



Stepney Community Partnership High Street Accelerator Place Vision August 2024

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1. Background

Stepney High Street Accelerator was identified in 2023 through government funding of a pilot programme of 10 schemes, and a community partnership – the Stepney Partnership was established to develop and deliver a shared vision for change in the area, with the support of the Council and funding programme.

Place Visioning is an offer to local areas which forms part of this High Street Accelerator’s programme of work. Developed in partnership with the Design Council, the offer is designed to support high street accelerator partnerships in catalysing a transformative vision for their high streets and enable them to build consensus around the direction of travel for the communities associated with it.

The Place Visioning is delivered as a 1:1 offer, with each location being connected with a High Streets Task Force Expert to discuss their high street’s challenges and opportunities and explore possible interventions that can support the positive transformation of the area to form the foundational work of a Place Vision, alongside the stakeholders who need to be brought along on the journey.

1.1 How to read this report

This report summarises insights developed by the Stepney Partnership during observations and recommendations from the 1:1 support with the Expert, Andrew Haley. The vision and report is intended to be used as a guide for the area’s transformation, and basis for a more detailed **Delivery Plan**, which will set out a range of specific and tangible measures which can be delivered to realise the vision. It can also be a prompt for further discussions within the council or as a mechanism for ongoing engagement with communities in additional rounds of co-creation and consultation.

1.2 Summary of insights from the programme

Whilst the Hull City Council team have facilitated project discussions and been the primary point of day-to-day contact with the Task Force the Stepney Partnership have been central, well-informed and responsible for decision-making around the Visioning process and outputs and have adopted this document. The Partnership is in its early stages of existence, has a broad and diverse membership and importantly is continuing to grow to strengthen its representation of the community. The Council on behalf of the Partnership conducted a citizen survey to further aid understanding of the perspectives. This Report is informed by that breadth of insight and input. A list of Key Stakeholders (not including the survey respondents) is included at Appendix A.

1.3 The Process

Stepney has benefited from a process, supported by the High Street Task Force, which has seen the Expert Advisor, Andrew Haley retained through three stages. This has enabled knowledge to be gathered and relationships developed that have undoubtedly led to better outcomes. An initial Unlocking Your Place Potential exercise, including a site visit and meeting with the Partnership took place on 29 April 2024. Andrew was then asked to undertake the Design Council appointed Place Visioning, that is the subject of this report. The High Street Task Force has confirmed that the support will continue until the end of September 2024, to enable Andrew to work with the Council and Stakeholders to develop their Delivery Plan.

2. The Context

2.1 Stepney High Street Accelerator Area

The High Street Accelerator (HSA) project for Stepney focuses on Beverley Road, which is one of the main arterial routes linking Hull City Centre with the neighbourhoods to the north.

The name 'Stepney', is linked to the School and Public Baths, but isn't traditionally applied to the area as a whole. However, it is a name that the communities to either side of Beverley Road recognise.



The HSA project relates to approximately 0.7Km of Beverley Road, extending from the junction with the Fountain Road at the south, to the Melwood Grove to the north (though Beverley Road itself extends beyond that).



The wider Beverley Road is disparate in its character and function. Whilst the detail is more nuanced, there are three principal zones:

North – from Clough Road/Cottingham Road to Pearson Avenue – residential uses predominate with sections of commercial frontage, broadly performing well, with street trees and front gardens contributing to the ‘green’ appearance and being broadly of good visual quality.

Central – Melwood Grove to Fountain Road– commercial and civic/community uses predominate, with high levels of vacancy, few street trees/gardens, and being broadly of low visual quality, despite having some buildings of distinction.

South – Wellington House to A165 – mixed-use frontage, including residential, commercial and institutional, with occasional vacancy/dereliction. The visual appearance is of moderate quality, with this section of the street functioning as the threshold to the City Centre.

Through discussion it was agreed that the HSA project should focus on the Central Zone, as the area of greatest need, whilst ensuring that its context to the north and south is kept under consideration. The Central Area therefore forms the High Street Accelerator project area (see Appendix B for formal Site Boundary), though the vision may facilitate change in a broader sense also.

2.2 Beverley Road High Street Accelerator Partnership

Hull City Council have been responsible for facilitating the HSTF programme, through its Culture and Place section. This has been energetic and impressive, facilitating the establishment of the Stepney Partnership Group, supporting it and organising activities including the Citizen Survey and Action Week, ensuring that the Partnership has strong ownership of issues and decisions, encouraging capacity growth and increasing representation.

The Stepney Partnership is Chaired by a local person, John Scotney (inset), who is a well-respected community representative. The Group is inclusive, involving people from local businesses, interest groups, the schools, police and from various departments within the Council.



3. Analysis of the Beverley Road area

3.1 Transforming Your High Street Report

The Transforming Your High Street (TYHS) Report, along with notes from the Inception Call on 28 February 2024, provided a robust desk-based analysis of the social, economic and physical environment of Beverley Road. It highlighted that over 180,000 people live within a 3-mile radius of the street.

Analysis of Deprivation Indices, noted that the area is in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK, relative to Income, Employment, Education, Health, Disability, Crime and Environment.

Footfall was noted to have declined by 22% between 2019 and 2023 and vacancy rates, which were perceived to be high were suggested to be around 9.6%, relative to a national average of 14%.

It was noted in the TYHS Report that perceptions, gauged through media content was relatively good – with 54% positive coverage, 10% neutral and 36% negative. The Citizen Survey outlined in the following section would indicate that a much more negative perception prevails.

Similarly, the figures being reported for crime, were lower than the national average, again something which is not reflected in the survey.

3.2 Site Appraisal

As Expert Advisor, Andrew Haley undertook a Site Appraisal on 29 April 2024, walking the area with project members, to facilitate a qualitative understanding of the issues, highlighted in the TYHS Report and Inception Call

3.3 Citizen Survey

Following the establishment of the Partnership and in the context of the Unlocking Your Place Potential stage of the project, it was agreed to undertake a survey, with the objective of broadening the understanding of people's opinions of the area. To enable this to feed into the Visioning Plan, the Council were tenacious in the efforts, given the restrictions associated with the General Election that had been called. This is to be strongly commended, providing great value.

The survey was launched online on 20th May 2024 and concluded on 16th June 2024. During this time, four pop-up engagement sessions were held in Beverley Road Baths, which enabled residents to speak with officers and seek assistance with their surveys.

90 surveys were completed. This was below the Council's corporate standards, on the grounds that a future survey could have a different outcome, however, there were recurring and consistent themes arising from the survey, previous pop-up sessions and views sought from the Partnership. This gave confidence that the survey results were, whilst small in number, valuable in their content.

When asked what would have the greatest impact in the area, the top five responses included:

- A clean, tidy area, free of litter, graffiti and fly-tipping (69%)
- Low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (49%)
- Low levels of street drinking (41%)
- The appearance and condition of buildings (34%)
- Attracting a wider range of shops and services (33%)

The top five green space improvements included:

- Trees (48%)
- Green roof, bee and butterfly highways (40%)
- Sculcoates Park grounds improvements (39%)
- High Street planters (38%)
- Sculcoates Park safety improvements (37%)

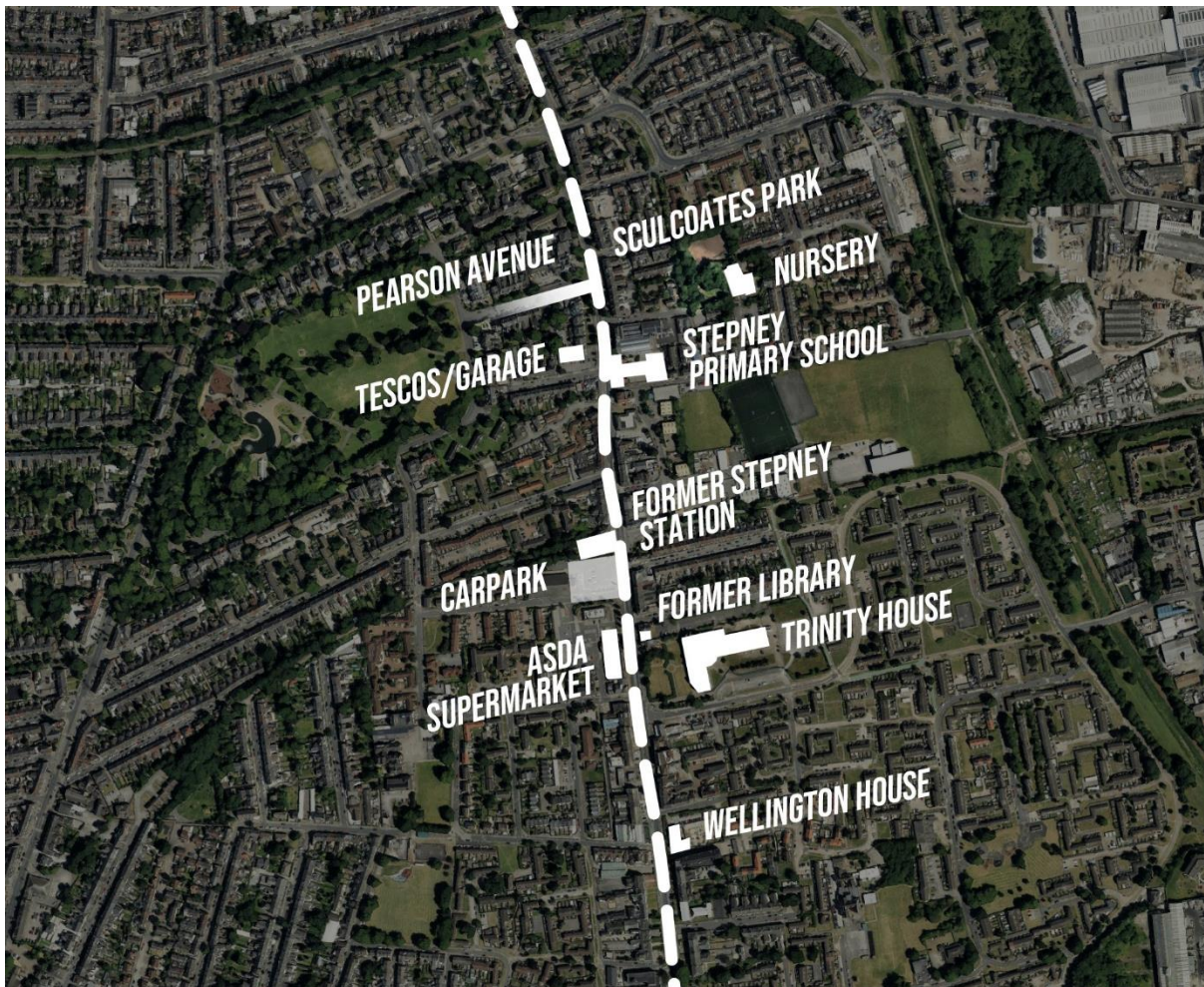
In addition to the measurable results, the survey enabled further comments to be recorded. Whilst this information was more difficult to quantify, the common themes were echoed, with extensive references to:

- Cleanliness, litter, fly-tipping and graffiti (53)
- Anti-social-behaviour and street drinking (59)
- Fractured communities and lack of social spaces (20)
- Lack of personal safety (17)
- Cycling links, safety, lighting, cycling on pavements (12)

4. Overarching Themes

Informed by the Analysis/discussions, it is clear that there are profound concerns relating to the Central Zone of Beverley Road, with the strong impression that the concerning situation has been deteriorating significantly over the last three years. It is in that context that the HSA should be seen as an opportunity to catalyse actions that turn the fortunes of the area around, developing a high street, that is, as the survey highlighted, a safe, attractive, welcoming, and green community.

It is important that interventions collectively and strategically target the root issues and not simply be 'sticking plasters'. This will require concerted and collaborative effort, targeting resources, with the community at the core, supported by the Council and other agencies, through the governance of the Partnership.



4.1 Anti-Social Behaviour

Instances of anti-social behaviour/criminality in the area are real and press coverage brings that to people's attention, both locally and beyond. This is not helpful to business confidence, nor to footfall. There are visual cues in respect of these challenges which contribute to negative appearances, particularly in the central area.

For the area as a whole to improve sustainably, there is a need to fundamentally address this core issue, with concerns over Sculcoates Park being key, as well as instances of cycling on pavements and intimidatory behaviour.

4.2 Health

Indicators highlight significant issues in relation to health within the community. Causes will be multi-faceted, however in developing a vision for Stepney, measures should be identified that will make a positive difference. This may include improvements to the street and open space environment that encourages increased active travel and greater use of the open spaces. Programmes that link with the Public Baths and sports pitches could be encouraged. Increased green infrastructure can help with air pollution and opportunities for people to engage with the landscape has proven physical and mental health benefits.

4.3 Education

Again, indicators suggest that the area has significant challenges, which the HAS should not ignore. The prominence of Stepney Primary School and Trinity House, on the street frontage, as well as the Nursey adjacent to Sculcoates Park should be capitalised upon, with regards their role. Improved walking/cycling connections may helpfully be promoted, including walking/cycling trains, with associated health and learning benefits.

Opportunities to develop Sculcoates Park as an environmental learning resource may be beneficial. Likewise, there may be adult green skills that could be developed through the programme.

4.4 Footfall

Footfall is an 'outworking' of other issues. In this respect declining footfall in recent years is a symptom of other issues, including anti-social behaviour, low business confidence and low visual quality. Increasing footfall, dwell time, vibrancy and economic benefit to the businesses is critical. It will also be important to install footfall counters, to provide robust data. In referring to footfall, it is important to consider access for all, recognising that the existing environment is challenging for people who have sight or mobility disabilities.

4.5 Dwell-Time

There are few reasons for people to stay longer on the street than is necessary. There are no 'spaces' to host events and footways are of limited width. Opportunities should be explored to make

more of the space at the former Station, to look at temporary events in the Harris & Co car park and importantly to 'take back the park', making Sculcoates Park a safe place to enjoy and to host events.

4.6 Cultural Richness

The richness of the cultural diversity with over 30 languages spoken in the School is a real asset for the area and yet that does not shine through in the character of the place. Opportunities to celebrate that could become part of Stepney's distinctive character.

4.7 Greening the Street

Portions of Beverley Road have the benefit of large mature trees as part of the overall environment. The busy-ness of the street makes these particularly valuable. In parts vegetation is sparse and is greatly missed, visually and in terms of mitigating noise and air pollution as well as rainwater management.

4.8 Visual Quality

Many of the visual challenges in the central zone relate to vacant and derelict premises, as well as poor quality frontages, litter and uncared for spaces. Addressing this is fundamentally important but needs to be in the context of being an attractive place for businesses to thrive.

4.9 Arterial Route – An Approach to the City and a Distinct Place itself

In considering this role, the approach from Clough Road/Cottingham Road is important to the city and to Stepney. With such high volumes of people passing through, it needs to look good and feel like somewhere that is good to spend time. The converse will (probably is) adversely impacting the City and Stepney.

The sense of approach to the City Centre would benefit from a 'welcome' at the Clough Road/Cottingham Road junction. The central zone requires significant attention, and the southern part could create a much stronger threshold to the City Centre.

5. A Place Vision for Stepney

5.1 Good News

Communication is key. Telling the positive stories, including the amazing work that was done in Action Week, clearing 47 tonnes of rubbish and giving credit to those who were involved is of real importance. Likewise the regular litter picking undertaken by Youth Justice should be commended.

It will be important for this to be communicated as the precursor to sustained investment of time and money to deliver comprehensive regeneration.

Enabling the community to share stories and form support networks effectively will become increasingly important, such that programmes of events can be promoted, businesses can become mutually supportive and organise co-ordinated activity, and for people to feel better connected and increasingly proud of their area.

There is an opportunity to build capacity within the community to effectively communicate agreed messages to people within the area as well as promoting Stepney to the wider city and region.

5.2 Cultural Richness that Confidently Defines Stepney's Distinctiveness

5.2.1 A World of Plants – 'Putting Down Roots'

For centuries there has been a tradition of collecting plants from all parts of the world. With over 30 languages spoken in the local school, that represents connections with wonderfully diverse places across the globe. Working with a horticultural advisor, it would be amazing to get seeds of plants from those places, grow them and introduce them to the street. Could this be programmed with informal training? Could this expand to become formal, with transferable skills in for example horticulture or garden maintenance?

In the short-term, could window boxes, hanging baskets and planters be made (for example by local social enterprises), so that plants could be used to bring green to the Central Zone? Partnership with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust may be helpful in broadening this to have a wider focus on improving Stepney's urban wildlife (e.g. green roofs on bus shelters, bird and bat boxes,). Strategic positioning of planters can be used as a deterrent to cyclists using the pavements.

Could the World of Plants be used in the transformation of Sculcoates Park?



5.2.2 A World of Food

The more than 36 languages also represent an amazing breadth of food types. Some are represented in the premises on the street.

Could there be a regular 'world food fair' on the street? This would bring cultures together, create reasons for people to visit the area, stay longer and become more aware of existing commercial premises (shops/cafes) and set the context for new investment.

Could the fair be accompanied by workshops and demonstrations, sharing skills in preparing/cooking food, and aligned with cultural events and activity? Could some of the plants being grown be used in the food?

In the short-term, could the Harris & Co car park be used for the fair? Or, whilst a smaller area, what about the frontage to Asda? Longer term, could Sculcoates Park become the venue? How can musical diversity be celebrated as part of events, and could a night market be explored to activate and reclaim spaces when they are usually most intimidating?



5.3 Take Back the Park

Whilst this initiative focuses on Sculcoates Park, it encompasses the adjacent connections, including, providing safe crossing points for the School to the sports pitch.



Images: Sculcoates Park.

5.3.1 Short-term

Over the coming year, deliver the changes which the £0.5m greenspaces funding can facilitate, and plan an event in the park, that extends into the evening. Encourage wide-spread participation, working with agencies including the police to make it a success. Use it as an opportunity to work out what needs to be done to the Park to make it a good place for the future.

The significance of this challenge is not underestimated neither is the importance. Significant preparatory, 'behind the scenes' work is required to provide context whereby this can be successful.

5.3.2 Longer-Term

Develop proposals for the park that embed the learnings from the short-term event. Plan ways of getting 'eyes on the park', round its edges and with 'parkies'. Incorporation of world plants into the design could be a helpful cornerstone of the vision.



5.4 Community Heart

This is as much about a sense of ownership and pride in the area, as it is about a space for people to come together. Putting systems and processes in place to improve the basics in terms of ASB, accessibility and visual quality (identified as priorities in the themes section and community engagement) will be key.

In terms of a space for the community to come together, there are a number of existing places that are of importance to the communities of the area, which form a strong base for growth, and can be given greater prominence and functionality.

The former station and the associated space and greenway connection is a key asset, already used by some community groups. The primary school performs a vital function at the heart of the community, but has ambitions to do more community outreach work, and is on a very constrained footprint. Sculcoates Park is overlooked by a community building, but this is significantly underused. The local Mosque is also a key community asset. There are other community groups and organisations in and around the area as well, who should be supported and encouraged to grow.



Image: Stepney Station



Image: Beverley Road Baths



Image Dartington Community Hub

5.5 Vibrant Street Frontage

To be sustainable, the improvements need to be underpinned by viable businesses, which in turn need improved footfall and dwell time. The above measures will contribute to that.

It would be helpful to map all commercial and community properties and their owners/occupants, establishing a directory, facilitating communication/involvement. Can the area develop a public facing asset showcasing the diversity of cuisines available? Can an online community be built around all of this, with blogs etc?

A 'How Can We Help You?' survey would be good to understand what would make a difference and what can actually be done.

Investment in the area is compromised by incidences of subsidence/structural failure. Can the Council provide grants or other financial incentives to address this?

The Council is preparing a Design Guide for frontages. Opportunities to support implementation with grants should be considered.

Improvements to the streetscape, with pavement finishes (including consideration of doorways with high steps), street trees (including opportunities to 're-plant' missing trees), seating, public art and lighting could make a significant difference. A zero-tolerance approach should be taken to address graffiti and consideration given to opportunities for murals where there are vulnerable surfaces.



Image: Stockport high street.

6. Next steps & Further support

We commend the Hull City Council team for their outstanding work to date, and encourage them to continue to explore the themes discussed throughout this programme. As outlined earlier, there is the opportunity to develop the themes outlined in this Vision to become a pragmatic Delivery Plan that will focus resources in the pursuit of the transformation of Stepney, to become a safe, attractive, welcoming and green community that serves the local neighbourhoods and wider city.

In the context of the HSTF funding to support the development of a Delivery Plan, the following next steps are suggested:

- Share this Report with the Partnership, in advance of a planned meeting of the Group with Andrew Haley w/c 22 July 2024
- Continue stakeholder engagement including discussions with Designing Out Crime and encourage increased/diversified Partnership participation, including identified under-representation such as LGBTQ+ community
- Workshop with Partnership Group and Andrew w/c 22 July 2024 to review the Report, refine it and agree the components of the Delivery Plan.
- Brief key Councillors and Officers, to develop support that will underpin a sustainable approach to the regeneration of the area.
- Plan and deliver a 'World of Food' event for October 2024, with existing businesses bringing the 'inside out', and encouraging others as 'pop-ups'
- Mentor the community in production of promotional media, to support events and as part of the community 'telling its story', with care and with confidence.
- Build on the October event, to prepare for and deliver an event in December, to continue the celebration of cultural diversity through foods and plants.
- Develop Delivery Plan to be complete by the end of September 2024, that maps out the ongoing, short-term and long-term initiatives that together will deliver sustainable transformational regeneration of Stepney. This will include scoping of the £500K Green Fund (DLUHC) project.

Teams may also wish to explore the over 300 resources collected in the Task Force's resource library. For information on all support available via the High Streets Task Force, visit <https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/how-we-help-high-streets/>

Appendix A - Stakeholder Participants

John Scotney – (Partnership Chair)

Sakil Kamruzzaman (Freeholder/Business owner)

Jummer Hossain (Business Owner)

Hilary Byers (Community stakeholder and National Picture Theatre representative)

Richard Clarke (Community Representative and Civic Society)

Simon Green (Community Representative and Civic Society)

Zeki Tasdemir (Community stakeholder and Summit Education Society representative)

Steve Walsh (Community stakeholder and CycHull representative)

Martyn Edwards (Community stakeholder and CycHull representative)

Imam Mizan Choudhury (Community Stakeholder - Hull Jame Masjid)

Jamal Choudhury (Community stakeholder– The Peel Project)

Michele Davy (Community Representative, The Ground Collective)

Jo Atkinson (Stepney Primary School)

PC Raph Batty (HumberSide Police)

Graham Paddock (Neighbourhood Nuisance Team Leader – Hull City Council)

Liz Dillon (Policy and Partnerships Manager – Hull City Council)

Bea Carmichael (Antisocial Behaviour Officer – Hull City Council)

Zoe Jones (Neighbourhood Co-ordinator – Wyke)

Jenna Robinson (Neighbourhood Co-ordinator – Central, Hull City Council)

Jane Winter (Open Space Community Engagement Officer, Hull City Council)

Helen Thackeray (Corporate Events Manager, Hull City Council)

Councillor Rhiannon Beeson (Avenues Ward – Hull City Council)

Councillor Karen Wood (Avenues Ward – Hull City Council)

Ben Murphy (Senior Capital Programme Manager, Major Projects, Culture and Place)

Lisa King (Capital Programme Manager, Major Projects, Culture and Place)

Nikki Stocks (Assistant Capital Programme Manager, Major Projects, Culture and Place)

Appendix B – Project Boundary

