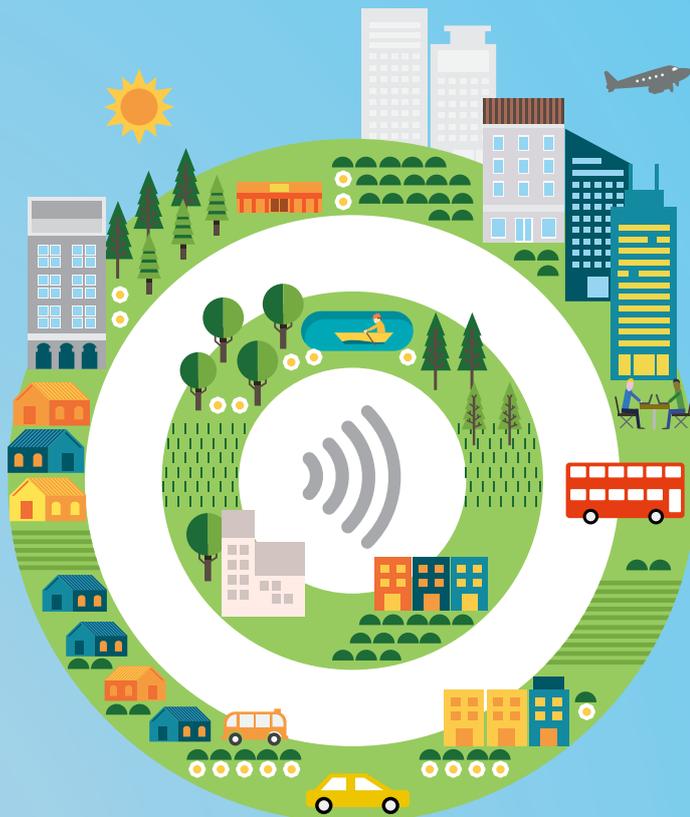


THE HIGH STREET DIGITAL HUB

REVIEWING THE POTENTIAL
PROVISION OF A DIGITAL HUB
PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT
HIGH STREETS, TOWNS AND
CITIES IN THE UK

April 2016



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the publication in March 2015 of the Digital High Street 2020 Report, a working group was formed of cross-sector stakeholder contributors; this group is the Digital Hub Working Group, and it is currently preparing the business case for a national pilot programme to bring together public, business and trade stakeholders to address a range of challenges facing High Streets.

This report, developed for Innovate UK by Connected Places UK and Clockwork City, offers a new dataset of ‘voices from street level’ – specifically **place-makers** – to offer guidance to the evolving High Street Digital Hub proposition. Through online surveys and focus-groups with a range of UK **High Street** locations, clear parallels emerge between this new research and the key recommendations of the Digital High Street 2020 Report. It is clear that there is considerable scope and appetite for a Hub programme, with 96% of respondents agreeing it would be a service they would feel comfortable using. Place-makers and their communities are eager to engage in a broad range of programmes to realise the potential of a Digital High Street in their area, but require strong foundations and guidance from a trusted source to help win hearts and minds. There is a clear mandate for the Hub to fulfill this role.

Common themes emerged throughout the research as to the function of the Hub:

1. **Measurable Impacts:** the Hub must adhere to a standard where all training and support resources that are delivered must actually result in being implemented by businesses and nonprofits
2. In order to meet the above standard, the Hub’s output needs to recognise the dual audiences the place-maker has to address, namely the businesses and organisations, and then the citizen-consumers themselves
3. Certain places and businesses are ready to move ‘Beyond Simple’. The Hub must support place-makers in bridging the digital divide between aspiration and delivery, and encourage High Streets to become ‘omni-channel places’, with content discoverable through multiple platforms online, mobile, in print and on street
4. **SME/VCSE** engagement and trust is the key to success, and face-to-face contact is essential. The research validated the focus of the Hub as the place-makers, with the latter having a leadership and information-cascade role with their local SME/VCSEs
5. The Hub should seek to act with place-makers at a local level, but also channel results towards strategic decision makers in local and central government too
6. The modern consumer expects to be able to get online in town centres, and SMEs/VCSEs need to have commercial grade access technology; the Hub should assist place-makers in influencing progress on improving connectivity

This report concludes that there is a clear need and role for a Digital Hub service, which place-makers can call upon to help them establish and achieve their local digital ambitions.

Place-maker

Individuals and organisations actively managing our High Streets, towns and cities.

High Streets

Our term used throughout this report as a catch-all term for High Streets, town and city centres, and any other place where people and services combine.

SME

Small and Medium Enterprise with less than 250 employees

VCSE

Voluntary, Charitable, Social Enterprise with less than 250 employees

INTRODUCTION

Following the publication in March 2015 of the Digital High Street 2020 Report, a working group was formed of cross-sector stakeholder contributors; this group is the Digital Hub Working Group, and it is currently preparing the business case and scope for a pilot phase and subsequent national programme to bring together the public, business and trade sectors, to address a range of challenges facing local High Streets.

High Streets and the wide range of enterprises operating within and alongside them, all play a part in driving employment, appeal and productivity for their local area. In order for these spaces and actors to continue to develop, they must increase their digital capability. They must become more publicly visible and better integrated online in order to compete with the behemoths of online retail and the white noise of social media and marketing. From individual companies taking their first steps to trade online to developing smarter towns and cities, the need to embrace digital technology is now here.

In order to achieve this consistently across the country, the development of a Digital Hub network was recommended to support and guide the delivery of economic, technological and social digital tools for High Streets and the enterprises that operate there. A visit to a digitised High Street would become more than just about a retail transaction; it would offer a sociable, engaging experience that draws people to enjoy it, and make the necessary interactions like parking, transit and other services more efficient and frictionless.

This report, developed for Innovate UK by Connected Places UK and Clockwork City, will contribute a new dataset of ‘voices from street level’ – specifically the place-maker – to offer guidance to the evolving High Street Digital Hub proposition. This study asks place-makers:

1. What is their understanding of ‘digital’ in relation to town and city centre management? What are their ambitions, and the barriers they have faced in achieving these?
2. If coordinated digital support were available to place-makers, what are their priorities?
3. Would a Digital Hub be a useful resource in terms of guiding and supporting these local priorities?

The aim of this report is to ensure that place-makers, the individuals and organisations actively managing our town and city spaces commence and/or refine their use of appropriate digital tools for the economic and social benefit of their local area. Whether this is best achieved via a Hub programme will be also be explored.

THE VALUE OF HELPING HIGH STREETS EMBRACE 'DIGITAL'

Our High Streets, towns and city centres are local economic and cultural engines that serve a number of roles simultaneously. They are unique, complex environments that are home to various types of interaction; they are centres of employment, retail and service marketplaces, centrally accessible leisure and social spaces, administrative and transport hubs as well as a focus of small business and micro-enterprise activity, especially in the growing creative and knowledge economy.

These 'High Street' spaces remain relevant as central connection points for most locations, but their continued viability as functioning economic and social marketplaces, linking together the physical and digital aspects of modern day life, is subject to enormous change brought on by the 'online-mobile-digital' capabilities of the modern **connected consumer**. It is therefore important to understand the perceptions and capabilities of the people and businesses using the space (or in some cases, not using it).

For instance, online perception-building can equally apply to an entrepreneur reviewing where to establish a new business, or to an existing employer's decision regarding expansion of one location over another. If one town centre is easily and attractively discoverable online, is it more likely to 'win' inward investment and increased footfall? Is a high street business that trades strongly online, both in terms of commerce and reputation, more resilient to economic fluctuations than its neighbour, who does not have a digital presence?

Bridging the Digital Divide

The generally low level of digital maturity in and around the UK High Street environment is already a barrier to local economic growth¹. Within most town or city centres, there exists a 'Digital Divide', whereby larger retailers have well developed online-digital-mobile relationships with **consumers**, but the majority of SMEs and non-profits lack the capabilities for such engagement. As this report confirms the majority of SMEs and many locations exhibit an under-embraced capability in this regard. It is a fast-changing and often complex technological environment that is highly challenging for SMEs/VCSE and also for those involved in managing these places.

One aspect of the challenge is that there is no clear and well-informed credible picture at the local level of what a High Street Digital Hub might look like across different types of locations; the Digital Hub is intended to provide that trusted guidance for place-makers. Using a basic framework, as outlined in the Digital High Street 2020 Report², there are certain underlying attributes that contribute towards a successful high street or town centre that have changed little over time, but 'it's how they manifest themselves that is different'. Our High Streets and town centres must adapt by embracing the opportunities a modern, digital consumer presents, as well as providing the necessary infrastructure for people and businesses to 'get connected' in the first place.

Connected Consumer

High Street users (resident, worker, shopper, visitor) comfortable interacting with digital content and navigating omni-channel pathways for purchase and decision-making.

Consumer

A catch-all term for High Street users, whether these are residents, businesses, visitors or external observers.

1 Lloyds Bank Digital Business Index 2015

2 <http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/digital-high-street-report-2020>

Being Discoverable

Discoverability online will lead to increased consumer engagement, helping to support business and social relevance in an era when 38 million British adults use the internet daily, and smart phone ownership rose from 24% in 2010 to 58% in 2014³. Great locations have a clear sense of place – a strong identity – delivered to consumers through numerous channels; an engaging social media strategy could sit alongside high quality public realm spaces with street entertainment and markets; a bustling business district might be served both by good connectivity and a diverse evening and leisure economy offer. These would be examples of key objectives for attracting and retaining people and investment.

Increasing Digital Competency

Businesses and communities could both benefit from being able to use open source data, or the potential of the ‘Internet of Things’ and the emerging contactless technologies, for instance to share useful content during peoples’ daily commutes, or to reduce transit and road traffic congestion, while fibre-to-premises and mobile broadband could be used to support growth in the creative industries, micro-business and SME sectors.

WHY A DIGITAL HUB?

If every location is expected to deliver discoverable, personalised and digitally accessible High Streets, it will be necessary to improve the digital capabilities of those people who are responsible for a town or city centre offer (the place-makers) to help them support their community.

The ‘connected consumer’ requires content that is engaging and, most importantly, continuously refreshed. It is not enough to install Wi-Fi or to set up social media accounts and local apps; story-tellers are needed in every location to add richness. Place-makers can play a key role in being a story-teller for their place in their own right, making best use of the digital toolbox, as well as showing SMEs and non-profits how to contribute their individual business stories to the narrative of a place.

The purpose behind the creation of a High Street Digital Hub is to improve the digital capabilities of our High Street leaders, so they may in turn help the smaller businesses and make the High Street relevant to the modern connected consumer.

METHODOLOGY

Throughout September and October 2015, a series of workshops and remote interviews were held with place-makers throughout the UK. In total, ten workshops were held, covering twelve locations. These used a semi-structured face-to-face interview approach guided by the text of an online survey tool; this allowed for greater freedom for individuals to go into broader context and detail.

A further seventeen locations were invited to complete the online survey and, where requested, a brief follow-up phone interview. For each online survey respondent, the answers for all multiple choice questions were randomised to minimise the potential of 'list bias'.

The locations were chosen to represent a broad range of different places, covering metropolitan city districts and small cities, to large towns and small market towns.

Metropolitan city districts: Birmingham, Leeds

Cities: Nottingham, Perth

Large towns: Bath, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Winchester

Smaller/market towns: Hemel Hempstead, Hinckley, Louth, Otley

Respondents in both groups were asked:

- to confirm that the intended Hub users actually want to be helped
- what specific elements they most need help with
- to identify the scope and nature of support requirements for the Hub
- to shape the actual content that would be delivered through the Hub
- to identify the measures and benefits of delivering support through the Hub

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Respondents were initially asked whether their organisation could engage with a non-commercial source, such as the High Street Digital Hub, that would be able to support the development of their digital economy. An unequivocal 96% answered ‘Yes’, with the remaining 4% ‘Unsure’.

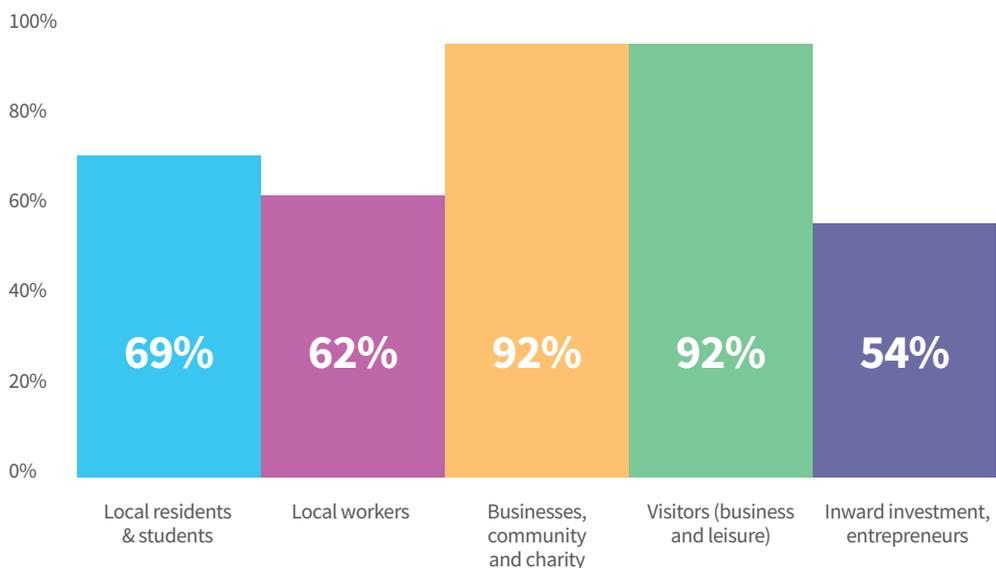
Therefore, we can confidently conclude that there is a viable and accessible audience for the Hub concept.

The Many Faces of Place

High Streets, towns and cities cater for a wide variety of services and users, and place-makers must be aware of their target audiences. When respondents were asked to list their perceived key audience groups, ‘Businesses, community and charitable organisations and ‘Visitors (business and leisure)’ both scored over 90%. The remaining three categories also scored highly (between 54% and 69%), as Figure One shows.

This reflects the many demands being made of places and therefore of place-makers. The Hub must support High Street stakeholders engaging inwardly, by building trusting relationships with businesses and services at the economic heart of their area, as well as developing coherent, appealing and refreshed narratives to engage with the visitors, tourists, local shoppers and workers who bring the social, cultural and economic function of any High Street to life. The many faces of place, and multiple roles of the place-maker, must be acknowledged by the High Street Digital Hub.

Figure one
Which target audiences does your organisation focus on?



The Need for Simple and Strategic Guidance

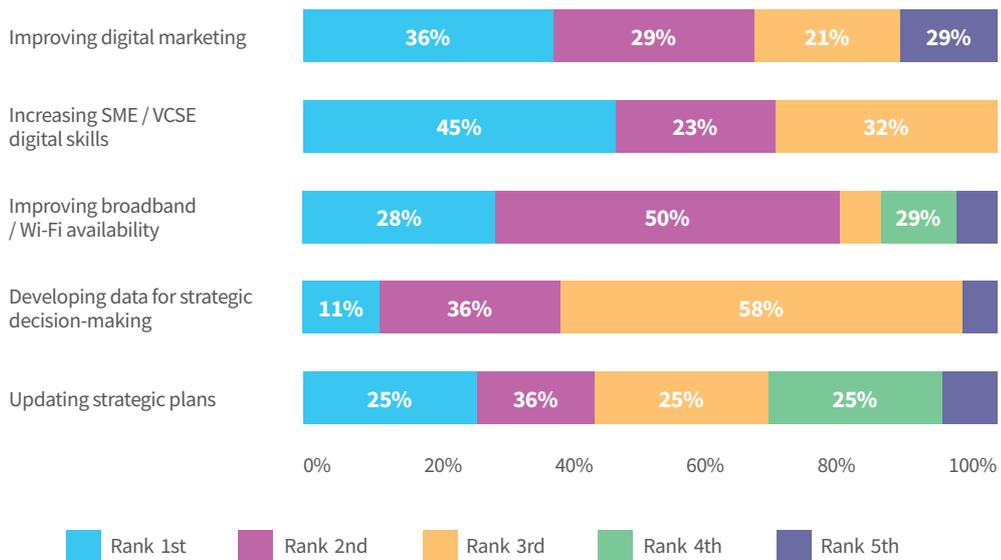
In Figure Two, respondents were asked to prioritise a series of ‘digital development’ ambitions in order of importance to their High Street, town or city centre. The top priority identified was to ‘Increase the number of SME/charitable organisations that are online; Benefiting from digital skills’ (42%); ‘Improved digital marketing’ (36%) was the second theme that appeared as a consistent priority for place-makers.

Interestingly from Figure Two, the second and third rank priorities were ‘Improving the Broadband and Wi-Fi availability’ (50% as second rank priority) and ‘Developing Data for Strategic decision-making’ (58% as third rank priority).

The priorities from Figure Two point to an emerging narrative of place-makers wanting to encourage small businesses and community ventures to ‘get online’. These organisations require education, guidance, and access to connectivity infrastructure, such as public-access Wi-Fi or business broadband, to be provided as a necessary utility.

Place-makers also want to recognise how ‘digital’ fits into the wider strategic context of their High Street, town or city centre. The Hub therefore should facilitate this dual need for both strategic guidance and deliverable results in order to begin to bridge the digital divide facing SMEs and VCSEs.

Figure two
What are your top three digital development priorities?



When place-makers were asked what types of support were currently being offered to bridge the digital divide in their area, 88% mentioned using social media as a destination marketing tool, 83% ran a central business-listing / community website, and 83% used other sources of digital marketing, such as Tripadvisor or providing content for bloggers.

Beyond Simple

It is clear there is an existing foundation of place-makers recognising and using digital tools to promote their respective areas, but that these tools are currently only accessing the base level of what can be achieved. When asked what they would like to offer, place-makers mentioned running in situ workshops and offering access to online training material (both 55%) to enhance local business digital skills. Respondents also mentioned installing free public Wi-Fi (52%) and high-speed broadband initiatives (48%), while 45% said they wanted to operate an online trading platform, or at least give their businesses the opportunity to trade online.

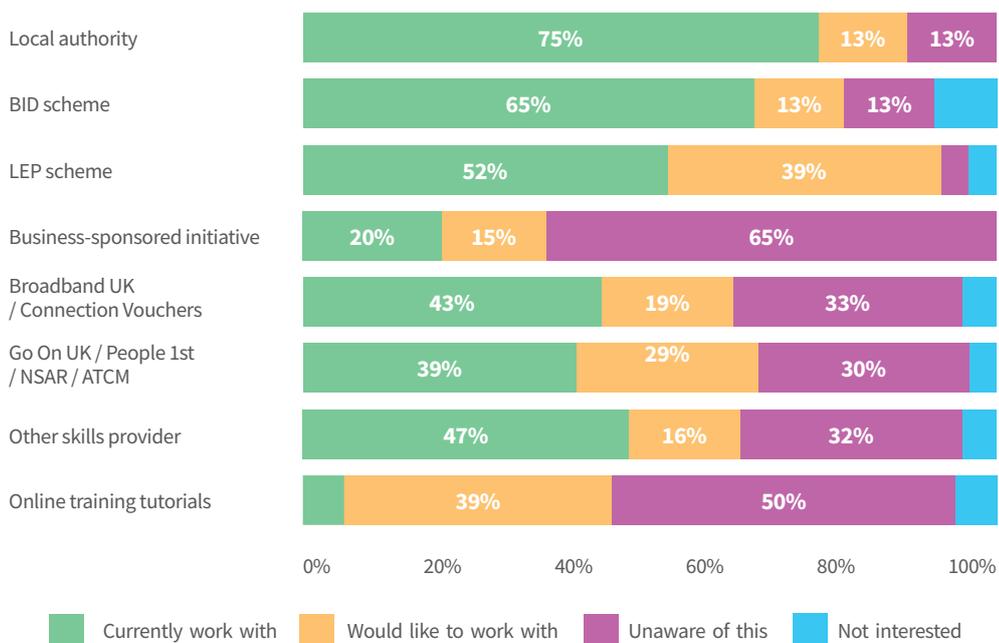
There is a clear desire from place-makers for support for them and their community to move 'Beyond Simple' and create more digitally mature, discoverable and accessible local centres. The High Street Digital Hub can play a central role in bridging not only the digital divide between those who can and cannot 'get online', but also the digital aspiration gap by providing place-makers with the skills and tools to move 'Beyond Simple'.

Bridging the Digital Aspiration Gap

The digital aspiration gap is clearly shown in Figure Three, by the high rate of 'Unaware' responses given when asked what types of support place-makers are currently engaging with. While there is clearly work going on in towns and cities, led by local authorities and business improvement districts, there is an equal number of locations that are either keen to engage, or unaware about how to engage, with digital initiative providers.

The responses in Figure Three indicate the clear need for the cohesion that the Hub would provide, with credible trusted guidance to local place-makers, and amongst all stakeholders it would be the default resource for every aspect of the digital experience in town and city centres.

Figure three
Are there digital initiatives that your organisation works with?



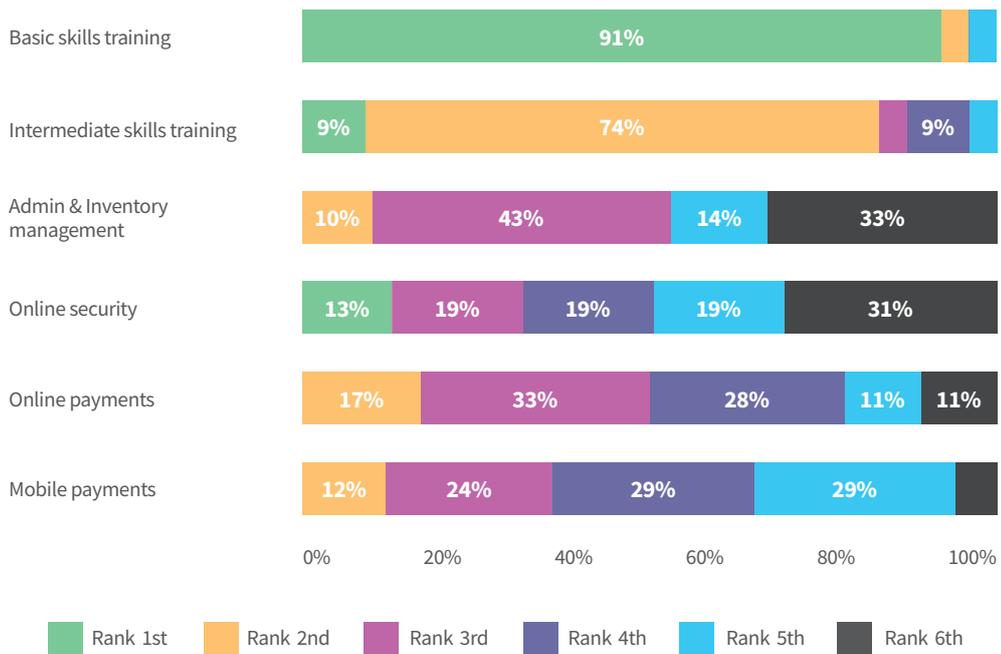
Basic and intermediary skills are clearly the key support topics

When asked to rank types of support, in terms of the content, that would most benefit businesses ‘going digital’, a clear podium was established. Over 90% of respondents identified ‘Basic digital skills training’ as most important for their SME/VCSEs.

Basic digital skills for business can be delivered by professional trainers, suitably licensed to present well-developed content, such as the Digital Business Skills modules used by People 1st and ATCM in their engagement via the Go ON UK delivery network.

The second most important type of content was ‘Intermediate digital skills training’, with 74%. This category of skills training is more likely to be available through online support, but also with the active training engagement of key suppliers of solutions, systems and services. These two support services being so clearly ranked as first and second in Figure Four is an indicator that ‘Beyond Simple’ thinking and skills are required, and the High Street Digital Hub should be a bridging service for the digital aspiration gap as well as the digital skills and awareness gap.

Figure four
What types of support would benefit local SME/VCSE’S



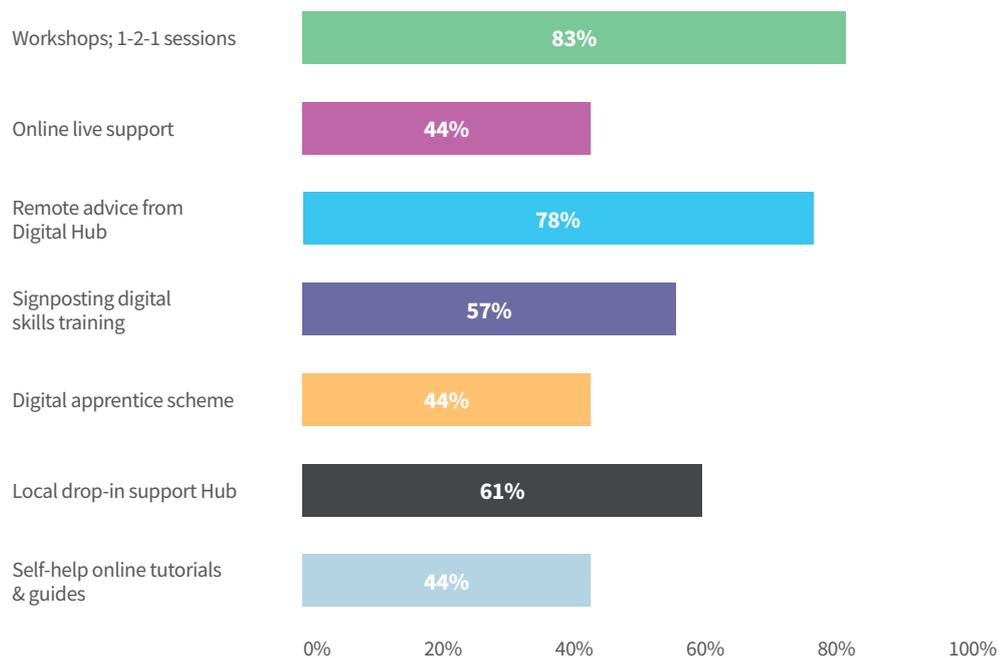
Other skill sets mentioned, predominantly in the third and fourth rank choices, included ‘Inventory management skills’ (43% third rank, but also 33% sixth rank), receiving online payments (33% and 28% third and fourth choice respectively), and receiving mobile and contactless payments (24% third rank, 29% fourth rank choice).

Delivering Support

As to how these preferred types of support could be delivered, Figure Five shows that there was a clear preference from place-makers for enabling sessions to be delivered to businesses in a one-to-one style (83%) with online refresher material and remote support available too (78%). However, there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, as is clear from the breadth of support each answer received.

Just as Figure One outlined the breadth of the audiences being engaged, and hoping to be engaged, by place-makers and their businesses, Figure Five shows the breadth of the formats required to engage with businesses.

Figure five
Best tool to develop and sustain local digital capacity



Humanising the delivery of support is an important theme that reoccurs throughout the survey and focus group processes. The need for physical, local training spaces to minimise time away from businesses and encourage face-to-face learning and continued peer mentoring should be supported. This can be achieved by having quality training content available online, through VoIP or webinar channels, and by supporting the personal development of place-makers to deliver this type of support confidently too.

Where possible, one-to-one support should be used to follow up face-to-face training, as this type of learning is highly perishable and benefits from having rapid post-workshop implementation. Whilst digital apprenticeships scored fairly low in the ranking (43%), in combination with one-to-one mentoring, they have the potential to become a significant force in converting training to implementation.

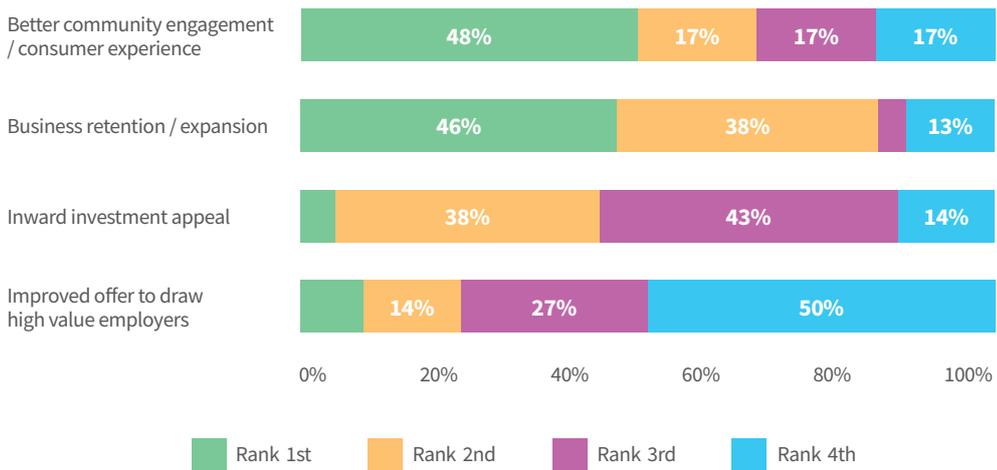
Social & Economic Benefits Must Be Made Clear

Place-makers are intimately involved with the economic development and regeneration of town and city centres. Many are currently using, or are eager to begin engaging with, a digital High Street strategy; respondents highlighted the potential economic value of such a decision as their first (46%) or second (38%) choice when asked what the most beneficial aspect of such a strategy would be for their local area. A well-delivered and strategically-focused digital capabilities programme was seen by a majority of survey respondents as a valuable tool for supporting and retaining existing businesses. As a second (38%) and third (45%) rank choice, the value of such a programme in driving inward and entrepreneurial investment in their area was also recognised.

However, 48% of respondents cited the immediate benefits of a better community and consumer engagement environment as the most valuable benefit of increasing digital High Street capabilities. This again highlights the many faces and functions of our towns and cities, and as such the High Street Digital Hub should also reflect this.

Economic development would be enhanced and supported by bridging the digital divide between consumers and businesses, and community cohesion would also benefit.

Figure six
Ranking the potential benefits of increased high street digital capability



EMERGING THEMES**Beyond Simple**

The survey has clearly shown that most place-makers are already working on some type of digital project, with many eager to advance their own capacity and move towards using 'Beyond Simple' digital tools. The High Street Digital Hub could provide a key function in bridging the multiple digital divides that have been alluded to already in this report, providing leadership and defining the 'goalposts' of what a digital High Street may provide.

The Hub is needed to help define 'Digital' for High Streets

There is confusion within the place-making community regarding how 'digital' should be delivered. The High Street Digital Hub is ideally placed to provide trusted guidance and build digital skills for place-makers. The Hub will train the trainers and guide the leaders.

As mentioned above, there are both economic and community benefits expected of programmes that build digital capabilities in towns and cities. The Hub will help place-makers:

- Build digital skills that are relevant to the place-maker role, outward facing towards the local catchment area, and inward facing towards the SME/VCSEs that also need to be discovered and manage their digital presence
- Develop sustainable local partnerships with economic leaders in LEPs and local authorities, plus engaging with retail, property and tech-sector stakeholders
- Help in drafting strategies at local level and define 'digital' in local context
- Inform local and central government of obstacles and blockages
- Provide help for micro business to evolve into SMEs, and for both to develop online capabilities

There is no substitute for local leadership

Place-makers agreed that they were the most appropriate group to interact with the Hub on behalf of their location, especially when it comes to generating and maintaining a story-telling narrative for a place.

- Local authorities are not the only leaders, BIDs and LEPs are the business voices, and community interest groups are often excellent at bringing independent voices to the fore
- LEPs should be encouraged to recognise the economic value of town and city centres

Support at the local level requires face-to-face contact ... but one size does not fit all

- Face-to-face contact helps with the challenges of addressing SME apathy. Minimising 'time away from business' is also essential to delivering skills training
- Delivery of training and enabling must be followed up quickly with one-on-one support to counter perishable loss of skills. Online support tools can then help preserve those skills
- All High Street stakeholders should acknowledge the breadth of formats needed to support local training and enabling efforts. A range of solutions and services - a digital support menu - should be provided via the Hub to allow suitable adaptation

Discoverability and Content are the Twin Pillars of Digital Relevance

Ensuring place-makers and their stakeholders have a suitable content strategy is a vital step in producing a digital toolbox capable of moving 'Beyond Simple'. The ability of High Street actors to gain initial discoverability, then generate refreshed content to interact online, will be an important enabling service the Hub may provide. Steps towards this include:

- Showing up on Google Maps and search engine pages
- Relevant and real-time information on websites, social media and apps
- Finding, using and returning to refreshed information
- Recognising the value of story-tellers, and focusing these groups, to collectively generate and produce the High Street narrative through relevant online content
- Be aware of the role of Internet of Things in discoverability and content – such as augmented reality, use of proximity beacons and geo-location and contactless technology

Strategic business planning

Every location has a unique 'Place DNA' at its heart, and 'digital' should be one component of a great location's DNA. 'Digital' can be used as part of the toolkit place-makers deploy to address economic performance, community development and engagement, and the perceptions of consumers towards a place

- Place-makers have access to multiple sources of valuable data; we need to use the Hub process to enable them to use it
- Making the Invest-to-Save business case for budgeting for digital capacity building
- Supporting a detailed understanding of the complex customer journey map and value of each stage within it. We must know the added-value aspect of the modern connected consumer's path to and from their engagement with the High Street; this is vital to making the right decisions in keeping the High Street relevant to consumers, and also in enhancing their experience of it

KEY OBSERVATIONS

This survey report aims to add a previously under-heard, authentic voice to the existing evidence base. Namely, that of the place-manager. The person 'at the coal face' of managing our High Streets, towns and city centres. The authors consider this approach to have validated the current forward trajectory towards embracing the digital High Street, and has helped to clarify priorities and a route map to continue the journey.

Below are the key observations and some further expanded points we believe pertinent to the research.

Observations on the High Street Digital Hub delivery

1. Measurable impacts - the Hub must deliver support that actually makes a measurable impact; training and resources must reach street-level
2. Recognise the dual-aspect of the place-maker, serving the businesses and also engaging the consumers
3. Beyond Simple – supporting place-makers in bridging the digital aspiration divide
4. Place-makers must accept that SME/VCSE engagement and trust is the key to success, and face-to-face contact is essential
5. The Hub focuses on place-makers, who in turn will acquire the confidence and knowledge to inspire their SME/VCSEs
6. Hub acting at a local High Street level but also feeding back to local strategic decision makers and government policy makers
7. The modern consumer expects to be able to get online in town centres, and SMEs/VCSEs need to have commercial grade access technology; the Hub should assist place-makers in influencing progress on connectivity

Complex places with unique stories

Perhaps the most unspoken characteristic of our town and city centres across the UK is that they all have the ability to be completely unique. Beyond the surface façade of replicated brand names and multiple retailers, there is a network of complex social, cultural and economic places that creates a sense of place, and therefore an experiential quality, to our High Streets. No matter how compelling the new technology, the entire High Street experience and its future economic success is underpinned by that local complexity and individuality.

During the face-to-face discussions with place-makers, the need was clear to help those unique local stories be told and discovered using digital means. Story-telling, whether around a fire, in a book or via Twitter, is an essential tool in creating shared experiences and community belonging. Place-makers and the businesses who look to them for guidance would benefit from digital skills training to enable this necessary story-telling, with digital marketing support to allow them to continue generating content and updating their story.

The Dual Aspect of Place-Makers

Stakeholders and place-makers have to maintain a multiple-aspect in terms of their engagement work. They are expected to support their businesses' relationships with local shoppers and workers as well as attracting visitors to the town centre. It is important that the Hub recognises this and provides advice and support that addresses the potential multiple demands being made on 'place'.

In practical terms, place-makers require support and guidance to ensure that both they and their stakeholders have the required tools to engage with the variety of audiences using High Streets. The Hub would be the vehicle through which advice on engaging with the various target market segments can be delivered, as well as associated training schemes, self-help guides and further professional and technological support can be offered.

Beyond Simple

The focus-session responses also indicated the recurring desire of High Street stakeholders to improve their ability to engage with the modern connected consumer and move 'Beyond Simple' to create more digitally mature, discoverable and accessible local centres. However, their ability to do so is hampered by poor connectivity, perceived time constraints and skills deficiencies.

Poor connectivity in our High Streets must be addressed by delivering efficient, accessible digital infrastructure. By considering fibre connections for businesses or rovingly fast public Wi-Fi as essential a service as street lighting, the connectivity gap can be bridged. Time constraints on place-managers and the skills deficiencies of both themselves and their stakeholders can be addressed through a suite of training, guides and in situ support to help those that can move 'Beyond Simple'.

Omni-channel Places

As the professional place-makers look to move 'Beyond Simple' in their own knowledge and skills base, the physical locations they represent and manage should also be supported to move 'Beyond Simple' in their interaction with connected consumers.

Major retail businesses have seen substantial benefit in embracing omni-channel engagement with their customer base, ensuring their brand identity, consumer content and purchase pathways are aligned in print, online, mobile and in-store. UK High Street locations should become Omni-Channel Places in the way they engage with their consumers. The High Street Digital Hub will guide locations in creating and maintaining high quality discoverable content online to be used throughout the customer journey and across all channels and touch points, helping to create vibrant Omni-Channel Places.

Looking forward, keeping ahead of changes

Given that the High Street has started to respond to the changes brought on by the onset of online commerce, it is important to keep a strategic perspective and stay focused well ahead of the current state of engagement. In essence, we need to anticipate where the ball is going to be.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The responses to this survey and focus group process suggest that the majority of High Street stakeholders, retailers and service organisations are aware of the new digital paradigm, and are seeking trusted guidance and informed leadership in order to maintain a competitive advantage. The High Street Digital Hub is well placed to deliver that. It would act as a strategic conduit, connecting place-managers and policy-makers to create and enable effective, sustainable and beneficial interventions that underpin resilient places.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Measurable impacts as a core value of the Hub
2. Reflect the dual aspect of the place-maker role, addressing business needs as well as engaging with consumers
3. Address the 'Beyond Simple' aspirations of more digitally mature locations
4. Hub should assist place-makers in influencing progress on connectivity

About the Authors



Chris Hurst
Chris@clockworkcity.co.uk
www.clockworkcity.co.uk

Connected Places UK

Guy Douglas
Guydoug@live.co.uk

This report was developed by Clockwork City and Connected Places UK, on behalf of Innovate UK. Both agencies have a wealth of strategic and practical place-making experience, and are dedicated to helping places prosper socially, culturally and economically.

Innovate UK

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Telephone: 01793 442 700
Email: support@innovateuk.gov.uk
www.innovateuk.gov.uk

Follow us on:     

Contact
Agata Samojlowicz
Agata.Samojlowicz@innovateuk.gov.uk