



Bristol City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal

Jason Thorne, 8 May 2024



Objectives

- Reimagine and repurpose high streets to meet local need, improve the mix and variety of offer, support economic inclusion, facilitate access to jobs and skills development.
 - Support new enterprises, which will help create new employment opportunities.
 - Reduce vacancy rates by bringing commercial properties back into use.
 - Increase footfall by reanimating our high streets, through locally distinctive and inclusive cultural and creative events and activities, meanwhile and innovative uses, and supporting a vibrant night-time economy.
 - Support existing high street businesses to assist recovery and growth by engaging businesses across the city. Providing information on a range of business support services including sustainable and green business practices, Living Wage, Bristol Eating Better.
 - Enhance the street scene and green infrastructure by improving the appearance of the areas and supporting biodiversity and climate priorities.
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Citywide support

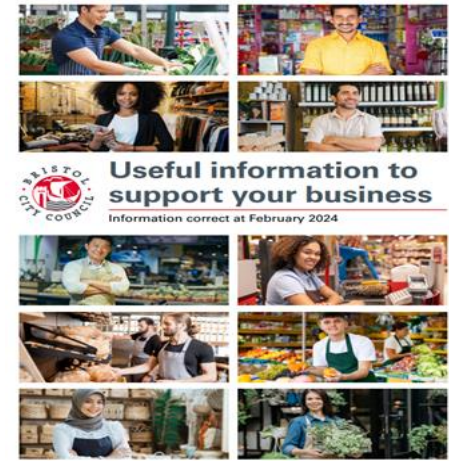
- Bristol currently has 47 designated high streets, ranging from the city centre to town, district and local centres
- Business Development - visit/engage with high street businesses, promotion, tailored solutions and signposting
- Vacant Commercial Property Grant – businesses/organisations can apply for up to £10,000 of capital funding



Bristol City Centre and High Streets
Vacant Commercial Property Grant

Business Development

- Business Development - engagement ongoing, 1,146 businesses have been visited/engaged, 193 supported with 1-3 hours, 72 with 3 hours+, 115 referrals made to other support services, including West of England Growth Hub, YTKO, Real Living Wage, Safer Shops West
- Promotion via Where's It To Bristol? and Shop Local Bristol social media pages with over 23,000 followers
- Current issues – crime and safety, cost of living
- Introducing a High Streets Go Green business grant to help businesses go green and save costs



Vacant Property

- 123 Vacant Commercial Property Grants approved, deadline for applications is 29/03
 - 540 enquiries received demonstrating strong level of interest
 - Cost of living crisis and need to meet diverse offer criteria has impacted number approved
 - Citywide vacancy rate of 8.78% in Feb 2024 v 9.76% in Nov 2021, City Centre vacancy rate of 13.94 in Feb 2024 v 16.27% in Nov 2021
 - Established City Centre Vacant Property Task Force
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Grant recipient case study - Sparks Bristol, former M&S, Broadmead, opened May 2023

- The council acted as convenor to bring together M&S and Global Goals/Arts Space Lifespace to enable the meanwhile use of the former M&S building as Sparks Bristol. Sparks Bristol provides a practical and exciting way for people to engage in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (which the One City Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy is based on) through education and creativity.
- Bristol Sparks will occupy the space until Dec 2025. See www.sparksbristol.co.uk



Grant recipient case study – PROPS, Fishponds Road, opened Oct 23

This grant enabled us to build our first high street café, designed to train and employ adults who have learning disabilities that we support here at Props. The impact of this funding will leave a legacy of inclusivity in Bristol and is the foundation of what we hope will be the start of a transformational shift towards disabled equality.

See BBC news article - Fishponds café creating opportunities for disabled adults,
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-67360470



Grant recipient case study – Robert's Bakery, Crow Lane (Henbury), opened Nov 22

Thank you for visiting the bakery. I would like to thank you very much once again for receiving financial help from you. Thanks for this, I can be proud that I have a very good coffee machine and I must boast that my customers say that I have the best coffee in the whole of Crow Lane, thanks to you. My husband, who is also a baker, is very pleased with the mixers and proofer. It would be difficult for us without your help, especially since when you are just starting your adventure with your own business, every penny counts and all costs must be calculated carefully.

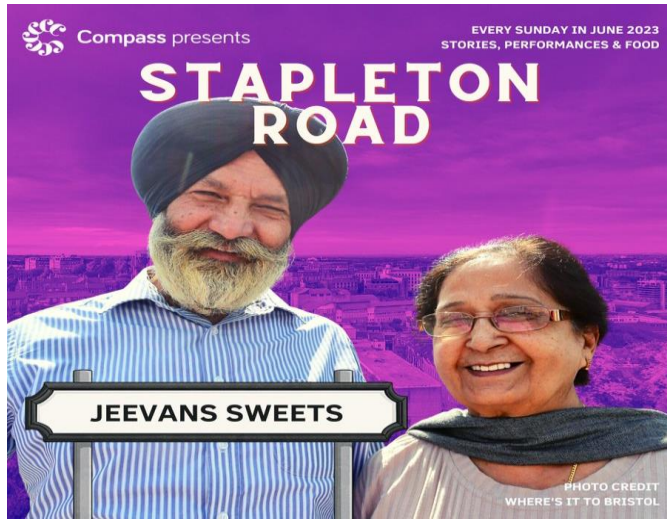
Robert's Bakery celebrated their first-year anniversary on 4 Nov 23 and husband and wife team Aneta and Robert were recently joined by a new full-time member of staff, their daughter also works on a part time basis.



Priority high streets

- City Centre
 - East St (Bedminster)
 - Shirehampton High St
 - Filton Ave
 - Filwood Broadway
 - Ashley Rd/Grosvenor Rd (St Pauls)
 - Oatlands Ave (Whitchurch)
 - Brislington (Brislington Hill/Bristol Hill)
 - Church Rd (St George)
 - Stapleton Rd
 - Two Mile Hill
 - Stockwood (Hollway Rd/Stockwood Rd)
 - Crow Lane (Henbury)
- Plans – short, medium and long term
 - Culture and events
 - Street scene and greening
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Culture & events



Culture & events



Culture & events

- 46 culture and event activities delivered in the City Centre
 - 66 culture and event activities delivered across nine high streets
 - Additional £2,097,136 total day visitor spend in City Centre or high streets
 - Additional £2,655,045 total resident spend City Centre or high streets
 - 945 paid employment opportunities for artists/creative practitioners and event professionals
 - 216,577 residents and visitors reached through the programme
 - 47,534 day visitors attending culture and event activities
 - Extensive media and social media profile
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Culture & events - quotes from visitors

- *This was an incredible event. So important to bridge the existing divide in BS5 and contribute to integration between different communities. It's exactly the type of things needed to facilitate dialogue. I will definitely come back. The event has definitely allowed me to enter in spaces I had never thought of entering before. I am planning to get cushions made at the kora centre, eat Afghan food after my yoga class at 238 and go on an evening out for Jamaican food with friends who were not on the tour. I loved all of it.*
 - *Such a wonderful afternoon, learning about the local people, cultures and sharing food. Stapleton Road often has such a negative perception, this was a truly magical way to showcase the community, bridge divides and promote greater integration in East city. This should be a permanent fixture in Bristol!”*
 - *I grew up in Stockwood and this is just what we need for our community, it was very busy and a great atmosphere, my only suggestion is to keep advertising it. Absolutely loved it.*
 - *Welcome and engaging teams. Stockwood has felt neglected and drab thus has injected life into the area and made me smile!*
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Street scene and greening

Filwood Broadway children's play area (before and after), completed Nov 23



Street scene and greening

Stockwood pocket park (before and after) next to the library installed Nov 23 (before picture from Google)



Challenges and learning

- Need positive narrative on the future of high streets
 - Covid/Cost of Living crisis has impacted contracts, costs and timing of street scene and greening related works
 - Covid has created more of a focus on high streets, need long term strategy
 - Funding cliff in March 2025
 - Managing expectations
 - Range of internal and external stakeholders, coordination and collaboration important. Good relationship with City Centre BIDs and Shopping Centre Managers
 - Important to have multi-disciplinary team
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