



## Report to Economic and Environmental Well-being Scrutiny Committee 17 January 2013

**Report of:** Simon Green, Executive Director of Place

**Subject:** City Centre Vibrancy

**Author of Report:** Brendan Moffett, Director of Marketing Sheffield

**Summary:**

Sheffield has a clear ambition, to maintain and grow a vibrant city centre, a key element of the Council’s Competitive City strategic outcome.

When we talk about vibrancy we recognise this includes culture and leisure including events and night-time offer, retail, hospitality, public realm and city centre management, and accessibility into and throughout the city centre.

We have a very real opportunity to address these significant challenges but cannot be wholly reliant on specific interventions, either large scale development projects or major events. We also need to look at the incremental changes we can make or influence with others to make Sheffield City Centre a more vibrant place.

A presentation on the levels of vibrancy in the city centre and our plans for the future will be shared at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	✓
Other	

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

**Background Papers:** None

**Category of Report:** OPEN

# Report of the Executive Director of Place

## City Centre Vibrancy Report

### 1. Introduction/Context

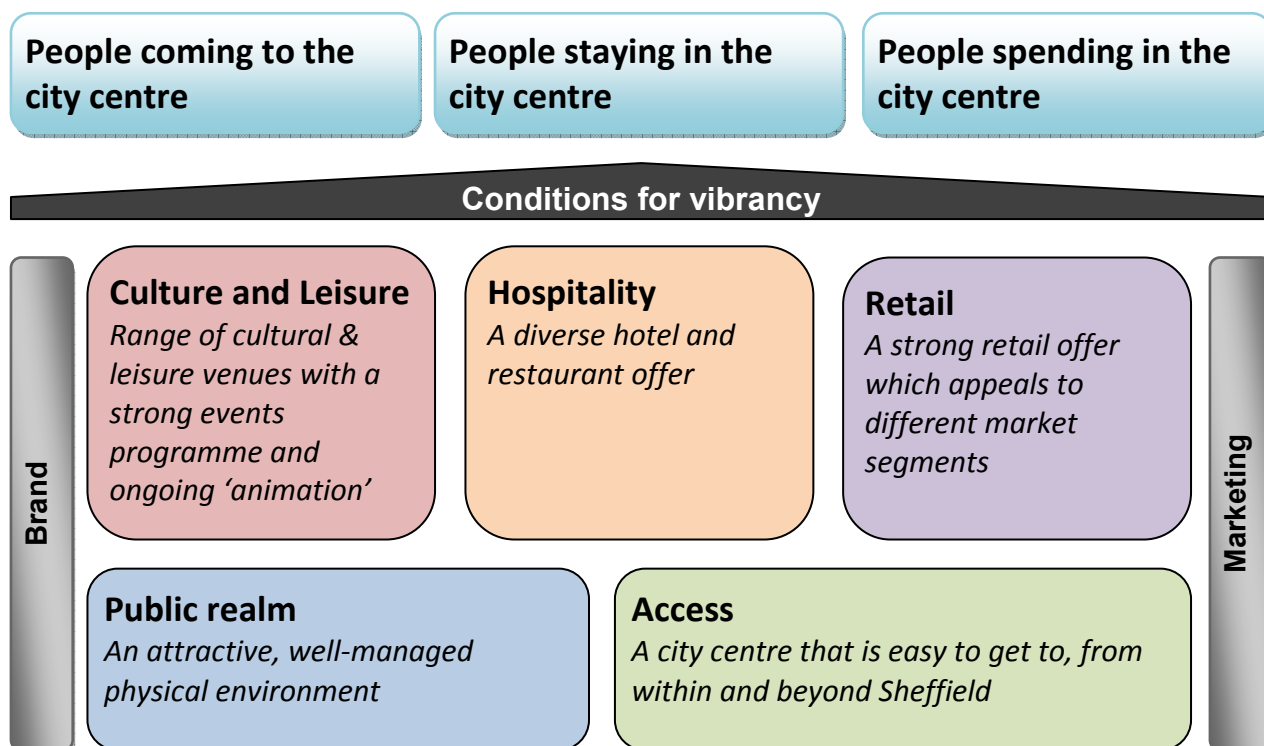
- 1.1 Sheffield has a **clear ambition**, to maintain and grow a **vibrant city centre**, a key element of the **Competitive City** strategic outcome.
- 1.2 The last few years have been about withstanding recession and making progress in tough economic conditions. Many of the realities remain challenging – a struggling global economy as well as less public and private money available. Yet **major opportunities exist** and the city must position itself to take full advantage of them.
- 1.3 A vibrant City Centre is integral to achieving our ambitions to be a Competitive City. Our vision for Competitive City is:  
***‘Sheffield will be a sustainable city which stimulates and incentivises business opportunity in order to attract investment and growth, creating a competitive advantage that will provide more and better jobs, enhancing the quality of life and reputation to attract people to live, work and visit; a city of independence, authenticity and distinction.’***
- 1.4 There are existing delivery plans that set out our aspirations and planned activity in detail. It is essential that these approaches and strategies work in a joined-up way to ensure maximum impact from our investment and efforts.

**Figure 1 – Strategic Framework – Competitive City and City Centre Vibrancy**



2. **Main body of report, matters for consideration, etc**
- 2.1 Over the last 15 years Sheffield's City Centre has experienced a dramatic transformation. However, the over-whelming impact of the recession has been to reduce the confidence and capacity for investment and regeneration, stalling a number of planned public realm developments. Whilst some are now progressing this has inevitably had an impact on the vibrancy in Sheffield City Centre.
- 2.2 As well as long-term mainstream projects we must be open to short term or experimental initiatives. Some may have only a short term impact, but others may turn out to be valuable seedbeds for the next generation of new ideas and talent.
- 2.3 The city centre population has increased significantly more than doubling in the last four years, and by 225% since 2004, changing the demand for city centre housing. As well as residents, city-centre based workers are also a key requirement to create a critical mass of people using the centre daily that will attract further investment, like bars and restaurants.
- 2.4 The City Centre remains a key driver of the City Region economy and we need to re-focus our vision for the future. Major development and public realm projects will continue to contribute to vibrancy, but we also need a more holistic approach and to take action to **make the City Centre a place with a well-rounded offer which people choose to come and enjoy using**. This includes visitors, businesses and local residents.
- 2.5 Vibrancy is about people using and enjoying the City Centre. This means:
- People are coming to the city centre,
  - People are staying in the city centre, and
  - People are spending money in the city centre.
- 2.6 A vibrant City Centre provides the services and facilities that businesses, customers, residents and visitors demand. It creates jobs, attracts investment, generates income and is a key contributor towards economic growth. Sheffield needs to be competitive with neighbouring towns and, importantly, other core cities.
- 2.7 We think this relies on:
- **Culture and leisure** – the scale and breadth of opportunities and things to do including events and animation and a quality evening / night-time offer.
  - **Hospitality** – quality hotels and great restaurants.
  - **Retail** – with a wide range of shopping opportunities from the big brands to small independent shops catering for niche markets.
  - **Public realm** – including venues that people travel to visit, a modern and well-connected urban landscape and a well maintained and safe place.
  - **Access** – people being able to get into and out of the city centre, including parking.

Figure 2 - Proposed framework for defining vibrancy:



- 2.8 As such, there is no single answer to increase vibrancy. Instead there are **a number of conditions that need to be right** for visitors, businesses & residents to use the city centre.
- 2.9 We need to be very clear about the actions we prioritise, given the current funding challenges, to ensure these are the ones that will have the **right impact** on multiple conditions and that some will need to be developed in the long-term, but the short-term actions we are taking are building a **solid foundation** for our overall aims and ambitions.
3. **Recommendation**
- 3.1 We are seeking views and comments from the Committee, to provide constructive challenge to our thinking to date. In the subsequent presentation we will discuss actions in more detail and seek guidance.