

URBAN ROOM

BURTON MARKET HALL



FINDINGS AND EVALUATION REPORT

MAY 2024

local

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2023, East Staffordshire Borough Council briefed Local Creative Project Ltd (Local) to deliver a public consultation exercise around the future of Burton Market Hall.

The consultation exercise was designed to understand the best way forward for the future of the Market Hall by understanding the public and stakeholder expectations of the space and gathering ideas around the best approach to the project.

Through conversation, design workshops and spatial mapping exercises, Local has interpreted the ideas shared by the public through over 500 in-person conversations and 300 plus online interactions. The consultation exercise lasted over 3 months and here, we draw some conclusions and offer some recommendations and possible next steps for consideration.

ABOUT LOCAL

Local is a creative practice specialising in place-based community engagement and cultural programming. We engage people with the potential of place through a mixture of art, research and creative action. And empower local communities to make positive change right on their doorsteps.

We look out as well as in, to celebrate what's great about a place and to bring in fresh thinking. Together, we shape places that are more relevant, more connected and more sustainable for the future.

HOW WE WORK

We believe everyone has the right to contribute to what happens locally. That's why collaboration and participation are at the heart of what we do. We are inclusive, community-minded and dedicated to empowering people through art and creativity. We're also research driven and committed to ethical, equitable and sustainable practice. We have a tried and tested toolkit of creative research and engagement methods. Every project is as bespoke as its place. Whether it's through public art, cultural programming or community engagement we always start with local.

LOCAL IN BURTON

For this project, we used the Urban Rooms methodology to underpin our creative consultation activity at Burton Market Hall.

WHAT ARE URBAN ROOMS?

Urban Room is a national network of spaces where local people get together to 'understand, debate and get involved in' their place. Often appearing as easily-accessible pop-ups (e.g. in a vacant high street unit), they're an open door to people from all walks of life.

Urban Rooms are:

Creative – focussing on conversation, creative collaboration and playful ways to discuss and co-design the future of a place.

National – with members from backgrounds in arts, planning, heritage, local government and more sharing best practice and new ideas for public consultation with the whole network.

Self-initiated – individual Urban Rooms can be organised by anyone, and take all kinds of shape or approach: from drop-in coffee mornings to conversational art walks.

As an open source, tried-and-tested method, we often use Urban Rooms in our public collaborations. **Local Urban Rooms** are places where local people can directly engage with a physical space dedicated to understand the past, present and future of their neighbourhood, town or city.

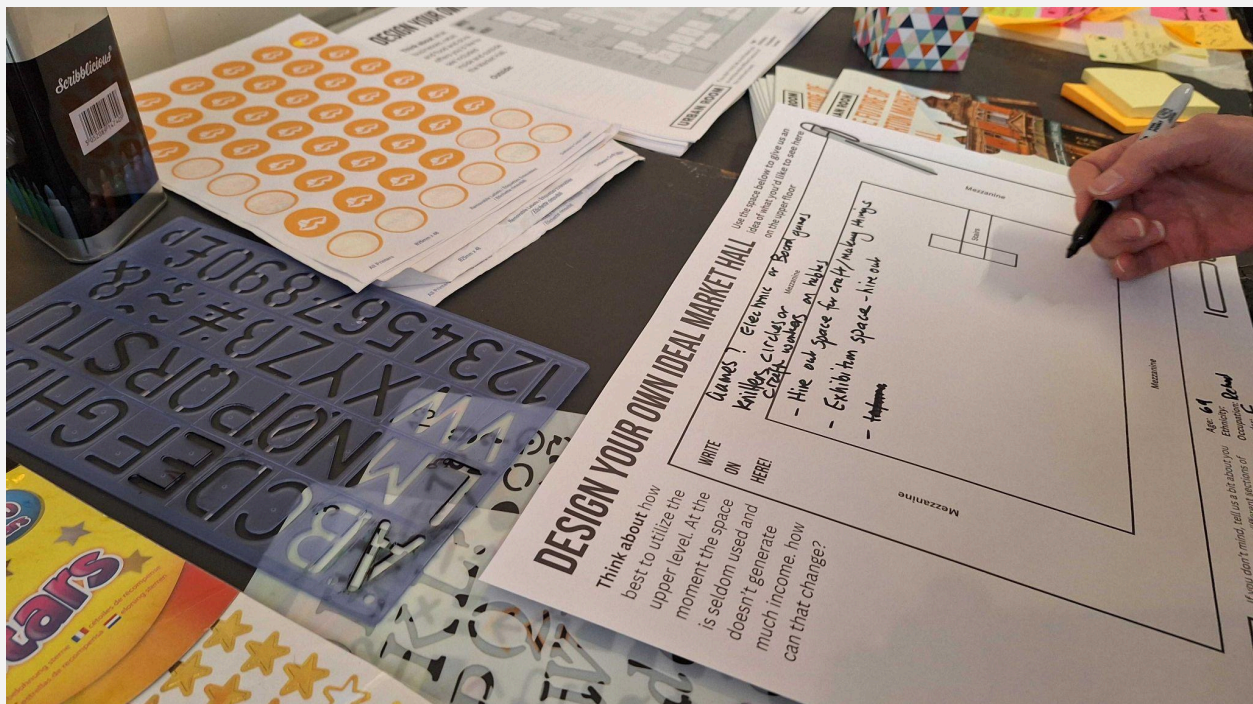


URBAN ROOM BURTON

We set up a temporary Urban Room in Burton Market Hall to enable local people and stakeholders to discuss the venue's future operational proposals, and to develop their own ideas, strengthen local networks and inform the future action plan.

Through the Urban Room Burton, we:

- **Facilitated conversations using a range of creative and accessible engagement tools** – recording the ideas generated, informing the future vision and design principles, and integrating the outcomes with the planning and design processes.
- **Co-designed the process** – to embed a sense of ownership and agency within the community and support longer-term sustainability for the work. It is our hope that the Urban Room methodology will continue to be used in the town and we have assurances from the College that this will be the case.
- **Reached far and wide** – our Urban Room didn't just appear in the Market Hall. We popped up in other key locations in the town to gather a range of opinions in different contexts.

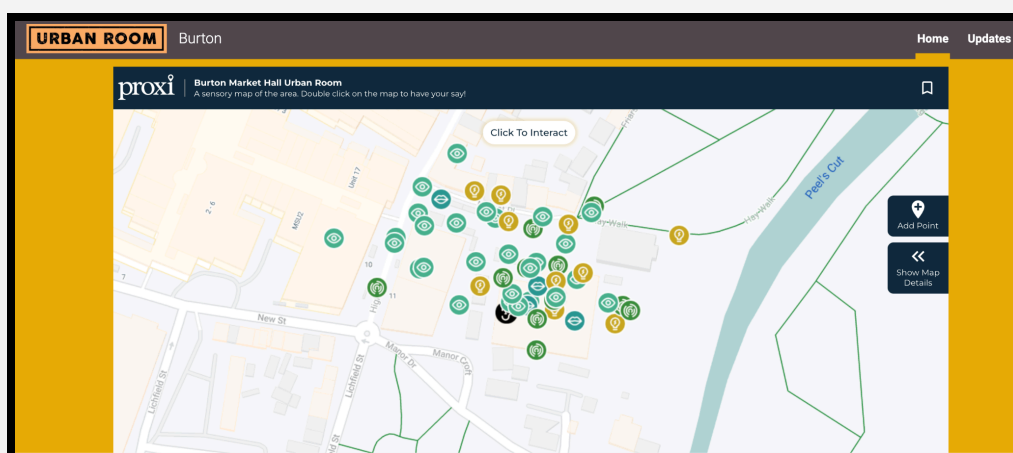


OUR METHODS

We met with groups and individuals in Burton to ascertain what the public's hopes and expectations are for the Market Hall, if any of those expectations are currently being delivered and how change might bring about a more vibrant offer for the town.

The Urban Room approach to community engagement fosters trust and empowers the community to have their say in a space which is non- hierarchical and where all views are heard. Our spaces are playful and engaging, where participants take part in different activities that combine to offer a holistic insight into people’s hopes and concerns for their place. In Burton, these activities included:

- Design your own Market Hall.
- Design your own events programme for the Market Hall.
- Brewing up some ideas – an opinion-based post-it note workshop.
- Responding to provocations – we added some research and counter arguments to certain ideas to produce new types of responses.
- Social media opinions – opportunity to comment and understand the stances of different groups.
- One-to-one interviews.
- Focus groups.
- Survey feedback.
- A digital space to have your say on a dedicated [web page](#).
- An interactive map of the Market Hall and surrounding area.

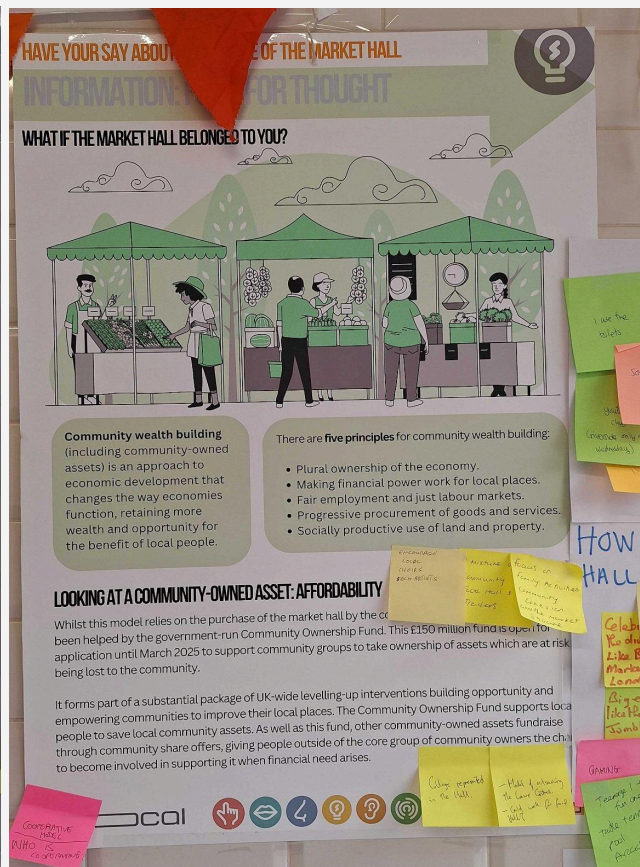


THE IN- PERSON ENGAGEMENT DAYS

The findings in this report consider all of the perspectives that we encountered in person and online – some 800+ responses in total. We have then curated a response which offers highlights and recommendations. These are based on our own placemaking and cultural-programming expertise, our research into the town, and the diverse range of ideas and feedback from the public.

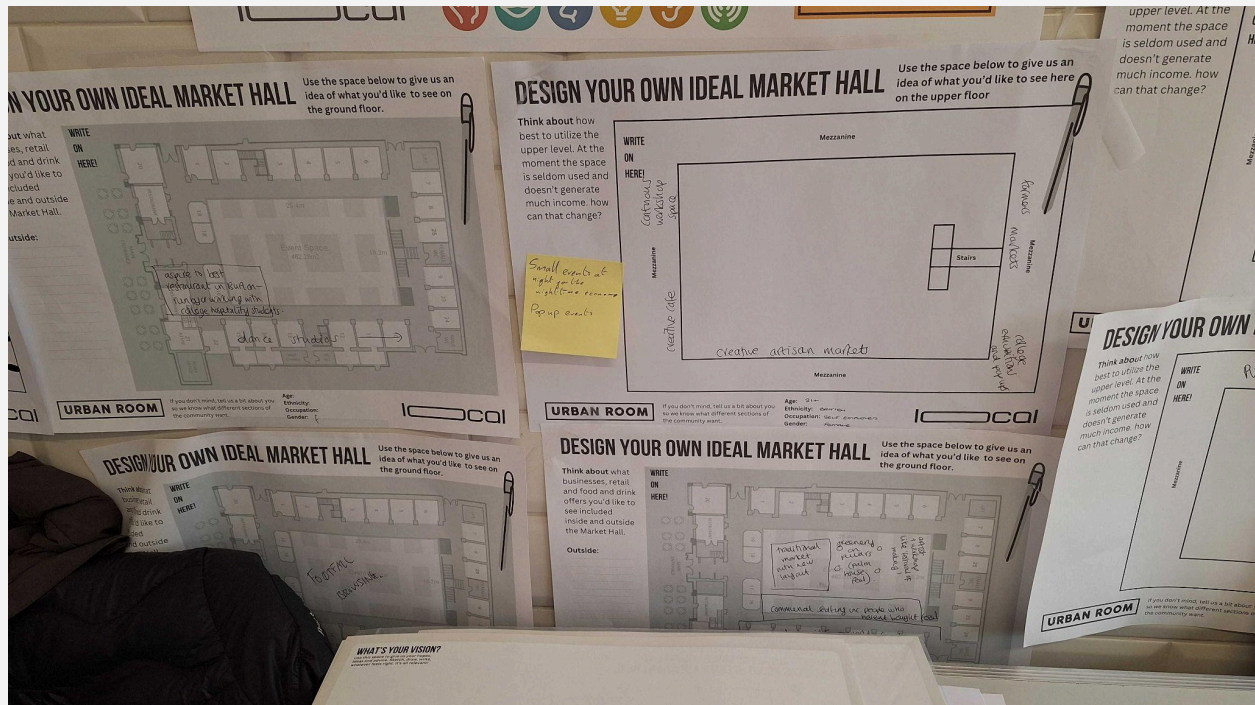
Our engagement activities took place over 8 weeks, and included the following methods and locations:

- Brewhouse Focus Group
- Urban Room in person engagement on site at the Market Hall (x 3) plus a semi permanent (open without our presence) Urban Room space that is monitored and adds to the evaluation
- Urban Room pop-up at Burton College (x 1) and a permanent Urban Room wall
- Urban Room pop-up at Coopers Square (x 1)
- Focus Group Scrutiny Committee
- Interviewing people and businesses around the Market Hall
- Digital engagement interfaces including a website, mapping exercises and a survey



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – SOME STANDOUT FINDINGS

Here in our report, we have curated a response which gives recommendations based upon Local's expertise of creative placemaking and which factors in our research in the town. We were keen to ensure any recommendations and analysis was contextualised by the wider strategic plans for the town.



- Burton doesn't make the most of its natural resources. The Market Hall should create and connect to leisure opportunities, particularly at the river.
- Curation is key – the curation of events, marketing, mix of stalls and artisans, and the welcome experience must be to a high standard and in line with the public's expectations for a contemporary Market Hall. 95% participants agreed that the present set up does not feel curated.
- People would like a mixture of affordable and high quality goods and services on offer. They currently feel that the Hall is predominantly affordable and all participants across ages and demographics agree that it is important to maintain affordable options at the site.
- The Market Hall is widely seen as the natural hub, anchor or focal point for the town, but does not have an offer befitting of this expectation.
- All participants external to those currently occupying the Market Hall agreed that change is absolutely required and a business-as-usual approach would be

detrimental to the future of the Market Hall.

- Refreshed branding and marketing strategies need to be designed and implemented to reflect how people across the town, of all ages and ethnicities, view and share information today, with the goal of developing a much more diverse visitor audience at the site.
- 80% of people wanted a place to dwell, work, rest and play. Currently dwelling in groups is not possible, as no seating area is available or designed for groups, without paying for hospitality services in one of the cafe areas in the Hall. There is no WiFi or co-working set up for people to work in. This is in high demand locally.
- There is no well-designed and purpose-built play/family area either indoors or outdoors for children to read and play with toys. Both were requested and would help with incidental footfall to the space.
- There is no offer for young people under 20 years of age to play, relax and lay claim to as a space for them. This is a national problem and an innovative space here can offer young people recreation and leisure facilities that would have a big social impact.
- The surrounding area needs to better connect to the Market Hall through signage, wayfinding and interventions to change current habits and create popular travel routes to the Market Hall.
- In modern developments, retailers understand 'the selling power of glass' - of being able to see what's on offer. The market hall struggles with this given the structure of the building but making canny, curated use of the external units as well as the entrance should be a priority. Curating an outdoor space with outdoor traders to better link to these entrances and external-facing units would further address the lack of visibility to the inside.
- The safety of the area, particularly for young people, should be addressed. 80% of young people that we engaged with said that the area was generally unsafe for them and that they are targeted by crime groups around the college area. Nobody that we spoke to outside of the college students and staff was aware of this issue.
- The college must play a key role in the future of the Market Hall. They want to be involved and to develop business opportunities and progression routes through the Market Hall to benefit their students. The College is the biggest potential source of regular footfall for the Market Hall. However all students saw the Market Hall as having nothing to offer them currently.
- The parking situation is confusing and impacts the footfall to the Market Hall as the parking offer interferes with the pedestrian approach. People have differing opinions on the need for parking space here and how to solve the issue, but all participants felt that the current parking infrastructure needed to be re-designed.
- By better representing the town's diversity and story, the Market Hall can attract more visitors.
- The Hall should be at the heart of any tourist offer for the town, based on brewing and brand heritage. 50% of participants saw the Market Hall as the most appropriate place for tourist information and museum-standard local displays.

- The Abbey Ruins are hidden in a loading bay at the back of the building and not accessible to the public. 80% of participants when asked about this viewed the situation as problematic and symptomatic of a mismanagement of the town's assets.

Our findings below consider all of the perspectives that we encountered. We have reported on a diverse range of ideas and feedback, based on our own placemaking expertise, considering feedback from a wide range of participants.

IDEAS THAT EMERGED AT THE DIFFERENT POP UPS

AT THE BREWHOUSE

We began the in-person process with a focus group as part of The Brewhouse's monthly Community Evening.

- Participants had no predilection for one outcome or another when it came to the Market Hall operation model.
- A small proportion of our interactions came from younger people who had never visited the Market Hall but who were keen to chat about what the Market Hall could be and how it would attract them in future.
- Many people who did use the market but who weren't invested in the same way as other groups (e.g. those who came to the Urban Room in the Market Hall itself) were amongst some of the most ambitious for its future. They weren't limited by what they felt was 'realistic' for the space.
 - An example of this was the question: "Why can't we have a Borough Market [London]?". This question was motivated by their desire to capture the diversity of communities, food and wares, rather than to necessarily create a tourist destination.
- This event was invaluable for providing us with insightful access to a passive audience.
- This activity at The Brewhouse saw the biggest turnout of people in their 20s, 30s and 40s - A group that typically most accesses hospitality experiences, especially takeaway options ([Food Standards Agency- Food & You Report](#)). This demographic was aspirational and idealistic for the future of the Market Hall.
- Burton does have an ageing population and the Market Hall currently caters to over 60's as the primary audience. However, if the outcome of the consultation leads to any element of night-time economy or artisanal offer, then people within the retirement age range could become collaborators in the process of identifying what they might want.

AT THE MARKET HALL

We initially planned to hold three days of in-person Urban Room events in the Market Hall itself. With thanks to the Market Hall and Council team, we were able to establish the Urban Room as a 12-week long, semi-permanent fixture, where feedback can be collected even when unmanned.



This is a significant achievement in the consultation exercise, increasing accessibility and transparency in the process. The market management generously decided to also open up the space during evening events, which brought essential feedback and opinions from event-going audiences.

During these unstaffed periods, there was a notable increase in the volume of feedback (we estimate this to be around 20% of the total engagement material) both in support of, and opposing, existing feedback, as well as some new ideas and different perspectives for consideration. We now feel more equipped to identify certain biases and concerns that pertain to particular types of Market Hall functions and uses as a result.

Our first in-person engagement day was programmed to coincide with the Jobs Fair, and was captured and promoted by the BBC for their nightly news: East Midlands Today. Footfall was at its highest of all the market engagement days that we held.

Subsequent engagement days witnessed a typical weekend footfall and a quieter weekday

attendance, where we spoke predominantly with store holders, stakeholders, local businesses and regular attendees.

- Feedback came through that the community were confused by what felt like a hierarchy of voices, where interested stakeholders with vested interests who were most engaged and active were perceived to be part of the team driving the plans forward.
- This left members of the public feeling that they were not welcome to explore other options. The perception was that a commercially-led contemporary Food Hall delivered by a private operator (an approach advocated by influential lobbying groups like the Save Our Market Facebook Group) or 'stay as it is' approach (advocated by representatives of the cooperative of existing traders) were the only viable options under consideration.
- This perception has been fostered by incredibly active and motivated stakeholder groups steering the narrative. The Urban Room was as much about reassuring local communities that all voices will be heard and valued in the process.
- The primary stakeholder groups that we identified had strong and relevant ideas which our report will also consider.

AT THE COLLEGE

The pop-up Urban Room we ran at Burton and South Derbyshire College allowed us to engage with the Market Hall's nearest potential collaborators, the biggest footfall generator in the locality and the existing neighbours of the Market Hall.

Besides the feedback we gathered on the day, there were other advantages that came with starting a conversation with the college.

- The college has a 'Skills Promise' which links each part of their learners' journey with competencies, behaviours and interpersonal skills that are relevant to any type of employment or industry. There is an opportunity to link this to experiences at the Market Hall.
- It was fruitful to explore the appetite for incubator spaces in the Market Hall, which would provide affordable options for the people of Burton, whilst supporting the development of local talent from an early stage.
- At other Urban Room activities (not at the college), the desire for young people to be active in the space also arose frequently, regardless of who was providing that feedback.
- It was clear that an incubator programme which develops young/small businesses and allows them to move on must have a sustainable approach, with clear succession plans for when these startups move on. Rather than being seen as a negative outcome, progression to larger spaces and high street locations must be promoted as evidence of success and local progression routes. This applies to all

start up businesses that grow, and this conversation topic resonated with young entrepreneurs in the college during the engagement.

- We have developed a good partnership with the college, encouraging and supporting them to adopt the Urban Room practice as their primary methodology for youth voice community engagement. We have developed an Urban Room wall in the college, where students can continue to provide their thoughts and ideas on this and numerous other local topics and plans. This partnership approach is designed to give permission for young people to have their say and begin to break down barriers to entry that were prevalent amongst the students, who on the whole, did not think the Market Hall was for them. This must change if the space is to become sustainable.

Our physical location on the college engagement day also provided us with insight about broader spatial issues:

- The Market Hall is not visible from the college despite being next door.
- The outdoor space in front of the Market Hall is not welcoming and appears unsafe. Lot's of student and staff feedback said that students were targeted by gangs here. No other demographic articulated safety concerns related to the area.
- The area is dominated by cars and there is no crossing, which makes efficient and safe foot traffic more challenging.
- Observation of the pathways of the students over the course of the day showed that out of the entire college of a few thousand students, only one student walked towards town via the public realm outside of the Market Hall. This has to change if the Market Hall is to reach its potential in terms of visitor numbers.

Other feedback from students:

- The students have limited break times throughout the day, so during breaks the student footfall is often predetermined and purposeful – meaning any offer in the Market Hall for students must take this into account.
- After college finishes there is opportunity to create lingering/dwell spaces for students if the Market Hall were to adopt longer opening hours to accommodate them. The Market Hall closes before the college students finish for the day, which would be the peak time they would use any facilities, shops and offers that the Hall might have for them.
- Accidental/incidental footfall to the Market Hall, where students are curious enough to cross the threshold and browse inside, is almost non-existent at the moment.
- The general perception amongst students is that currently the space has nothing to offer young people and is not enticing or welcoming enough to invite curiosity.

WHAT WOULD BRING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE HALL?

Students asked for:

- Leisure/recreation options such as a pool table, table football, gaming zones.
- Free, safe WiFi available to access easily and securely – this was an absolute must.
- Comfortable, well designed, sociable seating arrangements on the mezzanine.
- A meeting space/pods.
- **Both students and local professionals** strongly advocated for co-working space to be able to meet and plan in an environment away from the college/home/office, that offers a community for isolated workers such as freelancers.

AT COOPERS SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE

Our pop up at Coopers Square, outside the Primark main entrance, which is the closest in proximity to the adjacent Market Hall, saw some returning participants as well as many first-time visitors.

- Feedback here often focused on the public space elements of the Market Hall, both inside and outside. Conversations centred around the building's capacity to provide social space and opportunities to meet, linger and browse. These experiential facets were seen as offering a point of difference to the transaction-oriented shopping centre experience.
- Whilst a shopping centre and a Market Hall are distinct from one another, there are significant crossovers in what people think they *should* provide from a people-centred perspective.
- The shopping centre, and elements of a Market Hall, in some ways appear to replicate the traditional high street experience in a convenient indoor setting. With this in mind, the rights to sit down, use toilets and facilities, and dwell in comfortable surroundings are key.
- There are currently a few benches on the premises that are not affiliated to the food and drink businesses in the Market Hall, and so people can dwell there without buying something in exchange. However these do not constitute an area or experience that groups can plan to use and meet at and around. The benches are important for allowing people to rest and take in the space, but the need for more design-led seating areas is a conclusion that can be drawn from a large part of the public's feedback.
- We noticed that there currently are not any people-centred, design-led spaces (even if commercially driven) that are visually appealing and would entice a passerby or Market Hall user to dwell. Comparisons and a point of difference could be drawn from other spaces with glass roofs that capitalise on what that feature allows:

natural light and connection to the environment. If one ambition was for an offer akin to London's Borough Market (a space alluded to several times), then based on feedback, another could be for the greenery, and innovative design-led seating of a Winter Garden model.

- 90% of participants thought that a space to linger that was sheltered, vibrant and pleasant would enhance the town's offer. All participants agreed that the building itself is a beautiful space to be in, but that they needed extra features such as interesting seating, design, exhibitions and a curated food and retail offer to be convinced to use the space or bring people to visit the site.

The Market Hall was seen as distinct from the shopping centres and not in competition with them. All participants, when asked to explain why, came to roughly the same conclusion: that this should be maintained through an artisanal and independent-driven retail and food offer, interspersed with community spaces to rest, socialise and work for free.

Most participants agreed that the Market Hall must have a non-transactional element to it to make it accessible and to create a busier atmosphere that would in turn enhance footfall and spend at the businesses which occupy the rented spaces within the Market Hall.

Insight from the Cooper's Square Centre Manager, based on experience in other centres neighbouring a market hall:

- Footfall to the shopping centres can increase by 50% on market days
- There's a supportive partnership to explore there as a result.
- There's a difference between the offer and layout of the two types of building and they are not in competition. One can support the other.

Issues with wayfinding:

- People identified a lack of signage to the Market Hall.
- Travelling from inside the shopping centre and exiting the building at the exit/entrance closest to Primark could be a continued journey from chain-led shops to the independent-led market, but visually the Market Hall is obscured and no wayfinding encourages this onward trajectory.
- Upt to half of the participants on the day talked about the public realm space outside as a place for signage, information listings and a visible anchor from the shopping centre to continue on to, creating a flow between the distinct hubs.
- The Abbey Arcade, which intersects the Coopers Square Shopping Centre entrance/exit and the Market Hall. The space has recently been revamped and now there is opportunity for independent businesses to open there. This could develop an independent-led quarter in conjunction with the Market Hall and change footfall habits in the area.

- Once people travel through the arcade, from Coopers Square Shopping Centre, towards the Market Hall, they are confronted by a car park. This is seen as a psychological barrier to continuing the journey through to the Market Hall.
- The parking offer here was universally criticised for being confusing, as two different authorities own different sides of the roads. This results in confusion with payment at the correct metre, a sense of poor planning and a lack of consideration for citizens and how they use the space ultimately punctuating the area.
- The parking offer generally was divisive in that some thought it should be removed altogether to allow for more public realm space at the front of the Market Hall. Others said that more parking was essential to footfall. But, it was unanimous that people felt the design of the parking offer required an urgent rethink.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT BARRIERS?

What is stopping a diverse range of people visiting the Market Hall? The barriers that we heard are:

- The surrounding area is not attractive enough.
- The lack of facilities available – no wifi, no prayer room or wellbeing space, no info point.
- The promotion of the space and its lack of visibility on the high street and digitally.
- The reputation of it being a ‘tired space’.
- Lack of wayfinding and signage to direct people to the Market Hall.
- The offer – not currently relevant for the majority of those we spoke to.
- The ‘welcome’ when you arrive – there is no clear understanding of the Market Hall’s curation, unique selling points and personality
- The space is entirely transaction led at present – no place to meet and linger for free, lack of atmosphere and less appealing/usable for a diverse group of visitors.
- *‘It’s not for me’* – a prevailing sentiment throughout the engagement period for 90% of participants..

A NOTE ON STAKEHOLDERS

- We noticed the most resistance – not only to potential to change but of a discussion about the future – came from stakeholders inside the Market Hall itself. This is natural given that the businesses that currently exist there are uncertain about the future and feel that change might impact them/their business in a negative way.
- However, we found that a resistance to change was not in fact the collective opinion of all the traders, despite being presented as such by key members of the Market Hall Traders Association.

- Some of the individual traders who engaged with us were open and encouraging of a diverse future that they could be part of, but feedback delivered by the traders as a collective was not representative of this.
- It's worth noting that 50% of those with rented plots in the Market Hall did not engage in person, but most said that they had left feedback on the unstaffed days.
- It's possible that some of our engagement process may have been hampered by a concurrent survey that the market traders have been running, and the inference that they were one and the same.
- We have been assured that the results of this survey will be shared with us, but at time of writing this has not yet happened. In any case, it is difficult to evaluate this closed data set, as we were not able to ask those questions ourselves as part of an empathic research process, nor can we know if the process was in any way biased.
- Another survey was issued in the Save Our Market Facebook group prior to our engagement activity. Both surveys are expected to have outcomes in line with the issuing stakeholder's stance on the best way forward for the Market Hall. The Save Our Market Facebook group survey was in favour of a private operator model for the future of the space. The page's audience is wide and as such this is a useful insight into the desires of a section of the local community.
- This survey shows a definite appetite for such an outcome, but this approach was not mentioned nearly as often in conversations with the wider public. This is understandable, given that it is not commonly known what the different operating structures for Market Halls might be. But when pressed to give a preference based on the information that we gave people, most did not mind so long as the quality of the general Market Hall offer improved.
- There are structures of both self-interest and apathy at play that we have noted and factored into some of our findings.
- The most influential and motivated stakeholder groups have unsurprisingly engaged in the process most intensely and have been the most generous with their time.
- There are very relevant ideas from both sides, but the thoughts and concerns of the wider public have shown that people generally want a quality offer (a word used continuously) and don't necessarily mind how that happens, although there is concern as to how ESBC could assign the resource and capacity to achieve the ambitious elements of the communities collective vision.

PRIMARY THEMES

No one came to us with outlandish or "bad" ideas. People who had initially been committed to one idea were much more open and receptive to discussion about how that idea could work in other ways to suit Burton upon Trent, current local policy and strategy, or other ongoing commitments, not just as an off the shelf solution.

During conversations, we provided research and prompts that allowed flexibility or gave

credence to those existing ideas. For instance, we wanted participants to consider things like scale, competition, fundraising, tourism (lack of or potential for), and socioeconomic factors such as population.

There are merits in everything that we heard, and any outcome must be the right fit for Burton. This will require unbiased expertise that prioritises Burton's local distinctiveness, allowing that to lead the curation of the space.

We have identified some primary themes, but on a much broader scale, what came through was that generally most people wanted a **mixed-use development**, but were very **open to what that looked like or how it operated**.

THE OPERATIONAL MODEL

The operational model is the main point of concern for many of the Market Hall's most active lobbyists and primary stakeholders such as the Save Our Market Facebook group and the resident Traders Association. At times, this has overwhelmed the conversation around the Market Hall's future:

A corporate plan pledge from the incumbent ESBC team states:

'We will consider the outcome of the independent HM Treasury Green Book compliant business case assessment on future options for the Market Hall and consider looking to create a model of co-operative ownership of Burton Market Hall with local market traders and businesses managing the promotion and attraction of new businesses and events at the venue.'

The consultation process has led us to challenge and comment upon what this might look like:

- In terms of a Community Cooperative operation approach – when asked about this option, many participants external to the current stakeholders within the Market Hall said that more skills and new thinking need to be brought into any current Community Cooperative model in order for it to be sustainable or financially viable.
- If local market traders and businesses are to manage the promotion and attraction of new businesses and events at the venue, then a skills audit should be undertaken of the existing team and Traders Association members to ascertain who is best placed to do what, and where the resulting gaps in experience and capacity might be.
- If the current team of management, staff and Traders Association traders are to continue in their current roles and occupancies, they should be given or create the capacity, staff, training and resources to attract the audience necessary to create the space that the community wants and has identified within this report.
- Leaders within the current Traders Association group state that the skills and

necessary requirements are in place to realise what the public want to see, but the public on the whole seem to disagree with this sentiment on the evidence of the current footfall, the engagement outcomes and feedback on the current offer within the Market Hall.

- Within the current structure, it is recommended to add people with specific hospitality, events and contemporary Market Hall experience to work with the existing team (whose roles and capacity may not allow for the extra commitments required to promote the space) in order to realise what the public have asked for.
- The curation of the businesses and events at the venue should be in line with what the public's expectations are for a contemporary Market Hall offer.
- The Save Our Market Facebook group has strongly advocated for a private operator to take on the building management. The group sees this as the best approach to ensure the quality of the offer from hospitality experts. If this is not the approach taken, then how will ESBC replicate that skill set to ensure the future quality of the Market Hall offer? This question is a primary consideration for the subsequent decision making process and one the public have asked for clarification on.

TRADITIONAL MARKET HALL OR CONTEMPORARY MARKET HALL?

People's vision for the space tends to fall under two broad categories. Here we define the expectations of each, in order for the offer to be shaped in a way that satisfies the expectations of the majority of residents and visitors.

Similarities between the two

There is an expectation of:

- High quality, locally sourced produce.
- For it to act as a 'third space' or meeting place for the community.
- A mixture of retail and food and drink.
- Indoor and outdoor experiences.
- An aesthetic that is in keeping with, or inspired by, place-based cultural heritage.

Points of difference

The perception of contemporary market halls:

- Nod to tradition, but are design led and try to innovate, using tech like QR codes for menus and social media to promote itself.
- A high-quality-first approach and a strong curatorial plan which speaks to the ideas and expectations of traditional markets, whilst trying to innovate and modernise the

offer.

- A strong events programme.
- A focus on diversity of offer to attract a diverse audience.
- These spaces tend to be less affordable, but offer spaces for families to play and rest for free. Some offer coworking amenities and cultural experiences such as exhibitions or murals.
- These predominantly cater for the 18-50's age range.
- They are hospitality industry centric
- With flexible opening hours that can run late into the night to attract different audiences.

The public's expectations of traditional market halls:

- That they in some way compete with supermarkets as a place to do a weekly grocery shop and are, on the whole, retail focused to this end.
- A focus on affordability.
- Less curated and adopt a let-to-fill tactic. Traditional high street businesses like butchers and greengrocers are being replaced by beauty salons, charity shops and vape stores as the predominant high street businesses in many towns. There is an opportunity to make market halls a traditionally-focused retail destination as a result.
- The Burton Market Hall currently has traditional market hall values, but the public seem to expect a contemporary market hall approach.

Generally, when the public talked about the Market Hall, their preference towards a traditional or contemporary market hall experience mainly differed depending upon the age of the participant.

On the whole, those under 60 years old tended to hold a vision more in line with a contemporary market hall experience.

THE RETAIL OFFER

Design workshops showed that most people expected or preferred a retail offer to be situated downstairs, with services and 'zones' for other activity situated on the mezzanine level.

Curated souvenirs

- There is currently a large missed opportunity to connect the local distinctiveness of the town and Burton's tourism offer to a retail experience. When we asked people about local distinctiveness, they mentioned the brands that originate from the town. Hence, a stall selling Marmite, brewing, Branston Pickle and Bass trademark

merchandise, for example, could connect visitors to the nationally-significant brands and achievements that have originated here, imbuing pride in place and the opportunity to monetise it for the operator of the site or business that curated such an offer.

A modular approach to spatial design

- Central stallholders being situated under gazebos is perceived as claustrophobic and sometimes unnecessary. Another modular/flexible central stallholder solution should be considered which has a unifying, design-led aesthetic, whilst being able to move/transform for events. All participants agreed that modular/flexible solutions were important to the space and that designing such a thing required expertise and vision.
- We recommend that a unified and updated brand for the Market Hall (which remains in keeping with the cultural heritage of the site) and signage guidelines for stall holders should be redesigned and implemented. Currently, perimeter units have this unified signage, but gazebo stall holders have no unifying aesthetic. This would bring greater confidence from the public that the approach is curated and considered.
- We observed through our own experiences of visiting the Market Hall for the first time, and through the behaviours of visitors to the jobs fair, that there is a 'doorstep anxiety'. As a large space with a single corridor arrangement of stalls, the layout feels vast and intimidating, with no clear browsing pathways.
- To encourage more dwell time (and improve sales), the Market Hall should be thinking of principles to adopt a fundamentally interesting layout, or rotation of goods and traders, and inclusion of rest points and seating areas so that what might have been a purposeful visit (eg. to buy wool) becomes a more emotive and pleasurable experience, where the original intent is no longer the main reason for the visit.

Suitability

- Current vendors like the knitting stall and antiques stall would prove popular in most contemporary market halls, as they align with a maker-led, artisanal, connoisseurial and curated approach.
- However, the mobility scooter store was referenced by 30% of participants as not what is expected from the space and a psychological barrier to entry for some. This despite it being a very successful and popular local business in its own right. When people were pressed on this, the main issue seemed to be the percentage of floor space that it had taken up and how the shop's displays, which protrude deep into the centre of the Market Hall, dominate and disrupt the visitor experience and welcome.
- Some mentioned that if the Market Hall was bigger then more variety could be accommodated that might fall outside market hall expectations. But due to there being a limited number of units available, these should be occupied by businesses

that align with the values of a contemporary market hall offer.

- There was a desire from around 30% of those consulted for the reinstatement of some traditional market hall retail options, such as butchers, delis, cheesemongers and greengrocers.
- 90% of participants wanted an independent and artisan-led retail offer and did not want chains to infiltrate the space.
- There was a consistent ask for a good variety of retail options.
- An external presence from traders outside of Burton upon Trent was seen as a positive thing, so long as the Market Hall maintained a 'local first' approach.

Progression routes

- When a young business outgrows a pod, it is currently perceived as a failure of the venue to retain its strongest/most popular businesses, rather than being celebrated as a success story in its own right. A strategic comms plan and succession plan that creates sustainable progression routes must therefore be implemented to articulate how this is positive and sustainable.

Retail oriented events

- The desire for pop-up events, fairs and themed stalls – these do take place here but the feeling is that they need to be promoted/marketed to a wider audience and curated centrally to build an eclectic and diverse programme. Consultation showed that the public's expectation for types of retail pop ups included, vintage clothes fairs, flea markets, wedding fairs, craft markets, print fairs and comic conventions. These on the face of it, and marketed in a targeted fashion would attract a younger audience too.

Opening times and accessibility

- The retail offer and viability of visiting was intrinsically linked to and contingent upon nighttime opening and employing non-traditional hours in order to attract professional and student audiences. The current inconvenience of the opening times for those groups means that any retail offer would struggle to compete with the convenience of a supermarket, even though the offer in the latter is less high in quality.

Reasons to visit for shopping

- There were some particularly insightful comments such as 'purpose-driven' retail, though careful thought should be applied to what this means in practice. The assumption is that customers want to know they can buy what they need at the market and for reasonable prices. Their purpose is fulfilled at the market hall, rather than the supermarket, for instance.
- The need for specific trades occurred during consultation many times (fishmongers, butchers, cheesemongers) but there are two contrasting motivations. On one hand, there is a desire for a retail offer that responds to people's needs, which is regular,

affordable and functional. Whereas, the requests for artisanal markets indicate that specialist products are in demand to some degree and seen as creating an experience that one can't currently access locally..

- This is also where retail overlaps with the tourism economy. Many see the Market Hall as purely functional, and this is worth considering as an element to incorporate into the curation of the space. There is a pragmatism that underpins these needs for certain people in the community, which is less relevant to others and shows that the Hall needs to serve multiple functions to be in some way relevant to the majority of people in the town.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING OF THE SPACE

People remember events held here fondly. There are active groups currently testing new types of events in the space and this has helped to develop further interest in the possibilities of the site as a unique entertainment venue.

Parking for events

- Many of the people we spoke to said that the confusing situation with parking at the Market Hall put them off attending events.

Events team capacity

- Nearly all participants agreed that a specialist programme/events manager could add capacity within the current team and help to potentially bring world-class events and experiences to the Market Hall.

Testing new events in the space

- Recent events and private hire functions from different groups and individuals in Burton have demonstrated an array of uses and opportunities in the space. This step is widely acknowledged as positive and potentially transformative for the future of the space in terms of maximising revenue potential and expanding the audience.

Events logistics

- Some participants who were interested in putting on events of their own asked for clearer information on how to hire/rent the space and what is included within the hire package. They would like clearer lines of communication to be established with the Market Hall management so they are easily able to book and use the space on a regular basis.

Equipment for events

- Promoters and prospective groups who would like to hire the Market Hall said that investment in a high quality PA/sound engineering equipment in the space would

make it a much more attractive hire offer. They also identified that some soundproofing/muffling must be undertaken to improve the acoustics in the space.

The wider offer at events

- All participants said that a strong and consistent bar offer and food stalls were important to supplement the events offer. Participants wanted locally-sourced alcoholic beverages (given the town's history) and a selection of 0% abv drinks too.

Promotion and marketing of events

- Most participants did not know where to look for event listings and said that the current web presence for the Market Hall was lacking in quality. A new design-led website for the Market Hall was widely perceived as important.

Events for families

- Events for families and young people were seen as infrequent or inadequate and would help to bring a wider audience to the space.
- Most agreed that more should be made of the cultural heritage of Orton & Spooner. They'd like to see fairs and heritage-led family events and offers in the space based on the Orton & Spooner aesthetic, which is seen as quality-led and linked to the town's identity.

LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

Showcasing Burton's local distinctiveness and celebrating the town's cultural heritage was seen as both essential to the future of the building and lacking from the current offer.

Pride

- At the moment, the perception is that the Market Hall gives no real sense of its locality, nor does it contextualise itself within the story of the town to imbue feelings of pride and any sense of its importance to the area.

Cultural heritage

- Many participants mentioned the Burton Abbey Ruins and how making those an accessible and informative asset would build confidence and trust in how ESBC handles assets of cultural importance. It was mentioned that if such an obviously significant feature of local history is ignored, then what other mistakes might be being made? A solution to the access issue for visitors to view the ruins here would be seen as preferable to continuing to have no access to the site of historic interest.
- There is a small local history display on the mezzanine level, but the majority of participants saw this as inadequate or of low impact. Most agreed that some

museum-standard, interactive and immersive displays and interpretation about local history would help to bring the place to life and ultimately attract more visitors.

Information about Burton

- The people engaged in the process said that lack of a town centre information point or events listings focused in one physical place, made the Market Hall an obvious outpost of a visitor information kiosk, centralising the market in the itinerary of visitors and residents alike. When we asked participants where the current tourist information point for the town might be, as little as 5% were able to identify that it was situated at The Brewhouse and all agreed that the Market Hall seemed like a more appropriate location for such an offer to exist.

Brewing

- The town is intrinsically linked to brewing and most participants expect there to be a permanent local brewing/brewery/micropub or bottle shop offer based in the Market Hall to represent this virtue. This is despite what might happen at the Bass House site. The Market Hall is a natural hub to promote this aspect of the town's heritage, using it to create programmes, courses and awards based on, and in partnership with, the brands that shaped the town's offer. If this is to be realised elsewhere (i.e Bass House), then it must not be at the expense of capturing Burton's local distinctiveness at the Market Hall site.
 - Case studies to consider: Sheffield's promotion of Henderson's Relish, or Manchester and Vimto.

Brands

- We noticed that Burton was primed for a tourism offer built on strong local brands, physical attributes and history. As previously mentioned within the Retail Offer section, iconic brands which hail from the region, like Marmite, Branston Pickle and Bass are globally distinctive. Burton could lay claim to these, using them as a basis to promote the town to a wide (international) audience, whilst imbuing local pride in the town's significant achievements.

Food

- The Market Hall can develop its local identity by having food on offer that is inspired by traditional food from the area. This could include new recipes or products that use locally-grown produce or which include and elevate condiments and recipes that hail from the area.

Things to do

- The history of Orton & Spooner's fairground innovation and the company's cultural impact in Burton upon Trent could be recognised and mirrored in the Market Hall's events and aesthetic. This heritage is seen by participants as a good way to capture the town's local distinctiveness, whilst creating a family orientated offer in and

around the Market Hall. Many of the distinct offerings of the town are united by a playfulness and inventiveness that can be curated under a strong strategy for the town's tourism offer.

LEISURE AND FAMILIES

The space is currently not perceived to be family friendly, with no area to linger, play and rest for families or groups.

Developing the audience - families and young people

- Engagement suggests that the promotion of the space to families and young people needs to be strategized and implemented using channels and outlets that they access and are relevant to them. A stronger use of social media channels and a well-designed visual identity for the Market Hall could have a positive impact on how the space is seen by the demographics that currently underuse it.

The offer for families

- The offer in terms of events and retail is not particularly suited to families at present, with many stating that they did not attend for those reasons. The sweet shop which was situated on site was relatively well liked, but participants perceived the location on the mezzanine to be a barrier to passive footfall and the shop is now closed.
- Feedback from families suggested that there was no concise and consistent reason to visit the space.

Free leisure options

- Almost all participants with families flagged that the space is transaction oriented and that there was no permanent free offer of high-quality children's play space, toys, reading, etc. to entice families in and encourage related spending once in the building. Again there was an expectation that this offer should be well designed and of a high aesthetic quality.

A home for services

- Some noted that support services and community groups, classes and meetings should populate the currently predominantly deserted mezzanine area.

The needs of families and young people

- Leisure and relaxation came high on student's list of priorities for the space. The lack of Wifi and seating was seen as a huge issue for anyone under 50 and was an example of how the space was out of touch with contemporary societal needs.
- Once again, the space was often cited as the rightful home of tourist information for

the town, signposting people to what the town has to offer.

More more more

- Events in the public realm area of the Market Hall (outdoors) such as the Christmas light switch on are well regarded and the community want to see a regular and sustained programme of seasonal events to normalise that interaction with the space.

Connecting to nature

- The nearby River Trent was cited as a potential leisure hotspot, linking activity to the Market Hall and creating options for a fun day out in Burton upon Trent.

THE FOOD AND DRINK OFFER

This is central to the conversation around the Market Hall's future. Most participants wanted to see a mixture of affordable and high quality, artisanal food and 90% of participants thought that the current food and drink offer needed adding to or changing in some way.

Where do people in Burton currently go for food and drink?

- People currently expect to travel to Derby or Lichfield for high-quality food and drink experiences in a similar setting.

Perception

- The public were unanimous in their opinion that there is a lack of artisanal, high-quality contemporary food and drink options for young people and young professionals. This would broaden the appeal of the site.

Brewing capital of the UK - make the most of it

- The bar/drinks stall for events should prioritise locally-sourced produce, particularly local brewers.
- People identified a clear and obvious missed opportunity to house a local brewery's bar or bottle shop at the site, linking the retail offer to place-based cultural heritage.

Affordability

- There are already affordable community-orientated food and drink options in the Market Hall that are highly valued by the over 60's demographic and have fostered a sense of community spirit in the building.

The future food and drink offer

- A contemporary food hall as the site's primary purpose is strongly advocated for in some sections of the community, particularly within the Save Our Market Facebook group. Almost all participants outside of the stakeholders in the space do agree that at least four high-quality artisan operators added to the space would be appreciated by the community.

Similar plans

- People asked for clarity about plans for other sites in Burton and how that might impact on the community's expectations for the Market Hall. The Bass House site was mentioned on multiple occasions as risking duplicating or diluting what might happen at the Market Hall.

Food for busy people

- A 'grab and go' food option for the busy passing student clientele is a must to entice them into the space at break and lunch times. Students cited that pasties, sandwiches and pies would be welcome, as well as healthy food options. They typically have less than 15 minutes to purchase food between other lessons and plans.
- Many students said that they have missed the bakery that was at the Market Hall since it left for a different plot at the Octagon shopping centre. The desire was not necessarily for that specific bakery to return, or a bakery at all, but an anchor tenant to match their success and a place for all ages.

Opening hours

- Opening hours were seen as problematic for students and professionals in particular. Closing at 4pm misses the peak footfall as the college closes and students walk past a closed market space. Many said that it must remain open later on evenings and weekends, but this is qualified for the need for that to be in tandem with a more diverse, stronger food and drink offer that would help to attract the necessary audience.

Technical considerations

- Any issues with plumbing, ventilation and changing the use of pods for food and drink businesses due to listed building status needs to be either articulated to the public or overcome. There is currently mixed messaging about what is actually possible in the Market Hall, particularly along the left-hand side of the ground floor. If no plans are in place to change the usage of these units due to the constraints of doing so, then there must be a list of appropriate letting options for them.

THE MEZZANINE

A space that has a lot of potential, but people are unsure as to how viable the upper level is for businesses to rent spaces in.

It was agreed by many that mezzanine space rental should be significantly lower than that of the ground floor, but that it could be a good opportunity for small start ups and community groups to innovate in a vibrant setting for a low cost. It would maximise the footfall to the mezzanine space and incentivise further footfall to the ground level.

Effective use

- At the Job Fair we witnessed an effective use of the mezzanine space. Most Job Fair visitors did not browse the ground floor market, but walked straight through the centre, up the stairs and to the Jobs Fair. Not many individuals then stayed to browse afterwards. Socioeconomic reasons could be at play here, but it is also indicative of a ground floor offer that is not relevant to the diverse range of attendees on the day and/or of a floor plan/layout that does not encourage curiosity. Fair attendees did have a good experience on the mezzanine and the layout up there was conducive to completing a lap around the area creating a complete experience of the top floor.
- Many suggested that because past retail offers had proved unsustainable on the mezzanine level, that it was a perfect place for a co-working, meeting and study space with comfortable seating, desks and crucially, Wifi! This will create a good reason for 20–50 year olds to frequent the space and it was claimed repeatedly that the town currently lacks this kind of provision.
- Over 50% of the participants said that they would not currently think to look upstairs whilst in the Market Hall. The space is seen as 'out of the way' and not particularly conducive to browsing or passing retail footfall.
- It was seen by many as a good space for support services, pop-up events and purposeful- targeted, advertised or appointment oriented meetings.
- The current local history display on the mezzanine is not widely known about and although informative, is not strong enough to amount to 'a reason to visit' for our participants.

Opportunity to experiment

- There is also space up here for creative outputs like galleries and exhibitions, blank walls for murals and opportunity to bring games and leisure activities that would complement the ground level offer without interfering with it.
- It is worth noting that upper levels, especially those thought to be restricted in some way by traders, have often been successfully populated and transformed when adapted for use by young people. Since the 1970s and '80s, many indoor retail spaces with mezzanines have created a more eclectic and alternative retail space upstairs, creating a parent-approved 'high street' and safe space for young people to spend time.

THE OUTDOOR SPACE/MARKET

An area with the potential to draw crowds into the Market Hall and consolidate the market as a focal point in the town.

The welcome

- Most participants noted the pedestrian welcome or approach to the Market Hall and how it seemed to lack purpose, be confusing or look closed due to exterior-facing window leases being vacant.
- Members of the public interviewed outside the Primark exit at Coopers Square Shopping Centre, which sits parallel to the Market Hall, noted that there was nothing visibly exciting or informative in that public realm space to entice them into the Market Hall through curiosity or further exploration of the area.

Outdoor market to drive footfall

- As stated previously, Coopers Square Center management reported evidence that busy outdoor market days see a 50% increase in shopping centre visits. There is a clear opportunity to work in partnership here to boost visitor numbers to the town's attractions.

Use of the outdoor space

- Suggestions for use of the outdoor space directly outside the Market Hall included: vintage car shows, food and drink markets, farmer's markets, fairground attractions, flea markets and other local summer festivals.
- This was identified as another space primed for family activity and the public generally desired for there to be more for young people to do in the town.
- It was noted that any event held here is usually well attended.
- The opportunity to bring Orton & Spooner style heritage fairgrounds to the public realm would be well received by the families that we spoke to.

Current outdoor offer

- The current regular outdoor stall offer is affordable and quite popular. But engagement indicated that there needs to be more stall holders to create the bustling atmosphere necessary to attract new customers and stallholders and that people saw these stalls as very separate to the offer and experience inside the Market Hall itself.
- Outdoor events, particularly at Christmas, are regarded affectionately and the public would like to see more of them take place here.

Walking routes

- The majority of college students walk into the centre of town on a diverted route away from the Market Hall public realm space, citing traffic at the car park and safety as reasons to avoid the route. All students engaged said that more attractive outdoor activity would encourage curiosity inside the Market Hall.

Hiring the outdoor space

- Potential outdoor space promoters/prospective hirers and interested parties spoke of a lack of clarity around who to approach and how to hire spaces to create events here. More information and clear support would streamline the process and ultimately create more events in the space.

Design

- A foundation of any high street, and by extension the Market Hall, is the importance of the external public realm and central gathering point. A visual marker such as a fountain, statue, information board, seats or planters that create a place-based experience could be considered longer term, and people welcomed this idea as adding to the reasons to visit the area.

COMMUNITY USE

The view was that the Market Hall as it is currently does not serve the broad community of Burton upon Trent.

Facilities

- Some facilities must be updated for different faith groups and needs. A wellbeing room and a place where members of the Muslim community can wash/prepare and pray would help to attract a more diverse audience that is in keeping with the town's contemporary ethnographic makeup.
- It is hard to understand what this currently looks like, so perhaps some new, up-to-date research must be undertaken to identify the current demographic breakdown for the town and how to communicate and advertise facilities and opportunities with a diverse group of people and needs.

A presence/venue for key community groups

- A semi-constant presence from Burton Albion in the community and other community centres and groups was identified as a good way to use the mezzanine space upstairs and bring in more regular footfall.
- Many community groups would like to use the Market Hall to gather, meet, present and develop workshops, attend classes and offer services. Most were unsure how to go about this. A clear hire strategy and call to action as part of a wider comms plan could help.

A meeting point

- A meet-up point for groups or a place to begin tours could be set up, with chairs, tables and a place for tour guides to display information. This would allow the space to blossom as a multipurpose hub and focal point to meet at.
- The mezzanine was identified by most as the best place for community groups and workshops to meet and run activity.

- On the whole, participants who were under the age of 60 years old said that the Market Hall was 'not for me'. A community-centric approach to part of the offer might help address this.

Communicating to the community

- An updated website/digital presence was again raised as a way to better promote, communicate and inform the community about the space, how to use it and the possibilities for getting involved. The design of such a digital space (contemporary, interactive, high quality) was identified as the best way to give confidence that the Market Hall is contemporary and relevant.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER PLANS?

What is going on elsewhere in Burton and how might this affect the potential offer in the Market Hall?

Clarity

- We heard a lot of gossip and secondhand information about plans, agendas and developments that need to be communicated and factored into the Market Hall's future function and purpose.
- Clarity is needed on: any plans for the Bass House site, what that offer might look like and whether or not it will clash with plans or expectations for the Market Hall.

A holistic vision for the town

- The experience of the town centre as a whole is in question from the community. They would like to understand how the Market Hall features in the wider plans for the town – is it seen as a hub/focal point?
- A tourism strategy and rebranding of the town's corporate image can influence outcomes for the Market Hall. All agreed that the Market Hall's future is contingent upon it being factored into and made integral to these wider strategies.

Partnering with the college

- The college could be a primary footfall generator. How is ESBC and BSDC working together and how will the college play a significant role in the Market Hall to deliver a sustainable future there?

Competition and risk

- Are there any studies into how the Market Hall could potentially detract from surrounding businesses in the immediate vicinity? Business owners that we spoke to welcomed the idea of a successful Market Hall attracting more people to the area and did not see this as a risk, but the concern has been raised by local people.

Housing

- New local housing development was seen to bring opportunity and footfall. How will these new developments influence and impact decisions made on the Market Hall? Studies in Manchester show how an increase in town centre living directly contributes positively to the local economy and supporting small businesses.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THE ENGAGEMENT

- 1) A change in approach is necessary to make the space relevant for the people of the town.
- 2) People generally feel that there is a lot of potential for the space but it is currently under utilised.
- 3) The team running the Market Hall have developed a strong community within the Market Hall, but need extra capacity and support to achieve the expansion in visitor numbers necessary for the Market Hall to be deemed a successful and relevant public space.
- 4) There is widespread mistrust about what will happen next, based on historic decline, a historic lack of transparency and the recent financial performance of the space.
- 5) Most parties, across political divisions and a broad spectrum of local society, believe that something must change and that curation, quality, sustainability and capacity are key to the future of the space.
- 6) Of greater concern than the operation model going forward was that there is the guarantee of a high-quality offering in the space. This is possibly the most important outcome for those people that we spoke to in the community.

THE PUBLIC'S BIGGEST CONCERNS

Some concerns that can be addressed to achieve greater public confidence.

- 1) There is public scepticism that ESBC can achieve an artisanal, high-quality contemporary Market Hall vision without the aid of consultants, a private operator or expanding the current team to employ a hospitality professional with demonstrable experience in contemporary market delivery.
- 2) Business as usual. Doing nothing and continuing as things are was **not an option** for most people that we spoke to.
- 3) A fear that their opinion will not matter or be disregarded.
- 4) That people have given up on the town or that a new approach would fail.
- 5) The parking situation at the front of the Market Hall, with metres payable to two different authorities was a primary concern for many.

- 6) The treatment of current stallholders was often mentioned. The idea that they are not currently able to plan for the future and how that is negatively impacting their performance and the public's likelihood of visiting a space that is reported as closing soon.
- 7) The communication or perceived secrecy in the planning process is creating a mistrust in the aims and objectives of the local authority.

STANDOUT QUOTES

'there's an opportunity here to put the heart back into Burton, this should be the hub, the heart...'

'Burton faces away from the River'

'it looks closed and uninviting'

'it's just not for me'

'it doesn't represent the diversity of Burton upon Trent'

'the hall should tell the story of the town, but whose story?'

'it needs something that you can't already get in burton'

'a centre for promoting the town's uniqueness'

'collaboration over self interest'

RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY POINTS

Alongside the primary themes previously categorised, there were recurring ideas, requests and issues that were particularly well-reasoned, provocative and pressing.

Some of these relate directly to logistics, programming and specific models of use for the market. Others were rooted in socio-political needs. Addressing these elements, that will

present themselves in our recommendations, benefits Burton as a whole, not just the Market Hall.

The Market Hall model – key points:

- Quality/Curation
- Professionalism
- Communication
- Knowledge
- A mixed model

Social specifics:

- Diversity
- Youth
- Safe spaces
- Connectivity

Based on the public's feedback, we recommend that a mixture of Options 2b and 3b be implemented from the *December 2022 cross-party, Market Hall Working Group (MHWG) report*, which had identified a series of options for the Council's Cabinet to consider. This broad recommendation comes with the caveat that many of the further recommendations in this report would need to be implemented in order for that approach to be viable. It does seem that the community wants this mixed-use approach with a broad offer, rather than one or the other. Evidence in other similar mixed-use spaces suggests that this can work well in Burton too.

The gender split of participants in the engagement seemed to be fairly even. However, indoor retail spaces pay particular attention to women and families. This has generally been the pattern at marketplaces, market halls, shopping centres and also extends to cover people who would otherwise be isolated at home. Supplementary to what participants have asked for during engagement, the young people and female-led footfall that is typical globally should be a metric that the future Market Hall model checks in with throughout. This group of people typically expect the space to foster their mobility – to feed, relieve and revive.

WORKING TOGETHER

There are some opposing views on the best way forward. How do we find a solution that the majority of the town will be happy with? What do those engaged widely agree on?

- The need for a quality-led approach.
- A place that attracts more of the community to visit.
- It currently isn't working or reaching its potential.

Where we disagree, are we able to compromise? Some key questions related to this point.

- A major sticking point for some is the operating model. If a private operator won't

be brought in to run the entire Market Hall, could a hybrid approach work?

- Or, what about bringing in somebody with that contemporary market hall skill set?
- What does that look like?
- Who has a vested interest in a certain outcome? These interests need to be identified and declared. The conversation around the Market Hall can then be contextualised and vested interests can be taken into account when establishing partnerships and boards.
- Most importantly – what is the best outcome for the town over individual aspirations and the nuances of local politics?
- Is there a possibility to establish a diverse Board to influence the next stage? If so, these Board members could bring in the skills to transform the offer and should be resourced and appointed carefully.

HOW DO WE BUILD UPON THE ENGAGEMENT?

- Develop a vision based on what has been heard.
- Test that vision with a robust and resourced Board of Trustees.
- Develop the associated comms Plans, strategic framework, mission and manifesto, and begin to implement some of the recommendations we've heard.

WHAT FACTORS NEED CONSIDERING TO MOVE THE PLANS FORWARD?

- Finance
- Commitments
- Skills
- Resource
- Capacity
- Motivations
- The community
- Context
- How can we manage conflicting visions and how best to embrace opportunities?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BUSINESS PLAN

- Develop clear progression routes for local small businesses.
- Create a clear hire/lease arrangement and scale of offer that incentivises excellence.
- Define success and failure. What do each look like and how do they differ from the current situation?
- Curation is key. The community expects a certain combination of businesses, food, drink and activities to be on offer in a contemporary Market Hall setting.
- Define the plan and deliver in a timely manner.

- Who is the Market Hall for? Who is it serving? How does this change?
- Articulate and promote the space as the town's heart and hub. How does it tell the town's story, inform, guide and offer sanctuary to Burtonians today?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMS PLAN

- Where, to whom and how is the Market Hall currently being promoted?
- Consider a dedicated, design-led website overhaul.
- Develop a social media identity and target young people and families in particular. What channels do they use? How do they like to absorb relevant media?
- Consider how to link communications to key dates and events in the area, placing the Market Hall in the centre of the town's past, present and future.
- Define how to bring the public along for the journey, be open, transparent, ask for feedback and not be defensive.
- Employ a comms professional dedicated to promoting the site or assign significant resources and/or research and training internally to see what other successful contemporary Market Halls are doing and how to innovate based on those learnings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEAM

- What is the team currently doing well? There is a strong and cooperative community in place and the management and maintenance team are extremely flexible, helpful and approachable.
- Nurture the on-site expertise to drive a world-class hospitality experience befitting of the country's premier brewing town.
- Increase capacity in the team by bringing in or internally resourcing a Promoter/Events Management expert to drive bookings and source world-class entertainment. A PR, Socials and Marketing expert and an Operations Manager or Director who is able to curate the offer and work alongside the current General Manager and team.
- Develop a Board of Trustees with experts in contemporary market hall delivery, PR, business development, fundraising, law, historians, events planners and celebrity/popular figures who hail from Burton and can drive campaigns and promotions.
- A private operator would potentially employ a similar model.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROFILE OF BUSINESSES TO INCORPORATE

- Artisan
- Design led
- Contemporary approach
- Quality led
- Can fill a gap in the Market Hall/town's current offer
- Is in line with the curation of the space and people's expectations of a contemporary market hall, or is synonymous with traditional market halls BUT **still relevant today.**
- Something for young people
- Something for families
- Craft and maker led.
- Something you cannot get on a high street.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CURATION AND SELECTION

- This demands a connoisseurial approach and an understanding of national expectations when it comes to a contemporary market hall experience.
 - It isn't just about local expectations, as the Market Hall should draw visitors nationally who are keen to experience the UK's brewing capital.
 - Whilst curating the offer, the professional in post must consider the heritage of the town, the offer of the town, traditional market experiences, the community today, how to excite the audience and the sustainability of the project.
 - People have a firm grasp of what a quality offer looks and feels like, so a team that can innovate is key.
 - A modular and flexible approach to design is key to unlocking the potential for a variety of hire opportunities.
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DEFINING THE OFFER – KEY FEATURES OF THE NEW LOOK MARKET HALL

Here we define what people would like to see based on what was mentioned most frequently and what people saw as gaps in the current offer based on their expectations of the site. Number one being the most frequently mentioned ideal output. From what we've heard, people would like:

Position	Feature	Weighting (amount referenced in conversations and engagement)
1	New food and drink options which are artisan and quality led.	90%
2	A retail offer that is independently driven and in line with contemporary market hall values.	70%
3	A well-designed, child-centred, interactive area for children/families to play and rest.	50%
4	A co-working space.	40%
5	Comfortable (non-transactional oriented), well designed areas to sit, meet and relax which contribute to the town's wellbeing.	40%
6	A programme of regular and eclectic events.	35%
7	A more attractive and vibrant public realm space around the Market Hall to encourage lingering and footfall.	30%
8	A permanent leisure and recreational offer with games and activities available for all.	30%
9	More facilities that represent the town's diversity such as wellbeing spaces and prayer/wash room	20%

10	A tourist information point.	20%
11	Better, design-led wayfinding and signage techniques to direct people to the Market Hall and visually articulate the offer inside.	15%
12	Pop-up space for community groups and Not for Profit Organisations to use/hire and signpost people to.	5%

Here we break down these needs/desires into who they are serving and who, on the whole, seemed to be asking for them:

Who wants what?		
What	Who	Notes
New food and drink options which are artisan and quality led.	A broad spectrum of the community in terms of age, ethnicity and experiences.	Many saw this as a way to showcase the town's diversity and local distinctiveness through what was on offer.
A tourist information point.	A broad spectrum of the community in terms of age, ethnicity and experiences.	
A retail offer that is independently driven and in line with contemporary market hall values.	A broad spectrum of the community in terms of age, ethnicity and experiences.	People expected the retail t, in some way, reference the town's local distinctiveness.
A well-designed, interactive area for children to play and rest	Mostly mentioned by families, but flagged by many students at the college too.	This extended to expectation around the immediate public realm outside, with play area provision seen as a way to bring families closer to the

		Market Hall.
Pop-up space for community groups	Mainly mentioned by community group stakeholders and the audience which visited for the Jobs Fair	A general consensus was that community groups belonged somewhere in the space and the best place might be on the Mezzanine, where specific services and functions can be visited in a targeted way.
A permanent leisure and recreational offer	Mostly asked for by young people and parents who identified the need for more youth provision in the town.	All families that we spoke to identified this as a priority.
Wellbeing facilities, disability, religion and family facilities	Those who require extra provision often flagged this need.	Identified less with non disabled groups. But those from varying cultural backgrounds and who need provision which is different to the standard model on offer in many spaces, asked for change in this regard to make the venue more accessible and diverse.
Public realm	All participants identified the immediate surroundings as being uninviting and uninteresting and said that this must change.	Different groups had different ideas of how to make that happen, which, on the whole, aligned with their own world view and experiences.
Wayfinding and signage	A broad cross section of society identified that the Market Hall is lost in the story of the town, particularly from a visitor perspective.	Those that live in Burton said that it must be visible to be visited and to remind people of the Market Hall's existence and potential to add to the experience of the town.
Comfortable areas to sit/relax/meet each other without needing to spend money	A priority for families, retired people, students and visitors	These groups advocated for the importance of indoor, sheltered space that is well-designed, comfortable and available consistently.

		All those who identified this need also said they would be more likely to spend money at the Market Hall incidentally if such areas existed within it.
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NEXT STEPS

A breakdown of some suggested next steps:

- Present findings to Cabinet.
- Develop a plan based on feedback.
- Develop a new vision for the Market Hall, based on the engagement.
- Develop a diverse Advisory Board/Board of Trustees/working group for the Market Hall’s future that incorporates a variety of opinions, interests, skills and stakeholders.
- Produce a business plan, informed by the engagement.
- Create a comms plan that effectively communicates ESBC’s process.
- Test the vision and plans by putting them to the Advisory Board, amend them based on feedback and make the vision public and widely promoted.
- Articulate clearly through strong comms how the public’s voice has been heard, what has been taken on and why certain points could not be fulfilled.
- Develop a sustainable, long-term comms plan to promote the Market Hall’s events, offer and identity.
- Develop a new digital strategy, with a new website and social media output at the heart of it.
- Seek the necessary funding.
- Implement the plans.



PUBLIC FEEDBACK ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

- Throughout the public engagement events we noticed a positive shift in how the process was received by participants. Initially, a significant ratio of participants had judged the process against previous consultations which they felt paid lip service to an already agreed upon conclusion.
- As such many members of the public questioned how we (Local) would 'influence' ESBC into an equitable outcome for the people of Burton. Confidence in the process and transparency should be prioritised including in the distribution of this report.
- Uncertainty was also fortified by actions taken in the past by ESBC under a different leadership, which altered the market and caused disruption such as temporary closure. Residents felt left out of these decisions and that this had led to a decline in the market, demonstrating a lack of empathy for the traders or understanding of what people from Burton themselves wanted. There had been feedback that demanded apologies from ESBC, and a palpable anger over past decisions.
- There were also participants who had felt they had identified the best course of action and that the consultation was working at odds with their vision.
- We built time into the process to listen to these concerns and demonstrate our transparency and neutrality.
- Through one-on-one engagement, we asked how we could instil confidence in the process, which we felt to be a vital part of our consultation and something to overcome before we could progress to Market Hall feedback.
- On reflection, a majority of the public seemed much more assured after engaging with us, and continued to provide us with insight and ideas.
- Some participants visited expressly to air their views on the process but didn't leave any feedback about the future of the Market Hall itself.
- A strong comms plan can build further confidence and demonstrate where, how and why the council has factored in certain feedback and how it can explain when some points may not be viable. Not all opinions are possible to take action on, but the public would like to be shown what has led the local authority to certain decisions and they believe that this should be articulated in a timely and transparent manner.

GLOSSARY



The meaning behind some of the terms we've used:

Artisan – an Artisan is someone whose job requires skill with their hands. A skilled worker or craftsman, denoting or relating to goods produced on a small scale using traditional methods, to a tangible and evident quality.

Curate/Curation – to take special care in selecting, arranging and presenting something in order to achieve a specific effect.

Quality/Quality-led – well-made, carefully considered produce which goes beyond basic expectations and is beyond what most people can create themselves.

Third space – Third spaces are communal spaces between home and work, like a bar or cafe, park, restaurant or communal space. They are the spaces that foster a sense of community and belonging and contribute to the wellbeing and positive experience of a place and its people.

The offer – what a place has to offer and how that offer is perceived as worthy by potential users.

People-centred – an approach which takes into account the needs and values of the community and the different individuals within it, over the need for profit/growth driven by the financial markets which the industry operates within.