



City Centre – engagement and plans

Includes Broadmead, Park Street and Queen’s Road, Old City and King Street

Area overview

Based on geography and use, Bristol City Centre is split across four main areas: Broadmead, the Old City, King Street and Park Street and Queen’s Road.

The main shopping area of Broadmead is a post-WW2 development at the eastern end of the city centre, with Castle Park to one side and close to the Bristol Royal Infirmary and the Bus Station. It houses various national retailers as well as smaller independents, together with several banks and a cinema. Several large department stores have closed in the area over the last couple of years. Broadmead’s large pedestrianised area hosts seasonal markets and events throughout the year.

Surrounding St Nicholas Market is the Old City, the original heart of medieval Bristol. The area includes smaller independent retailers and hospitality outlets ranging from national chains to small independents, many of the latter within the Glass Arcade of St Nicholas Market. The pedestrianised area outside the Corn Exchange is home to several markets including a Farmer’s Market and seasonal events.

Moving towards the west, King Street runs from the Floating Harbour to the Centre and is next to Queen Square. With some of the oldest pubs in Bristol, as well as the Old Vic, the oldest continually working theatre in the English-speaking world, it is a popular destination in evenings and weekends.

From the other side of the Centre, Park Street rises uphill from College Green with the Cathedral and City Hall to Queen’s Road and the Triangle at the top, where you can find Bristol University and the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Retail outlets here include both leading brands and independent boutiques, and there is an ever-growing number of bars and restaurants from well-known brands to Bristol-born independents.

A City Centre Retail and Leisure Study is in the process of being finalised and this will also inform future medium to long term actions and development. The regeneration of the City Centre will be informed by a Development and Delivery Plan focused on Broadmead, St James Barton Roundabout, Castle Park and the Old City.



Broadmead



Kings Street

Engagement Feedback

A survey was circulated to businesses in the Old City as part of the permanent pedestrianisation of the area during July 2021. This feedback included suggestions for the area around St Nicks Market which included:

- Hanging baskets
- Planters
- A Christmas tree on Corn Street
- Additional promotion of the Old City and St Nicks Market

We also engaged with businesses and members of the public in two phases first in late 2021 to identify issues and priorities and then again in January and February 2022 to gather more in-depth ideas and suggestions relating to these. This was done through a combination of on-line focus groups and on-line surveys with a paper alternative.

People coming to the centre most often do so either on foot or by car and tend to spend at least an hour in the area. There is also a lot of passing trade with people on their way to work or college. While a majority of businesses felt reasonably confident about the next twelve months, expecting footfall and sales to remain the same or to improve, over 70% of the businesses who responded said that footfall had decreased over the last 12 months, attributing some of this to the changes in road access and parking. The increased difficulty in accessing the centre by car was also the most frequently cited reason for not coming to the centre.

The two other big issues with the city centre were the streetscape and the lack of variety in shops and services on offer. There was a strong feeling that the centre, particularly Broadmead, is run down and grimy, with too much concrete, too many empty shops and increasing issues of homelessness and anti-social behaviour. In terms of the retail offer, people cited the closure of major retailers, and many complained that the shops tend to cater to the younger age groups.

When asked what improvements they would like to see, both businesses and community would like to see more greenery, with trees and biodiverse/wildflower planting being the most popular options. There were many comments about the need to break up the concrete landscape to create a more inviting and sustainable environment. Many also called for more businesses that would help animate the area both by day and by night, such as cafes with outdoor seating or community services that would increase the reasons for coming to the area.

There was a lot of interest in a wider range of shops and services, with most respondents wanting to see more independents and a substantial number also calling for more high-end outlets.

In terms of events, the highest interest was in more markets, particularly food markets (outdoor or indoor) offering fresh food. Businesses also called for more artwork and community events. While there were many suggestions about possible locations for art installations, the most popular was the Broadmead pedestrian area. There were also suggestions that movable installations could be used to link up the different areas of the City Centre.

People commented that the City Centre is eclectic, architecturally and geographically dramatic, with plenty of character, vibrancy and quirkiness. People find the City Centre safe but there is opportunity for it to be more inclusive as there is so much potential.

City Centre plans

Issues and Opportunities	Proposed Action
Need to support businesses and organisations	Business Development Officers to visit businesses and provide support, information, and signposting
	Support businesses to adapt to change, and work with Council departments and other stakeholders to provide a joined up and co-ordinated approach to the City Centre (CAZ, Waste project, pedestrianisation and long-term regeneration)
	Promote the area and its offer using a variety of channels, including www.wheresittobristol.com and @shoplocalbris social channels including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
Attracting new and desirable shops and services to the vacant property units.	Establish Vacant Property Task Force to develop solutions to barriers in bringing vacant properties back into active use. Monitor property vacancies to identify opportunities and promote the vacant property grant scheme to potential occupiers
	Negotiate with owners of vacant premises around potential meanwhile and pop-up uses
People find the city centre too grey and concrete and want to see more greenery, especially trees	Identify appropriate greenery and specific locations for placement and initial designs produced
	Work with local residents and organisations to develop a group for maintenance of greenery/plants
	Install new greenery/plants
Wish for a more vibrant night and day-time economy	Investigate options for continuing and developing outdoor hospitality seating
	Bristol awarded Purple Flag for 12 th year in succession in 2022
Desire for more community events/projects to bring people together and increase footfall	Develop an inclusive seasonal programme of events (events that have already been delivered or commissioned include In Memoriam, Light Festival, Night Markets at St Nicks, Better Sundays Market at Broadmead, College Green Jubilee Event, Little Amal, Summer Headline event in Broadmead)
	Investigate opportunities for art installations, fixed or circulating
Wish to see current market offer expanded	Develop opportunities for additional markets (Night Markets at St Nicks, Better Sundays Market at Broadmead commissioned)
Issues with perception and occurrence of anti-social behaviour and crime (including graffiti)	Work with relevant Council services and other stakeholders to address anti-social behaviour and crime

Need to improve public realm	Complete pedestrianisation of King St and Old City. Work with other Council departments and external stakeholders to develop plans for each of the priority areas
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