on a place's distinct capabilities, whilst also being accommodative of future trends in order for a centre to be resilient. Knowledge exchange between stakeholders is also crucial in such strategies to generate a shared understanding of a centre's identity and function.

From the primary audit, we identified that necessities and liveability were strengths in Northenden (see Section 6.1), since in addition to the core retail provision, there are public realm features such as benches, a local park, as well as basic additional services available in the centre (e.g. a pharmacy and vets). The provision in Northenden is focused around a basic convenience offering (predominantly small food retailers). And so, in this respect, Northenden is functioning in line with its position as a community/convenience centre.

Northenden is, however, weaker in the area of entertainment and leisure, with a lack of an evening and nighttime economy also identified in the footfall data (see Section 6.2). With such a dense resident population within walking distance of the centre, there is a lack of usage of the centre during the evening. Evening footfall should be monitored and tracked to see if short-term interventions (like a street food evening market, for example – similar events have proven to be very popular in places such as Levenshulme and Stockport) can prove that there is underserved demand. However, any interventions made around activity hours and entertainment and leisure should be sensitive to the socio-demographic profile of the local community.

Northenden's position as a centre that serves the convenience needs of its community (which is of course a strength) does little to attract visitors from outside its immediate catchment. The challenge will be to develop an offer in the town that appeals to both the local catchment, and those from further afield. There is room for creating an environment that moves beyond basic provision, and into a place that attracts and retains people for prolonged periods of time. Northenden should seek to differentiate itself from other nearby convenience centres. To achieve this, Northenden should capitalise more on its greenspace and riverside location. The audit and workshop suggested this as one of the key strengths of Northenden (see Sections 6.1 and 6.3), but this potential distinctiveness is not communicated well through place marketing strategies, and is not, therefore, contributing as well as it could to a stronger sense of identity for Northenden (see Rebranding and Reinventing).

Repositioning Northenden in this way can be done through stakeholders working together – the workshop was a good starting point, but collaborative working needs to continue. How will this be facilitated? A project area on the IPM website can be enabled to at least share information, documents, and reports to interested stakeholders. However, there is potential for more regular meetings to take forward specific action. There were some stakeholder tensions identified in the project, and stakeholders currently seem to work independently of each other, which needs addressing (see Restructuring).

Quick Win

Analysing and understanding the footfall data may offer an opportunity for a wider group of stakeholders to come together and understand the centre and how it functions. IPM can provide some more analysis of patterns, but we would recommend that the stakeholders in the centres start to analyse the data themselves, and share this information so that more informed and collaborative decisions can be made. The neighbourhood team would provide the ideal lead for this type of activity.

7.2 Reinventing

- **Revitalise offer through making most of green space provision**
- **Increase awareness of riverside/trans-pennine trail location**
- **Organise community events/festivals to emphasise green space/draw people to it**
- **Improve signage/directions to riverside/green space – make it clear it is there and an important part of the centre**
- **Improve appearance of centre through planters/hanging baskets (potentially through 'In Bloom' style event)**

Reinventing strategies relate to the activities undertaken to revitalise a place's identity and offer (Theodoridis, Ntounis, and Pal, 2017; please click here to read more about reinventing). Any place, however, should understand and seek to meet the needs of its catchment, and be sensitive to these insights when making any changes within a centre. As previously mentioned, initial footfall data analysed so far suggests that Northenden functions as a convenience/community centre (see Section 6.2); so the question is, does it meet the needs of its local catchment?

As discussed above, a key strength of Northenden identified by both the primary audit and by local stakeholders in the workshop, is its surrounding greenspace and riverside location - part of the trans-pennine trail (see Sections 6.1. and 6.3), which residents seem very proud of and keen to further capitalise upon. To better communicate its potential identity as a 'riverside village' (see Rebranding), which is still in keeping with its community/convenience function, some changes can be made within the centre itself. This would also help to differentiate Northenden from other nearby convenience centres, such as Didsbury and Chorlton.

Such examples might include a riverside café, which could attract both the local catchment and also provide a place for visitors using the Trans-Pennine Trail to dwell in, which was identified as another of the centre's strengths by workshop participants. There was previously a large pub on Mill Lane that would have provided this, though this is currently lying vacant.

To further enhance the strong community spirit within Northenden, more community events and festivals could also be instigated, some of which could centre around the greenspace and riverside, particularly in the warmer months (e.g. a summer festival, sporting event, or food market). As well as fostering community spirit, such events would also help to highlight these assets in Northenden – reinforcing the branding recommendations below, and attract visitors from outside the immediate local catchment.

Again, we would also encourage stakeholders in the area to make use of the footfall data being recorded to track progress of any of these interventions. This data can be an invaluable resource, particularly for local businesses when considering aspects such as opening hours.

Quick win

As the quickest and lowest cost reinvention activities, more visible and frequent signage could be introduced in the centre to more effectively point people towards the greenspace and riverside areas. Whilst the local stakeholders attending the workshop seemed to be aware of these assets, the greenspace and riverside are currently quite hidden away from visitors who might not be as aware of these surrounding areas of Northenden and so could miss them. Although there is some signage on Palatine Road relating to these areas, it is not that visible, and the riverside/greenspace is not singled out as a key visitor attraction, which could be addressed in new signage. Furthermore, hanging baskets and flower beds – perhaps through an In Bloom event - could be included around the centre to enhance its appearance and attractiveness, bolster its village identity, encourage dwell time, and increase perceptions of safety in the centre. Finally, the footfall data is a valuable resource, and we would recommend that this is utilised frequently – as a longitudinal pattern develops and the impact of interventions can be measured, this will become ever more useful.

7.3 Rebranding

- **Encourage stakeholder engagement in the development of a coherent, attractive brand image for Northenden**
- **Utilise riverside location and heron in imagery as a starting point for deliberation; drawing on Northenden's history**
- **Potential to make the process democratic through design competition/public vote on selected design**
- **Incremental/low-cost rollout of branding – predominantly online**

Strategies of rebranding focus upon the application of branding, marketing communications, and public relations techniques in order to deliver a consistent place identity, which relates to the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions in the minds of potential consumers of a place (Ntounis, and Kavaratzis, 2017; please click here to read more about rebranding). Successful place brand management can lead to positive word-of-mouth, and also assist in the transformation of previously negative, or just as problematic, non-existent images. To achieve this, Northenden's stakeholders should come together to co-create a positive and consistent place brand. Indeed, participatory place branding processes can flourish when place stakeholders are engaged in the right context and are encouraged to work together collaboratively.

As our previous research has shown, the development of a coherent place brand that is truly representative is difficult to achieve. However, by following the interrelated stages of research, deliberation, consultation, action, and communication – it is well within the capabilities of Northenden's stakeholders to drive forward a process that will produce an attractive brand proposition for the centre.

Northenden currently lacks a coherent image, however this can be rectified relatively easily, as the centre possesses qualities that can be utilised through place marketing. Based on the feedback gleaned at the workshop, stakeholders were keen to point to

Northenden's rich and well researched history is a means of differentiation (Northenden featured in the Domesday book of 1086, prospered during medieval times, and became a township for wealthier traders and business owners during the industrial revolution). Another suggestion that arose on more than one occasion during the workshop was to better utilise Northenden's green space provision and proximity to the River Mersey. By taking the approach of rebranding Northenden as 'the riverside village', a stronger image for Northenden could be communicated that in time would permeate the public conscience. Of course, further consultation following the process outlined above would be advisable to ensure that there is an adequate consensus amongst stakeholders. As a starting point, this would seem to be a viable suggestion, however it is of course of utmost importance that linked repositioning and reinventing efforts take place around this to support and reinforce the brand message.

Northenden has a symbol that has become less prevalent over the years; that of the heron. A sculpture of the heron stands in the playground adjacent to the River Mersey on Mill Lane, and to the eagle-eyed, the image appears on planters – aside from this, it is difficult to find reference to the symbol elsewhere. This symbol, which brings the riverside location to the fore, could provide a useful starting point for developing a stronger brand image for Northenden.

There is a strong network of engaged stakeholders that would be well equipped to carry out a successful branding process/be involved in a consultation - albeit they are somewhat detached from one another to this point (see restructuring section below for more information). Tapping into this existing resource will be an important step towards developing a coherent brand for Northenden that can form the basis of marketing material/promotional efforts in the future.

Once a core group of stakeholders - perhaps led by the neighbourhood team - is in place, a wider group can be engaged in order to gather as many viewpoints as possible as to which aspects of Northenden could provide suitable focus for any branding efforts. The 'Riverside Village' and associated heron imagery providing an obvious starting point. There is also the possibility of engaging further stakeholders by making the process of selecting a brand image democratic. A competition could be launched for designs – perhaps through local schools- with a final short list going to a public vote?

Quick win

Develop branding/marketing efforts around Northenden's location on the banks of the River Mersey. Incorporating 'the riverside village' message, and the heron imagery, into any promotional activity gives Northenden an identity that it is perhaps lacking currently. The roll-out of this message can be incremental, not necessarily requiring a costly design/campaign to implement – stakeholder engagement could be maximised by involving the local population in the design/selection of final brand image.

7.4 Restructuring

- **Capitalise on engaged stakeholders**
- **Bring together stakeholders in regular meetings/through establishment of a partnership/forum/group**
- **Use these meetings as opportunities to review footfall data**
- **Sub-groups can be established for specific projects/aspects of place improvement activity**

Restructuring strategies relate to both governance structures and forms of management, and also the physical structuring of a place (Peel and Parker, 2017; please click here to read more about restructuring). The first requires the cooperation of all place stakeholders and creation of strategic networks and public-private relationships that will nurture conditions for the sustainable development of a place, rather than taking top-down approaches. The second requires the proper use of current infrastructure, in addition to the development of new retail spaces to enhance place attractiveness and place development.

Comprehensive physical restructuring of Northenden is unlikely to be a realistic undertaking, owing to the cost and complexities associated with this, coupled with the disparate land ownership and lack of land suitable for development in the centre. Were efforts to be made in this regard, supporting 'the riverside village' brand through focusing on development in this area, perhaps bar/café provision, would be one avenue. With retail vacancy in the centre at only 6%, this is not a particular area of concern – however there are examples of prominent vacant units (such as the previous home of 'The Hive' on the junction of Palatine Rd/Church Street). To this end, exploring opportunities with the landowners as to how to fill the space would be advised. Accessibility into the centre is another weakness, and again the remit of efforts emerging from this project are unlikely to cover this. However, it is important to note all areas for improvement as these could be looked at in the future.

In the shorter term, efforts in Northenden would be better directed towards working with the existing topography of the centre, essentially building on existing strengths and tweaking areas of weakness whilst working to a coherent vision. It will be very important that as wide a range of stakeholders as possible are engaged in this activity. To this end, facilitation and management will be key to ensuring stakeholder input into any developmental efforts.

At the meeting with the neighbourhood team, it was suggested that Northenden has a wide range of engaged and enthusiastic stakeholders. However, at present the efforts of these groups would seem to be lacking a joined up approach, resulting in a series of outcomes that are less than the sum of their parts. By bringing together these independent groups and focusing efforts towards coherent goals, it is likely that far more could be achieved. The neighbourhood team can play a crucial role in coordinating this, fostering a participatory approach to local change that can yield positive results.

The workshop in March offered the ideal opportunity to bring the local stakeholders together under one roof, and the positivity in the room indicated a shared appetite for collaborative working in Northenden going forward. The neighbourhood team should seek to conduct similar meetings, perhaps on a regular basis. As well as bringing the stakeholders together, forming a network of engaged participants, these meetings could serve as information sharing opportunities. Footfall data is being fed to the neighbourhood team on a regular basis – reporting on this, particularly in light of any significant intervention or events held, will be key to keeping stakeholders engaged and giving them a feeling of ownership over what is happening in Northenden. The value of assigning holistic and joint actions developed through participatory visioning exercises cannot be understated. A likely result of these meetings/the establishment of a core group of stakeholders would be an increased motivation to drive interventions that can have a positive effect in Northenden. For example, a task force approach to various issues could be taken, with sub-groups established to oversee different actions.

It is important to keep the momentum gained through the workshop going. Implementing a forum, or partnership structure that can engage interested stakeholders into action will be key to this. The neighbourhood team could facilitate the group, with the direction coming from the stakeholders themselves.

Quick win

Establish a community/stakeholder group, facilitated by the neighborhood team. From this, sub-groups can be established to enact change in particular areas. This harnesses the existing resource in the centre and brings it together with a view to creating a joined-up/collective approach to centre improvement.

8. Conclusion

Northenden is a functional, attractive district centre, which benefits from a high level of community and stakeholder engagement. The turnout for the workshop and the high level of interest in the project from the neighbourhood team, the community and local elected members shows that there is capacity to get things done – and tackle the immediate weaknesses in the centre.

Current provision in Northenden serves the needs of the local community from a convenience perspective (it provides the essentials very well). Northenden is less strong when it comes to non-essential provision, particularly that relating to the evening economy (for example, drinking, eating, general leisure/entertainment). This could be addressed to some extent through holding events in the evenings – the makers market being one possibility that could be worth exploring.

Northenden’s current image is somewhat unclear, however given its relatively unique location close to the River Mersey, and the green space this provides, there is a resource there that is ready to be tapped into in order to rectify this – both in terms of brand image and through building interventions around this resource.

Our recommendations centre around developing community/stakeholder engagement in the centre, harnessing this resource in order to action change that can lead to ‘quick wins’.

Building on Northenden's strengths (particularly its abundance of recreational/green space) forms an integral part in this, as does utilising the footfall data collected in order to track progress, measure the success of interventions, and build future intervention plans accordingly.

In conclusion, given the relatively strong position that Northenden is in, the main issue, we feel, is one of perceptions. Any investment into more effective place marketing, and community-led social media and campaigns, encouraging people to use the centre and visit the riverside (especially if linked to local festivals or events) is likely to increase footfall and improve vitality in the centre.

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Appendix 1: Primary centre audit

Appendix 1: Northenden centre audit

General centre overview
NAME OF CENTRE: Northenden

Information required	**Response**
Identification of centre area (map) Please include a map of your centre in the space provided.	

Demographics of local population (population size, age, occupation etc.) Please provide a summary for your centre using the statistics available.	**Key demographic data:** - Population size: Northenden ward – 14,783 (2016 MCC data) -Age 30-59 (41%); Age 60-84 (15.7%); Mean age= 36.8 -White (85%); Asian/Asian British (6%); Black/African Caribbean/Black British (4%); Mixed/multiple ethnic (3%); Other (2%) -No cars in household (34.8%) -Adults in employment (60.3%) -Retired adults (10.6%) (Source: ONS, 2011).

TOP 25 PRIORITY AREAS *(scores 1= poor - 5= excellent)*

1. Activity Hours	**Response**
The centre's hours of operation should meet the needs of the local catchment. What are the shopping hours? Is there an evening economy? Do the activity hours of the centre match the needs of the catchment? Relates to: Repositioning Reinventing Rebranding Restructuring	- In terms of anchors/key services: - Costa Coffee on Palatine Road is open 7am-6pm Mon-Sat, and 8am-5pm Sunday - Well Pharmacy on Palatine Road is open 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat - The Post Office is open 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat but closed on Sundays - The Children's Society charity shop notably had a sign outside about their new extended opening on Saturday - The Northenden community library has very narrow opening times: Monday: 2-5 pm; Tuesday: 10am-1pm; Wednesday: 10am-1pm; Thursday: 2-5 pm; Friday: 10am-1pm; Saturday: closed - There are two particularly well-respected restaurants in the area which help to stimulate the evening economy, as well as a range of takeaways which were closed at the time of visit (Monday morning). Score out of 5: 3/5

2. Appearance	**Response**
How clean is the centre? What is the quality of the public realm? What does the façade of the retailers look like? Are the shops well-maintained? Are there any noticeable litter issues? Relates to: Reinventing	- There were no noticeable litter issues on Palatine Road and the centre was very clean overall - There were several more modern and newer looking units on Palatine Road, including The Northenden Den, Bar Bilbo, Escape 2, and Lounge-about bar. Whereas, the other units looked a bit outdated and untidy in comparison (e.g. the Party Shop, Quidds in Discount etc.) - There were some noticeable pot holes and fallen down metal fences opposite the post office which made it look a bit unkempt - The Palatine road area lacks green space, however there are numerous planters. The annual In Bloom competition is a means by which the appearance/abundance of planters/hanging baskets could be improved upon. - Additionally, the Northenden War Memorial on Palatine Rd provides a pleasant flowered area. Score out of 5: 3/5

3. Retailers	**Response**
The retailers in the centre should meet the needs of the local catchment. What retailers are represented (this includes retailers of products and services)? **(See Appendix 2).** Relates to: Repositioning Reinventing	- Northenden has a range of small grocery retailers (e.g. Tesco Metro and Co-op), poundshops, takeaways, a few bars, and many service-orientated units (e.g. hairdressers, repair garages, beauty bars, solicitors, estate agents, a funeral parlour, vets, dry cleaners etc.- see Appendix 2) - There is a lack of comparison shopping in the centre - There were notably no banks in Northenden (just a stand-alone cashpoint) Score out of 5: 3/5

4. Vision and Strategy	**Response**
Having a common vision and some leadership is important in centres. Do the high street stakeholders collaborate? Is the vision incorporated in local plans? Is the vision adopted in stakeholder plans? Relates to: Restructuring	- As with any centre, Northenden's wide-range of stakeholders makes collaboration difficult to achieve. There are multiple land owners, for example, which makes pulling this group together difficult. - The Northenden Business Association appears to be less active over the past twelve months. - The retailers seem quite apathetic; but the residents are passionate about the village (there is a Northenden Civic Society and a Neighbourhood Forum) - The Neighbourhood Team are active and passionate about improving the centre (and were involved in the workshop organised by IPM and MCC). - The juxtaposition of older more outdated units with newer more modern, better kept properties causes a lack of consistent image in Northenden. (Source: Meeting with Neighbourhood Team) Score out of 5: 3/5

5. Experience	**Response**
Considering the quality of the experience within the centre. What is the overall image provided by the centre? How are customer service levels perceived? What are residents'/visitors' overall levels of satisfaction with the centre? Relates to: Repositioning Rebranding	- The centre has a local convenience feel, as opposed to being a destination people from outside Northenden would visit - There were quite a lot of people walking around on Monday morning, but since the street is so long there was a lack of a central hub/sense of buzz - Palatine Road is very busy with traffic, and so the centre is quite loud with lots of vehicle noise - The juxtaposition of older more outdated units with newer more modern ones causes a lack of consistent image in Northenden. - The centre was very clean, which enhanced perceptions of safety. Score out of 5: 3/5

6. Management	**Response**
Is there effective management of the centre? What management structures are in place for managing the centre? Is there effective collaboration between centre stakeholders in managing the centre? Relates to: Restructuring	- There are many stakeholders involved in the centre with many disparate land owners- no single managing agent for the centre. - There is a Northenden Business Association. The chair puts in efforts but no one to back them up. It's quite a dormant group with no real figurehead. - The retailers, it seems, are quite apathetic; but the residents are passionate about the village (there is a Northenden Civic Society and a Neighbourhood Forum) - The Neighbourhood Team are active and passionate about improving the centre (and were involved in the workshop with IPM and MCC). (Source: Meeting with Neighbourhood Team) Score out of 5: 3/5

7. Merchandise	**Response**
The merchandise on offer in the centre should meet the needs of the local catchment. What is the range and quality of goods on offer? Relates to: Repositioning Reinventing	- The units on Palatine road primarily provide the local community with food and beverages, household goods, and groceries. - There are quite a few lower-end price offers (e.g. Poundland) which meet the needs of the historically lower-income community in Northenden - The centre seems more service-orientated than product-led. Score out of 5: 3.5/5

8. Necessities	**Response**
A centre should ensure that basic facilities are present and maintained. Is there appropriate car-parking, toilets, and places for people to sit down in the centre? Relates to: Reinventing	- On-street parking is available both in front of the stores (potentially private parking) and on the adjacent residential roads for up to one hour stays - There was signage on Palatine Road pointing towards a car park, although it wasn't overly clear where this was located - There are benches for people to sit down, although these were located close to the busy road, nobody was sitting on them at the time of visit (Monday morning) - There was a cash point located on Palatine Road, but no banks. Score out of 5: 3.5/5

9. Anchors	**Response**
Is there an anchor in the centre which has pulling power and drives footfall into the area? This could be retail (like a department store or large supermarket), a busy transport interchange, or a large employer. Relates to: Rebranding	- For the daytime economy, the main anchors in the area are Costa Coffee, Tesco, and the Co-op - The main night-time anchors are the two well-respected restaurants in the centre (Mi and Pho and Alexandros Greek) - There are no real entertainment and leisure anchors to attract people into the centre - The greenspace and riverside could serve as anchors; however, they don't seem to be very well signposted or promoted. Score out of 5: 3/5

10. Networks and partnerships	**Response**
Are there strong networks and effective formal/informal partnerships in the centre? Are there any traders' associations or community groups? Do centre stakeholders communicate and trust each other? Or are there any apparent stakeholder tensions? Relates to: Restructuring	- There are many stakeholders involved in the centre with many disparate land owners- unsure who takes charge of managing the centre. - There is a Northenden Business Association. The chair puts in efforts but no one to back them up. It's quite a dormant group with no real figurehead. - The retailers seem quite apathetic; but the residents are passionate about the village (there is a Northenden Civic Society and a Neighbourhood Forum) - The Neighbourhood Team are passionate and active in their efforts to improve the centre (having assisted with this project). (Source: Meeting with Neighbourhood Team). Score out of 5: 3/5

11. Diversity	**Response**
How diverse is the offer provided in the centre, for both retail (types of retailer/multiples/SMEs etc.), and non-retail (leisure activities, events etc.)? Relates to: Repositioning	- Northenden has a range of small grocery retailers (e.g. Tesco Metro and Co-op), poundshops, takeaways, a few bars, and many service-orientated units (e.g. hairdressers, repair garages, beauty bars, solicitors, estate agents, a funeral parlour, vets, dry cleaners etc- see Appendix 2.) - There is a lack of comparison shopping in the centre - There were notably no banks in Northenden (just a stand-alone cashpoint) - There is a lack of entertainment and leisure provision Score out of 5: 2.5/5

12. Walkability	**Response**
Are linked trips between areas possible, or are the distances too great? Are there other obstacles that stop people walking through and around the centre (e.g. potholes, bollards, cars etc.)? How easy is the space to navigate with pushchairs/wheelchairs etc.? Relates to: Repositioning Reinventing	- The centre is located primarily on Palatine Road, which is easily walked end-to-end in around 10 minutes, and linked trips are also easily made - The pavements on Palatine Road are wide, clean, and flat so very accessible - There were a few cars parked in front of shops, causing some obstructions to walkability – but nothing to cause concern Score out of 5: 4/5

13. Entertainment and Leisure	**Response**
What is the entertainment and leisure offer provided in the centre? Does this appeal to the local catchment? Are there any festivals, fairs, and events held in the centre? Relates to: Reinventing	- There appears to be a lack of entertainment and leisure offerings - The Northenden Community Library hosts a book club every Tuesday and also Toddler groups, whilst the community church hosts pregnancy yoga sessions (clear signage about this located outside the church at time of visit) - There appears to be a lack of community events and festivals in the centre. Score out of 5: 2/5

14. Attractiveness	**Response**
Is the centre able to attract visitors from a distance; or does it primarily serve the needs of the local community? What is there in the centre which might make it a visitor attraction? Relates to: Rebranding	- There aren't really any strong anchors to attract visitors from outside of the centre (it's mainly geared around convenience offerings for the local community), especially since the Northenden Hive has now closed. - The greenspace and riverside are potentially strong anchors in the centre but, apart from some signage further out on Palatine Road which is quite hard to spot, not that much seems to be made of it as a unique selling point. - Northenden very much has the feel of a centre that provides the essentials for the local community, without offering a great deal to attract other visitors Score out of 5: 3/5

15. Place assurance	**Response**
Does the centre offer a basic level of customer service; is this consistent? Or do some operators, or parts of the offer, let this down? Is the centre getting the basics right for their local community? Relates to: Restructuring	- The centre seems to provide a good convenience offer to its local community, providing a mix of groceries, household items, food/bev, and services - The juxtaposition of older more outdated units with newer more modern ones causes a lack of consistent image in Northenden. - The centre is lacking in entertainment/leisure provision/community events - The lack of banks is likely an issue, particularly for residents without access to the internet. Score out of 5: 3/5

16. Accessibility	**Response**
How convenient is the centre to access? What modes of transport are available to access the centre? Are there any cycle lanes? What car parking options are available? Are there clear pathways to walk to and through the centre? Relates to: Restructuring	- It seems that the main way to access Northenden is via car, since Palatine Road was very busy and congested at the time of visit (Monday morning). - There is on-street parking available and signage pointing to a car park - Public transport options into Northenden from Manchester City Centre, for example, are limited (no tram routes, the nearest train station Gatley is quite a walk away from the centre. But there is a frequent bus route- number 41) - A Trans Pennine Trail cycle path is accessible into Northenden - Once in the centre, walkability is good due to wide and flat pavement but there were no apparent cycle lanes. Score out of 5: 2/5

17. Place marketing	**Response**
How does the centre market and promote itself? Do enough stakeholders communicate in a way that builds a coherent place brand image? How well does the centre orientate visitors and encourage flow with signage and guides? Relates to: Repositioning Rebranding	- The well-respected restaurants in the centre, e.g. Alexandros Greek and Mi and Pho, have very positive reviews on Trip Advisor, and presumably are promoted by word of mouth - There were some advertisements of community events within the centre on a noticeboard on Palatine Road - There doesn't seem to be much active promotion of Northenden as a place, or of the greenspace and riverside surrounding it Score out of 5: 2/5

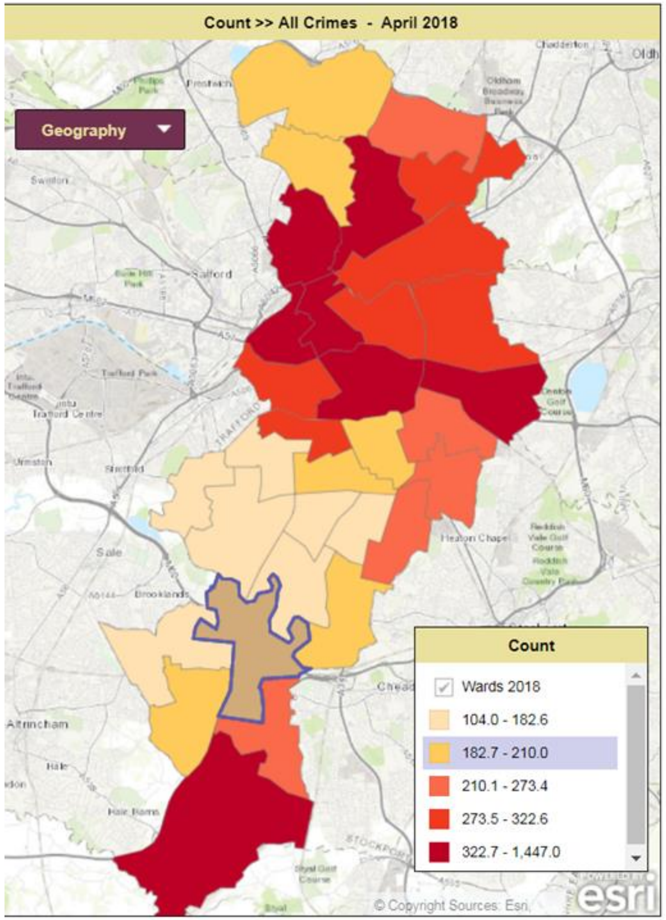
18. Comparison/convenience	Response
What comparison shopping opportunities are available in the centre? What convenience shopping is on offer in the centre? What is the ratio of comparison shopping compared to convenience? Relates to: Repositioning Reinventing	- The offer within Northenden is based around convenience rather than comparison shopping (e.g. small grocery retailers like the Co-op and the Poundland). Score out of 5: 3/5

19. Recreational space	Response
Are there areas in the centre where people can enjoy spending time without spending money (e.g. parks)? What is the quality of the recreational areas and public space/open space in the centre? Relates to: Reinventing	- There is ample greenspace and riverside surrounding Northenden but, apart from a sign on Palatine Road, there doesn't seem to be much active promotion of it to attract people into the centre/direct them to it once in the centre. - There is a park/playground area on Mill Lane adjacent to the River Mersey, a short walk from Palatine Road. Score out of 5: 4/5

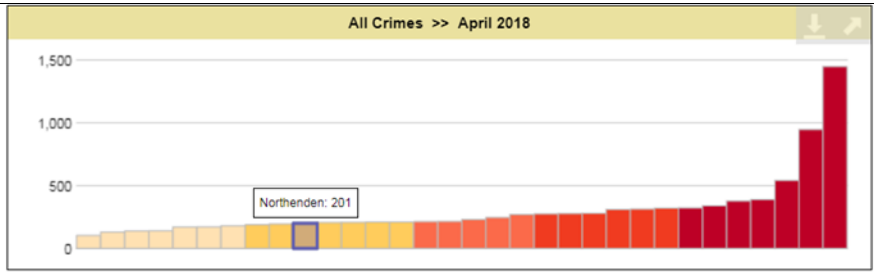
20. Barriers to entry	**Response**
What obstacles are there which make it difficult for interested retailers to enter the local market? What is the location doing to make it easier for new businesses to enter the centre (if anything)? Relates to: Restructuring	- The Northenden Hive has recently closed, removing a good opportunity for start-ups and small companies to set up their businesses here. - The centre is primarily located down Palatine Road, and since there are not many vacant units, this could make it difficult for new entrants. Score out of 5: 2/5

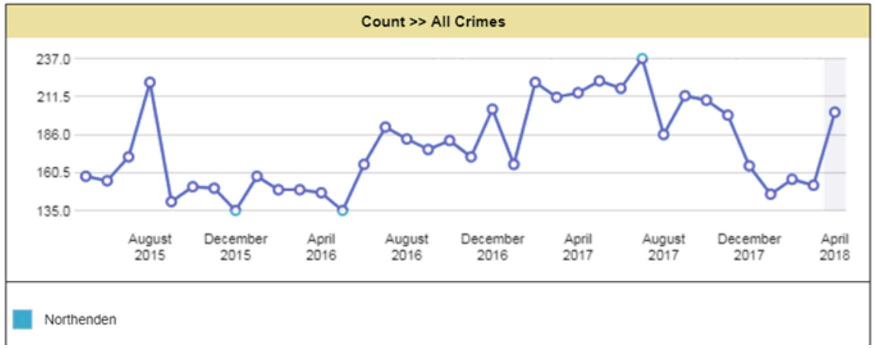
21. Chain vs Independent	**Response**
What chains are on offer in the centre? What independent stores are there in the centre? Is this suitably balanced, and does this provision meet the needs of the local community? Relates to: Reinventing	- There seems to be quite a balanced mix of chains (e.g. Costa, Tesco, Co-op, Poundland) and independents in the centre (e.g. Motor Repairs, Himalayan Tea, Express 2, The Northern Den, and Lounge-About Bar) - Much of the service provision seems to be from independents (e.g. nail bars, hairdressers, and bars/cafes). Score out of 5: 3/5

22. Safety/crime	**Response**
What are the actual reported crime figures and resident/visitor perceptions of safety in the centre? Relates to: Restructuring	Northenden's crime rate compares favourably to other Manchester City Council wards, as shown below:



Of the 32 wards for which Manchester City Council holds crime information, Northenden is amongst the wards with the lowest number of recorded crimes.





In terms of perception, since the centre is clean with no noticeable litter, shattered glass, or other signs of anti-social behavior, perceptions of safety were good during the visit, in keeping with the statistics recorded above.

Score out of 5: 4/5

23. Liveability	**Response**
Does the centre offer the services/environment that meets the needs of the local community (e.g. doctors, schools, playgrounds, etc.)? Relates to: Reinventing Restructuring	- Overall, the centre provides a very liveable environment. Some general observations in this respect included: - There was signage pointing towards Northenden primary school - There is a doctors' surgery - Well Pharmacy is located on Palatine Road - There is ample greenspace surrounding Northenden Score out of 5: 3.5/5

24. Adaptability	**Response**
How flexible is the space/units in a centre for new development opportunities? Are there any inflexible and outdated units that are unlikely to be re-let or re-purposed? Relates to: Restructuring	- There was noticeably a vacant glass-front unit to let (the 'High Rise') which used to house Northenden Hive. The vacant ground floor unit could offer new opportunities within the centre - The former library building is now being re-developed as the home of Northenden Players theatre group- a good use of the space. - From the retail type audit, it was noticeable that a number of businesses had expanded into adjacent units, indicating a level of flexibility Score out of 5: 3/5

25. Store development	**Response**
Are retailers and property owners in the centre willing to coordinate/cooperate in updating activities? Or do they act independently (or not at all)? Relates to: Reinventing	- The juxtaposition of older, more outdated units with newer, more modern ones causes a lack of consistent image in Northenden. - Given the active and enthusiastic body of stakeholders in the centre, there is the opportunity to improve co-operation and strengthen links between what, at present, are somewhat disparate groups. (Source: Meeting with Neighbourhood Team). Score out of 5: 2/5

Photographs taken during audit

Wide, clean, and flat pavements enabling pedestrian accessibility

Parked cars obstructing walkability in certain places

One of the well-ranked restaurants in Northenden

Clear signage on Palatine Road

Former library – soon to be new home of Northenden Players

' High Rise' building - large ground floor unit to let on Palatine Road

Appendix 2: Retail use survey

Date	NORTHENDEN DISTRICT CENTRE					
Name of Business 2018	**Address**	**Change**	**Retail Type 2015**	**Use Class 2015**	**Retail Type 2018**	**Use Class 2018**
The Co-op		☑	Convenience Supermarket	A1	Convenience Supermarket	A1
Massimo Barbers Shop	285 Palatine Rd		Barbers	A1	Barbers	A1
Trophy Market	287 Palatine Rd		Trophys	A1	Trophys	A1
Polski Sklop	295 Palatine Rd		General Store	A1	General Store	A1
Alexanders of Northenden	307 Palatine Rd	☑	Barbers	A1	Barbers	A1
Vacant	325/7 Palatine Rd	☑	Newsagents	A1	Vacant	V
Samari Hair Design	1a Bret Street	☑	Hairdressers	A1	Hairdressers	A1
Rainbow Fashion	363a Palatine Rd		Fashion	A1	Fashion	A1
Fusion Hair Beauty	373 Palatine Rd	☑	Hairdressers	A1	Hairdressers	A1
Vision Service Opticians	379 Palatine Rd		Opticians	A1	Opticians	A1
Razors	385 Palatine Rd		Barbers	A1	Barbers	A1
Smart electronics	389 Palatine Rd	☑	Fashion	A1	Electronics	A1
Envy Hair & Beauty	16 Church Rd	☑	Sandwich Bar	A1	Hairdressers	A1

Rings n Things	14 Church Rd		Jewellers	A1	Jewellers	A1
Arthur Gresty	8/10 Church Rd		Undertakers	A1	Undertakers	A1
Polish Delicatessans	Hatro House, 399/401 Palatine Rd		Supermarket	A1	Supermarket	A1
Northern Gents	415 Palatine Road	☑	Barbers	A1	Barbers	A1
Mill Carpets	444/6 Palatine Rd		Carpet Shop	A1	Carpet Shop	A1
Charity Shop	432/4 Palatine Rd		Charity	A1	Charity	A1
One Stop Parties	420/2 Palatine Rd		Party Accessories	A1	Party Accessories	A1
Roche Spares Car & Cycle Centre	414/16 Palatine Rd		Car & Cycle Parts	A1	Car & Cycle Parts	A1
Tesco Metro	404/6 Palatine Rd		Supermarket	A1	Supermarket	A1
Taylors News	396 Palatine Rd		Newsagents	A1	Newsagents	A1
Kennedy Funeral Director	390 Palatine Rd		Undertakers	A1	Undertakers	A1
Mi & Pho	384 Palatine Rd	☑	Sandwich Bar	A1	Restaurant	A3
Post Office	382 Palatine Rd		Post Office	A1	Post Office	A1
Vacant	378/80 Palatine Rd	☑	Florist	A1	Vacant	V
Barnados	374 Palatine Rd		Charity	A1	Charity	A1
St Anns Hospice	364 Palatine Rd		Charity	A1	Charity	A1

Pound Express	358/62 Palatine Rd		Discount	A1	Discount	A1
Childrens Society	356 Palatine Rd		Charity	A1	Charity	A1
Well Pharmacy	352/4 Palatine Rd		Chemist	A1	Chemist	A1
Sayers Bakers	350 Palatine Rd	☑	Bakers	A1	Bakers	A1
Northern Fruits	348 Palatine Rd		Greengrocers	A1	Greengrocers	A1
Greys Hair	346 Palatine Rd		Hairdressers	A1	Hairdressers	A1
Heron Foods	340 Palatine Rd		Frozen Food Store	A1	Frozen Food Store	A1
Bargain Booze	338 Palatine Rd		Off Licence	A1	Off Licence	A1
NISA	330 Palatine Rd		General Store	A1	General Store	A1
Dry Cleaners	328 Palatine Rd		Dry Cleaners	A1	Dry Cleaners	A1
Quidds In	324/6 Palatine Rd		Discount	A1	Discount	A1
Tax Assist Accountants	281 Palatine Rd		Accountants	A2	Accountants	A2
The Vape Store	283 Palatine Rd	☑	Care at Home Office	A2	E-cigs	Sui Generis
Express Solicitors	311-319 Palatine Rd		Solicitors	A2	Solicitors	A2
Kirn EA	321 Palatine Rd		Estate Agents	A2	Estate Agents	A2

Otta Penna	339 Palatine Rd		Solicitors	A2	Solicitors	A2
Geoffrey Holland Accountants	341 Palatine Rd		Accountants	A2	Accountants	A2
Vacant	2 Church Rd	☑	Bank	A2	Vacant	V
Homewell Improvements	2a Church Rd	☑	Estate Agents	A2	Windows/doors	A1
Franco Fire Alarms	4 Chapel Rd		Fire Alarms	A2	Fire Alarms	A2
Utility Business	2 Chapel Rd/407 Palatine Road		Energy Consultants	A2	Energy Consultants	A2
My Care Direct	394 Palatine Rd		Care Provider	A2	Care Provider	A2
Mitchels Solicitors	392 Palatine Rd		Solicitors	A2	Solicitors	A2
Premiserv	386/8 Palatine Rd		Cleaning Service	A2	Cleaning Service	A2
Hunters	372 Palatine Rd	☑	Estate Agents	A2	Estate Agents	A2
Costa Coffee	332/4 Palatine Rd	☑	Bank	A2	Coffee shop	A3
Taj Mahal	289 Palatine Rd	☑	Restaurant	A3	Restaurant	A3
Chennai Dosa	303-305 Palatine Rd	☑	Restaurant	A3	Restaurant	A3
The Good Catch	333/5 Palatine Rd		Restaurant	A3	Restaurant	A3
Alexandros	337 Palatine Rd		Restaurant	A3	Restaurant	A3

Tai Kathmandu	345/7 Palatine Rd		Restaurant	A3	Restaurant	A3
Himalayas tea	349 Palatine Rd	☑	Juice Bar	A3	Tea shop	A3
Northenden Bar & Grill	351-9 Palatine	☑	Restaurant	A3	Restaurant	A3
The Northern Den	376 Palatine Rd	☑	Café	A3	Café	A3
Northenden Grooming Parlour	273 Palatine Rd	☑	Bar	A4	Dog grooming	Sui Generis
The Grapes Lounge Bar	297 Palatine Rd	☑	Wine Bar	A4	Wine Bar	A4
Escape	377 Palatine Rd		Bar	A4	Bar	A4
Bar Bibo	387 Palatine Rd		Bar	A4	Bar	A4
Lounge About	424/6 Palatine Rd		Bar	A4	Bar	A4
Tai Loy	275 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Sagor Balti	277 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Oriental Express	291 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Simply Delicious	309 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Drum Stick	331 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5

Dixy Chicken	343 Palatine Rd	☑	Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Chesters Chicken	363 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Issano	367 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Apetizer	381 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Robins hood	383 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Carribean Flavas	Hatro House, 403 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Chus	436 Palatine Rd		Takeaway	A5	Takeaway	A5
Vacant	3 Bret Street	☑	Offices	B1	Vacant	V
Residential	11-27 Church Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3
New Residential Build still under construction	20/22 Church Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3
Residential (above)	417-423 Palatine Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3
Residential	440/2 Palatine Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3
Residential (above)	428/30 Palatine Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3
Residential (above)	418 Palatine Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3
Residential	310-316 Palatine Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3

Petrol Station	304-308 Palatine Rd		Residential	C3	Residential	C3
National Autistic Day Centre	Anglo House, Chapel Road		Health Care	D1	Health Care	D1
Methodist Church	409-413 Palatine Rd		Church	D1	Church	D1
Acorn Vets	366/8 Palatine Rd		Vets	D1	Vets	D1
Northenden Social Club	412 Palatine Rd		Social Club	D2	Social Club	D2
Halfords	271 Palitine Rd		Vehicle Repair Garage	Sui Generis	Vehicle Repair Garage	Sui Generis
Tech Geek electronics	279 Palatine Rd	☑	Beauty	Sui Generis	Electronics	A1
Nail Bar	323 Palatine Rd		Nail Bar	Sui Generis	Nail bar	Sui Generis
Boho tan & beauty	349 Palatine Rd	☑	Tanning Studio	Sui Generis	Tanning Studio	Sui Generis
Adorez	361 Palatine Rd		Beauty	Sui Generis	Beauty	Sui Generis
William Hill	369-371 Palatine Rd		Bookmakers	Sui Generis	Bookmakers	Sui Generis
Tanning & Beauty	4/6 Church Rd		Tanning & Beauty	Sui Generis	Tanning & Beauty	Sui Generis
Passenger Cars	adj to 4 Church Road		Taxi	Sui Generis	Taxi	Sui Generis
Perfect Nails	Hatro House, 397 Palatine Rd		Nail Bar	Sui Generis	Nail Bar	Sui Generis
Northern Car Audio Centre/Royal Tyres	407a Palatine Rd		Vehicle Repair Garage	Sui Generis	Vehicle Repair Garage	Sui Generis
E-Cigarette Zone	438 Palatine Rd		E-Cigs	Sui Generis	E-Cigs	Sui Generis

Bet Fred	344 Palatine Rd		Bookmakers	Sui Generis	Bookmakers	Sui Generis
The Gilbraithe Partnership	293 Palatine Rd	☑	Vacant	V	Consultant engineers	A2
Hotinoor	299-301 Palatine Rd	☑	Vacant	V	Restaurant	A3
Le Nails	329 Palatine Rd	☑	Vacant	V	Nail bar	Sui Generis
Vacant	375 Palatine Rd		Vacant	V	Vacant	V
New Build with vacant Ground Floor Unit	391 Palatine Rd		Vacant	V	Vacant	V
Vacant	24 Church Rd		Vacant	V	Vacant	V
Co-Op Funeral Care	400/2 Palatine Rd	☑	Vacant	V	Funeral directors	A1
Viet Guy	336 Palatine Rd	☑	Vacant	V	Restaurant	A3
Subway	320 Palatine Rd	☑	Vacacnt	V	Sandwich shop	A3
Beauty Den	318 Palatine Rd	☑	Vacant	V	Hairdressers	A1

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