

DOUGLAS

City Centre Management

Douglas City Centre Strategy 2025



Douglas City Centre Strategy

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Introduction

Douglas city centre plays a role in the life of most island residents in one way or another, whether it's as a place to shop, have a night out, meet friends, work, or spend leisure time. It is therefore in the island's interest that it remains a convenient, vibrant, pleasant place to visit. The image of the city centre also plays a role in the island's identity and has the potential to impact the local economy through a range of industry sectors including tourism, retail, hospitality and financial services.

For much of its history, the town centre has been dominated by the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors. The nature of tourism has changed beyond recognition since Douglas's tourism heyday in the nineteenth and twentieth century and, over the last decade, particularly since the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020/21 the retail and hospitality sectors have been evolving extremely quickly. The pandemic changed our lives in many ways and these have left their impact on town centres throughout the British Isles. Even 'late adopters' became accustomed to online shopping during the pandemic accelerating the growth of ecommerce dramatically. In the UK, online retail sales peaked at 33.9% of all retail spending in 2020, a record high (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Even after restrictions eased, online shopping remained significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. For example, in May 2022, 26.6% of retail sales were still online, compared to just 19.7% in February 2020 (Office for National Statistics, 2021).

Another impact of the pandemic was a major change of work habits, particularly for office workers, with working from home and hybrid working having to be facilitated during lockdowns and then continuing to become the norm for some employers. In our online survey, 41% of respondents reported a change in their working pattern since the pandemic with 33% reporting that this has resulted in them visiting the city centre less often than before. This has clearly impacted the peak lunchtime trade in Douglas city centre and has followed the impact of large employers who used to be located within easy lunchtime walking distance of the city centre moving to out of town sites.

On top of these recent changes, the high cost of living is clearly impacting spending more generally so value and cost is playing an increasingly important role.

The island also loses shoppers who travel off the island for leisure and shopping trips. In our online survey 63% of respondents reported having taken off-island trips for leisure or shopping purposes over the last year. Of these, 37% travelled to Liverpool by ferry.

Finally, anecdotal feedback has suggested that since Tesco replaced Shoprite in the towns outside Douglas and at Victoria Road, shoppers are tending to visit their local Tesco rather than coming in to Lake Road and combining it with a wider shopping trip to Douglas. In our

online survey, 19% of respondents reported that since the change from Shoprite to Tesco they visit Douglas city centre less often.

Taking all of the factors above into account, it is hardly surprising that footfall in the city centre has dropped significantly since 2019. The total number of visitors to the city centre in 2024 was 9,079,142. This constitutes a 12.5% reduction from the 10,373,169 visitors in 2019. Although footfall measurement is not the whole story because the amount each visitor spends can fluctuate, it is an indicator of the number of customers available to the city centre businesses. It is also a factor that the Council and the Isle of Man Government can influence to some degree by ensuring the city centre is a pleasant and vibrant place to visit by keeping it clean, well presented, convenient to visit and by boosting visitors attending events. Consequently, the actions and projects proposed in this strategy aim to increase, or at the very least, halt the decline in, footfall.

Background

In April 2025, Business Isle of Man published its [Local Economy Strategy 2024 – 2035](#) with the vision ‘To ensure the Island is a great place to live, supporting vibrancy and distinctiveness in our city, towns, and villages by empowering communities and enabling retail, leisure, and hospitality businesses’ (Business Isle of Man, 2025)

The strategy was accompanied by three related grant schemes offered by the Department for Enterprise; the relaunched [Town and Village Regeneration Scheme](#), the relaunched [Domestic Event Fund](#) and the [Local Economy Fund](#).

Douglas City Council has produced this City Centre Strategy in order to develop proposals for supporting the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in Douglas city centre in line with the vision, guiding principles and strategic goals of the Local Economy Strategy. As the island’s capital and main retail, leisure and hospitality hub, it is clear that Douglas city centre makes a nationally significant contribution to the local economy by providing services and quality of life not only to Douglas ratepayers but to the majority of the island’s residents. Consequently, access to the new funding streams is considered an important opportunity to make significant improvements that can benefit the Isle of Man.

Methodology

The first stage in this strategy was to seek feedback from the Manx public about which factors might encourage them to visit the city centre more frequently. A post on the Douglas City Centre Management Facebook page on 30th April 2025 asked,

“Over the last few years, footfall in city centres across the UK has dropped and Douglas city centre has also seen a reduction in people visiting. We suspect there are a number of reasons for this and would like your input to help us understand the local reasons for footfall having dropped. As a starting point for this process, we would be very grateful if you would comment below to answer the following question...

What single change would you like to see in Douglas city centre that would encourage you to visit the city centre more often?”

A full review of the comments received by 7th May is appended at [Appendix 1](#). The issues raised have been grouped into subject matter below in order of the number of comments received

- Car Parking – 174 comments : Many comments highlighted the need for more parking spaces, cheaper parking, and better accessibility for disabled and parent-child parking. The lack of parking was frequently mentioned as a major deterrent to visiting the city centre.
- Variety of Shops – 139 comments: There is a strong desire for a greater variety of shops, including well-known UK brands like Primark, Zara, and H&M. Many comments also mentioned the need for more independent retailers and lower rents to attract businesses. Although the Council owns and is the landlord for several shop units in its housing estates, it does not own any shops in the city centre. Consequently it has no influence over which businesses are present in the city centre. For that reasons there are no recommendations in this strategy regarding the choice or variety of shops.
- Levels of Rent – 54 comments: High rents were cited as a significant barrier for businesses, leading to many empty shops. Suggestions included reducing rents and offering incentives to attract new businesses. See above; as the Council is not the landlord for the shops in the city centre it has no influence over the level of rents charged by commercial landlords.
- Toilets – 24 comments: The need for more public toilets, especially centrally located ones, was mentioned frequently. Parents highlighted the need for child-friendly facilities.
- Food – 15 comments: Comments suggested more diverse food options, including street food markets and better restaurants.
- Rates – 14 comments: High business rates were seen as a deterrent for new businesses. Suggestions included reducing rates to make it more affordable for retailers.

- Seating – 10 comments: More seating areas were requested to make the city centre more comfortable for visitors.
- Music – 8 comments: Some comments suggested playing music in the streets to create a more lively atmosphere.
- Cafes – 7 comments: There were mixed opinions about the number of cafes, with some suggesting fewer cafes and more diverse shops.
- Events – 6 comments: Organizing more events and activities in the city centre was seen as a way to attract visitors.
- Entertainment – 4 comments: Suggestions included more entertainment options like cinemas, arcades, and play areas.
- Smoking – 3 comments: A few comments mentioned banning smoking and vaping in the city centre.
- Restaurants – 2 comments: More diverse and better-quality restaurants were requested.
- Markets – 2 comments: The idea of regular street markets was mentioned as a way to attract visitors.
- Lighting – 1 comment: Improved lighting was suggested to make the city centre more inviting.

Not all of these issues fall within the direct remit of Douglas City Council. Where they do, this strategy recommends measures the Council could take in support of the local economy. Where the issue does not fall directly within the Council's remit it will aim to engage with other public authorities or the private sector in an effort to address the matter.

The following chapter addresses each of the main issues in turn and makes strategic recommendations for action.

Car Parking

Car Parking was the No.1 issue raised by respondents at the initial information gathering stage with 38% of comments relating to one or more aspects of car parking. These included availability at peak times, availability of disabled and parent and child parking, cost (with free parking suggested), and the short duration of disc parking.

Availability

The peak time for footfall in the city centre is Saturday, usually between 11.00am and 4.00pm. Figure 1 below shows the distribution across a typical month (in this case April 2025) with clear peaks during weekday lunch times and a more sustained period between 11.00am and 4.00pm on Saturday. Footfall on Sundays is typically lower than Saturdays and weekdays with most activity being between 11.00am and 3.00pm.

Footfall Counts by hour

The figures shown below are calculated using a weekly average

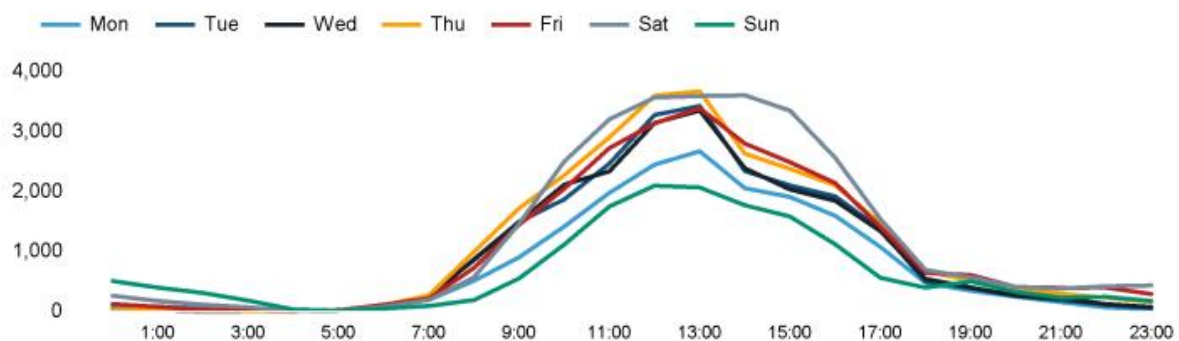


Figure 1 Typical daily and hourly footfall

In response to the concerns raised about the lack of car parking, Douglas City Centre Management carried out two snapshot surveys of space availability in the city centre car parks at peak footfall periods both during the working week and the weekend. The first survey was carried out between 1300hrs and 1430hrs on Thursday 26th June 2025 and the second survey was carried out between 1300hrs and 1345hrs on Saturday 5th July. Full results are provided in Appendix 2. In summary, there were 258 available spaces on Thursday 26th June and 503 available spaces on Saturday 5th July at peak times.

Figure 2 shows the average daily and hourly occupancy of Shaw's Brow taken from the (Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system. The car park is fully occupied from Tuesday to Thursday during normal commuting hours, with slightly less use on a Monday and relatively low occupancy at the weekend.

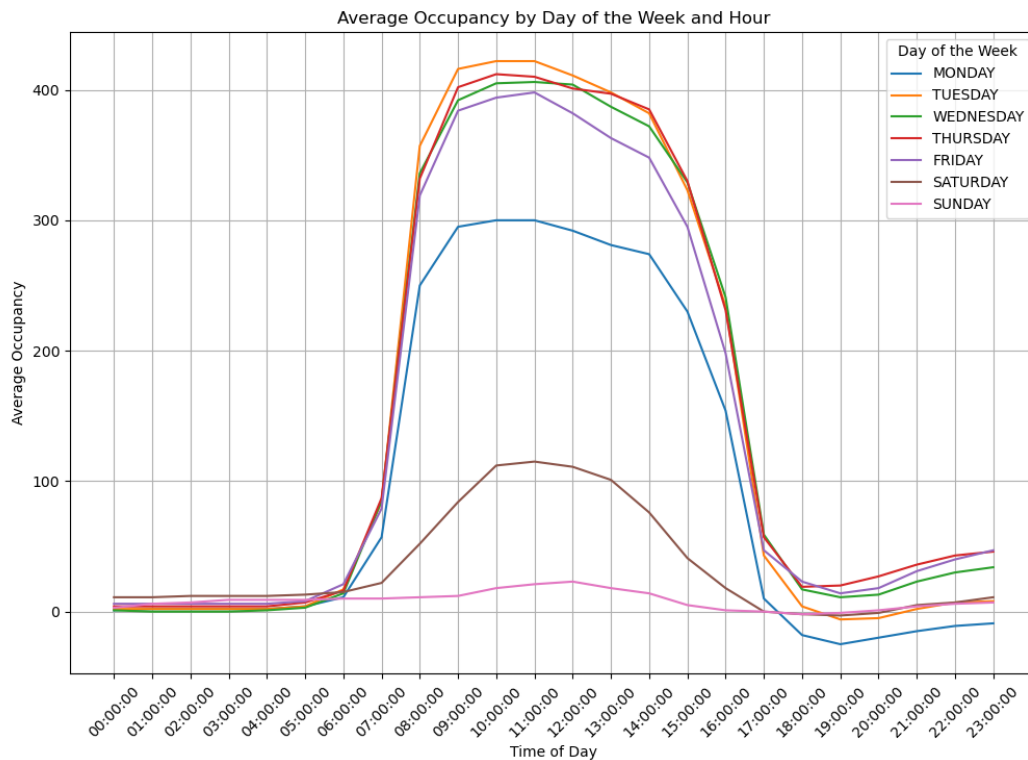


Figure 2 Shaw's Brow Car Park daily and hourly occupancy(1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025)

Together this demonstrates that availability of car parking is not a problem during peak shopping hours during the week or at the weekend. A review of comments received on social media when these figures were provided suggests that the people complaining about the lack of car parking are really complaining about the lack of *free* car parking.

One of the challenges is to amend shoppers' habits about where they park or look for parking. Although it is clear that commuters who work in the area around Shaw's Brow are aware of its presence, weekend shoppers appear not to be. Similarly, shoppers may not be aware that space availability in Drumgold Street increases on levels 2 and 3 or that the contract levels in Chester Street are available to the public at the weekend.

In our online survey, 30% of respondents who expressed a preference said that Saturday was their preferred day to visit the city centre to shop or spend leisure time, with a further 6% preferring Sunday. So, a third of shoppers expressing a preference still favour the weekend as their primary shopping days. In the same survey, 74% of respondents said that if more free car parking was available on a specific day or time, they would be more likely to visit on that day or time and 81% of respondents said they would be happy to walk for 5

minutes or more from a free car park to either the Strand Centre or M&S. Shaw's Brow is an approximately two minutes walk to the rear doors of M&S.

The Council currently charges a flat rate tariff of £2.00 (inc. VAT) for all day on Saturday and Sunday. Despite this, use of the car park at the weekend has remained low. When the Council operated Chester Street Car Park in the past and ran the "Free after Three" initiative, there was a noticeable spike in footfall from mid afternoon.

Recommendation 1

That the Council trials providing free car parking at Shaw's Brow Car Park from 7.00pm on Friday evenings until 07.00 on Monday mornings and that this promoted heavily to ensure shoppers and retailers are aware of the initiative.

Recommendation 2

That the Council invites the Department of Infrastructure to join it in providing free car parking at the weekend in one or more of its car parks in the city centre.

Disabled and Parent & Child Parking

The next most common feedback we received about car parking was about disabled parking. There were 18 comments that included;

- Insufficient Number of Spaces - Many commenters noted that there simply aren't enough disabled parking bays available, especially near key shopping areas and amenities.
- Proximity to Shops and Facilities - Several people emphasized that existing disabled spaces are too far from the main shopping areas, making access difficult for those with mobility issues.
- Wider Bays Needed - A common request was for wider parking bays to accommodate wheelchair users and those needing extra space to enter and exit vehicles safely.
- Better Signage and Enforcement - Some comments mentioned that disabled bays are often misused by non-blue badge holders, and called for stricter enforcement and clearer signage.
- Covered or Sheltered Parking - A few people suggested that covered disabled parking would be helpful, especially in poor weather, to make access safer and more comfortable.

- Time Limits and Accessibility - There were concerns about time restrictions being too short for those who need more time to shop or attend appointments, and suggestions to extend time limits for blue badge holders.
- Drop-Off Zones - A couple of comments proposed dedicated drop-off zones for disabled passengers, especially near pedestrianised areas where parking isn't possible.
- Parent and Child Parking: The need for more parent and child parking spaces was frequently mentioned. These spaces need to be wider to accommodate the extra space required for getting children in and out of cars.

Appendix 3 contains the results of a survey of these issues carried out on 19th June 2025. The key findings of the survey in relation to the points above are:

- There are 98 disabled parking spaces in Douglas City Centre. There are no guidelines or standards for the number of on-street accessible spaces but British Standard BS 8300-1:2018 recommends that for off-street parking, at least 5% of the total capacity should be designated as accessible spaces. Douglas City centre has around 1,400 public on-street and off-street public parking spaces, 5% of which equates to a requirement for 70 disabled spaces. Against this benchmark Douglas appears to score highly in relation to the total number of spaces. However BS8300 also states that accessible spaces should be 2.4m wide with a 1.2m access zone on either side and at the rear for boot access. Of the total number of spaces;
 - 46 are wide spaces with room to manoeuvre a chair and 52 are normal-sized parking spaces. 39 of the normal-sized spaces open onto a carriageway and only 9 of these are located next to dropped kerbs or flush paving.
 - 46 are under cover and 52 are open air.
 - Only 48 of the spaces have good or excellent signage and road markings. Many of the spaces are poorly marked or lack signs. In the worst cases, such as Market Street (see Figure 1) and Chester Street Car Park (see Figure 2), there are spaces where the markings are confusing to the point that they are likely to put drivers off using them for fear of receiving a penalty notice.
 - 66 of the spaces are considered to be well located for city centre shops, however, others such as those at the Sea Terminal, serve specific locations in the city centre.
 - During the survey, only one space was being used without a blue badge being displayed.
 - There are only 6 parent and child parking spaces, all of which are in Chester Street Car Park.

- There is only one designated drop-off and pick-up layby in the city centre, outside the Premier Inn in Market Street, but the signage is so confusing as to make the layby unusable for this purpose.(See Figure 3)

Recommendation 3

That the poor marking and signage of disabled parking spaces in Chester Street Car Park and Market Street is brought to the attention of the Department of Infrastructure.

Recommendation 4

That the confusing signage and road markings for the drop-off/pick-up layby in Market Street is brought to the attention of the Department of Infrastructure with a request for the Department to also consider designating other similar areas in the city centre, such as a suggested site at the eastern end of Market Street.

Recommendation 5

That the lack of dropped kerbs at some of the on-street disabled spaces is brought to the attention of the Department of Infrastructure with a request that they programme in installing appropriate means to facilitate wheelchair access between the nearest pavement and the disabled parking space.

Recommendation 6

That the Council explores the potential to include some parent & child spaces in the Bottleneck Car Park when it is re-marked.

Toilets and Wellbeing Facilities

Numerous comments were received about the impact of toilet facilities on people's likelihood of visiting the city centre including;

- **General availability:** The current facilities are seen as insufficient, especially for families with young children and disabled individuals. There were specific mentions of the need for centrally located toilets, as the existing ones are at either end of the street, making it inconvenient for visitors.
- **Family-Friendly Facilities:** Several comments emphasized the need for toilets with space to accommodate buggies and children. The current facilities are often too small and not designed with families in mind.
- Parents also mentioned the need for baby changing facilities and spaces where they can feed their babies in a comfortable environment.
- **Disabled Access:** The need for more disabled-friendly toilets was frequently mentioned. The current facilities are seen as inadequate, and there were calls for more accessible toilets with longer time limits.
- **Cleanliness:** Cleanliness of the existing toilets was a concern. Some comments mentioned that the public toilets need to be better maintained and cleaned regularly.
- **Specific Locations:** The toilets at M&S were frequently mentioned, with some comments noting that they are often the only option available, but they are not sufficient for the demand. Chester Street toilets were also mentioned, with some comments suggesting that they are not always convenient for everyone.
- **Summary of Toilet-Related Comments:**
 - Need for More Toilets: 24 comments
 - Family-Friendly Facilities: 11 comments
 - Disabled Access: 7 comments
 - Cleanliness: 5 comments
 - Specific Locations: 4 comments

The public toilet situation has deteriorated since the toilets in the Strand Centre were closed by the centre's owners. An approach has been made to the owners but they are not willing to reopen the toilets. Tower House has also evolved from a retail area with toilets available for customers. This leaves the facilities in Drumgold Street Car Park and Chester Street Car Park as the only public conveniences in the centre with others further afield at the Sea Terminal, Shaw's Brow Car Park, Loch Promenade and the Villa Arcade.

Please see [Appendix 4](#) for a review of current public toilet provision in and near the city centre.

It is clear from the survey of public toilets that although there are a range of public conveniences available around the edge of the city centre, particularly during the day, there is currently a gap in provision in the heart of the city centre and that there is a gap generally in provision of the following;

- An adult Changing Places facility;
- Family friendly toilets suitable for use by parents of any gender with toddlers and buggies;
- Clean, high quality and well maintained facilities that aren't subject to vandalism;
- Baby changing and feeding spaces.

During the development of the strategy the Council received a specific request for a Changing Places Toilet in the city centre. The request from Mr Collister is reproduced with his permission as Appendix 5. He explains that city centre visits are often cut short as a result of the lack of a suitable facility being available and that the closest facility at the Manx Museum is often too far to be reached in time. Officers have visited the very impressive facility at the Manx Museum and the staff there have offered their advice should the Council wish to develop a facility in the city centre.

Recommendation 7

That the Council explores the potential for funding the provision of a new central customer well-being centre using grant funding and Council funding to buy a vacant unit in Strand Street.

It is proposed that the facility should contain;

- One Changing Places Toilet
- One quiet room for use by individuals with autism or other conditions where they would benefit from being able to go to a quiet space away from the stimulation and hustle and bustle of the city centre. The room would also be available for baby feeding or insulin injection or similar.
- Several unisex fully accessible toilets with baby changing facilities that are available for anyone to use including being suitable for families with toddlers and buggies, anyone needing to change nappies or colostomy bags or similar and anyone just needing a toilet irrespective of their ability, disability, gender, gender identity etc.

Street Markets

Several comments suggested that street markets with local sellers offering fruit, vegetables, meats, flowers, artisan breads, and cakes as well as food vans with outdoor seating areas would help create a vibrant atmosphere and generate footfall. This model was explored over the summer of 2024 with Douglas Foodie Market on North Quay and was successful initially although, for reasons outside the Council's control, the initiative did not continue in 2025. In the past continental food markets held on Loch Promenade have generated high levels of footfall but also elicited complaints that trade was being drawn away from local businesses by off-island traders. During TT 2025 the MannMade Festival on the Bottleneck Car Park explored the potential for local traders collaborating under a single market operator. This model is considered to be the most suitable way of delivering regular sustainable markets that deliver footfall and ambience although some experimentation is likely to be required to find a solution that delivers that footfall into the city centre without generating logistical problems or competition that proves detrimental to permanent businesses located in the surrounding area.

Recommendation 8

That the Council engages with potential market operators to trial several formats of local produce markets in or near the city centre in order to evaluate their positive and/or negative impacts on trade for businesses in the area.

Seating

Several comments were received about seating in the city centre. Currently the permanent seating is located in the side streets linking Strand Street to the Promenade and this make them prone to the effects of wind blowing off the sea.

The reason for the current distribution of seating is that the Duke Street, Strand Street, Castle Street corridor is too narrow to accommodate seating in its centre without it obstructing access by service and emergency vehicles. With the exception of the side streets linking to the Promenade, there are no breakout spaces or squares where seats could be provided where users could be sheltered from the wind or rain.

The only remaining option would be to place public seating directly in front of shop windows but retail businesses value their window displays and are unlikely to be amenable to public seating being placed there. However, there is a constant turnover of shop occupants and shop units can be temporarily vacant for a variety of reasons. This provides the opportunity to place temporary seating in front of temporarily vacant units without impacting businesses or obstructing the seat. The seating would need to be a suitable design that would allow it to be moved from time to time as shops become occupied but sufficiently difficult to move to deter unauthorised removal or relocation. It would also need to address its impact on visually impaired pedestrians and emergency access.

Recommendation 9

That the Council liaises with property agents and groups representing disabled people to explore the potential for temporary seating to be placed in front of vacant units while they are vacant and, if supported, to prepare a specification or brief for the purchase or construction of suitable seats.

Music

It was suggested in the survey that music has an important role to play in creating an attractive atmosphere in the city centre. This includes both live and recorded music.

Douglas City Centre Management has for many years managed a busking initiative where both local and visiting buskers are licensed to perform in the city centre. All buskers are auditioned prior to receiving their first licence to ensure they are competent to perform and will be enjoyable to listen to. Once licensed, buskers can book slots online according to a strict set of rules that aims to prevent over-saturation and nuisance. Generally this initiative is well received. Although there are several locations available for buskers to book, their preference is normally Drumgold Street near M&S as this is the area with the highest footfall and therefore the highest earning potential.

Douglas City Centre Management also manages the playing of music and messages through the speaker system incorporated into the lighting columns in the city centre. This system is normally restricted to the Christmas period due to the cost of licensing involved however there is potential to explore expanding the use of the speaker system to play music more regularly.

A small online survey on the City Centre Management Facebook page suggested that the Christmas music playing through the speakers is generally supported and welcome, although there remain some people who are opposed to it. Officers consider the system offers the potential to add an additional dimension to city centre experience and propose experimenting with different types of material to gauge responses.

Recommendation 10

That a trial playing different types of media through the speaker system is explored over 2025 and 2026 and feedback monitored.

Events

Respondents to the survey welcomed events in the city centre and suggested that more events, particularly family friendly events, could help generate footfall.

Suggestions included;

- Street Markets
- Pop-up Shops
- Live music
- Family friendly events such as play areas
- Cultural and community events
- Late night opening events

Douglas City Centre Management has a long track record of organising events in the city centre including;

- “Five Days of Fun” – free children’s rides and craft workshops during school holidays
- “Summer in the City” – a programme of small events during the school summer holidays.
- “Guts Grave” – Jinny the Witch in her lair
- Santa’s Grotto
- The “Christmas Greatest Show” – multiple events to mark the switching on of the Christmas lights including fire shows, ice sculptures, walkabout characters, outdoor cinema etc.
- Late night Christmas Shopping
- Christmas Live – Live Nativity
- Christmas Stage
- Tower of Refuge Walk
- Dinosaur and character walkabouts

The provision of funding through the Domestic Events Fund has assisted greatly with the ability to fund these events without the full cost falling on Douglas ratepayers but organising and managing the events takes up a great deal of the City Centre Manager’s time through the year and the number of events is limited by their capacity to undertake this role in addition to their other duties. Expanding the number of events will therefore require the assistance of an event planner.

Recommendation 11

That the Council seeks support through the Local Economy Fund and/or the Domestic Event Fund to engage an event management specialist to assist in planning and delivering more events in the city centre with the specific remit of generating footfall.

References

Business Isle of Man. (2025). *Local Economy Strategy 2024-2035*.

Office for National Statistics. (2021). *Census 2021 Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on retail sales in 2020*.

Office for National Statistics. (2021). *How our spending has changed since the end of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions*.

Appendix 1: Summary of comments received by 07/05/25 to Facebook post on 30/04/25

The Facebook Post

Over the last few years, footfall in city centres across the UK has dropped and Douglas city centre has also seen a reduction in people visiting. We suspect there are a number of reasons for this and would like your input to help us understand the local reasons for footfall having dropped. As a starting point for this process, we would be very grateful if you would comment below to answer the following question...

What single change would you like to see in Douglas city centre that would encourage you to visit the city centre more often?

Overall Summary of Comments:

Parking: Many comments highlighted the need for more parking spaces, cheaper parking, and better accessibility for disabled and parent-child parking. The lack of parking was frequently mentioned as a major deterrent to visiting the city centre.

Shops: There is a strong desire for a greater variety of shops, including well-known UK brands like Primark, Zara, and H&M. Many comments also mentioned the need for more independent retailers and lower rents to attract businesses.

Rent: High rents were cited as a significant barrier for businesses, leading to many empty shops. Suggestions included reducing rents and offering incentives to attract new businesses.

Toilets: The need for more public toilets, especially centrally located ones, was mentioned frequently. Parents highlighted the need for child-friendly facilities.

Food: Comments suggested more diverse food options, including street food markets and better restaurants.

Rates: High business rates were seen as a deterrent for new businesses. Suggestions included reducing rates to make it more affordable for retailers.

Seating: More seating areas were requested to make the city centre more comfortable for visitors.

Music: Some comments suggested playing music in the streets to create a more lively atmosphere.

Cafes: There were mixed opinions about the number of cafes, with some suggesting fewer cafes and more diverse shops.

Events: Organizing more events and activities in the city centre was seen as a way to attract visitors.

Entertainment: Suggestions included more entertainment options like cinemas, arcades, and play areas.

Smoking: A few comments mentioned banning smoking and vaping in the city centre.

Restaurants: More diverse and better-quality restaurants were requested.

Markets: The idea of regular street markets was mentioned as a way to attract visitors.

Lighting: Improved lighting was suggested to make the city centre more inviting.

Ranking by Number of Comments:

Parking: 174 comments

Shops: 139 comments

Rent: 54 comments

Toilets: 24 comments

Food: 15 comments

Rates: 14 comments

Seating: 10 comments

Music: 8 comments

Cafes: 7 comments

Events: 6 comments

Entertainment: 4 comments

Smoking: 3 comments

Restaurants: 2 comments

Markets: 2 comments

Lighting: 1 comment

Key Issues and Suggestions Regarding Parking:

1. Availability:

General Lack of Parking: Many comments highlighted the difficulty in finding parking spaces, especially during peak times. This was seen as a major deterrent to visiting the city centre.

Disabled Parking: There were several mentions of the need for more disabled parking spaces, as the current availability is insufficient.

Parent and Child Parking: The need for more parent and child parking spaces was frequently mentioned. These spaces need to be wider to accommodate the extra space required for getting children in and out of cars.

2. Cost:

High Parking Fees: Many people commented on the high cost of parking, suggesting that it discourages visits to the city centre. There were calls for cheaper or even free parking options.

Free Parking on Weekends: Some suggested that parking should be free on weekends to encourage more people to visit the city centre during their leisure time.

3. Convenience:

Short Parking Durations: The current parking durations were seen as too short, especially for those who want to spend more time shopping, dining, or attending events. Suggestions included extending the parking duration to allow for a more relaxed visit.

Promenade Parking: There were several comments about the promenade parking, with suggestions to make it available year-round rather than just during the Christmas season.

4. Specific Areas:

Chester Street Car Park: This car park was frequently mentioned, with comments about its high cost and the difficulty in finding spaces. Some suggested making it free for the first two hours.

Promenade: The promenade was highlighted as an area where parking is particularly challenging. Some comments suggested reopening it for parking to alleviate congestion in other areas.

5. Alternative Solutions:

Park and Ride Schemes: Some comments suggested implementing park and ride schemes, where people can park in designated areas outside the city centre and take a shuttle bus into town.

Multi-Storey Car Parks: There were suggestions to build more multi-storey car parks to increase the overall number of parking spaces available.

6. Impact on Businesses:

Business Impact: Many comments linked the parking issues directly to the decline in footfall and the negative impact on local businesses. Easier and cheaper parking was seen as essential to revitalizing the city centre.

Summary of Parking-Related Comments:

Parking: 174 comments

Disabled Parking: 18 comments

Parent and Child Parking: 11 comments

High Parking Fees: 10 comments

Free Parking on Weekends: 4 comments

Short Parking Durations: 3 comments

Promenade Parking: 25 comments

Chester Street Car Park: 6 comments

Park and Ride Schemes: 4 comments

Multi-Storey Car Parks: 2 comments

Conclusion:

Parking is clearly a major concern for many people, with issues ranging from availability and cost to convenience and specific problem areas. The Council owns and operates Shaw's Brow Car Park and the Bottleneck Car Park in the city centre and consequently has the opportunity to influence a strategy for city centre car parking. Ideally, a strategy would require the cooperation of the Department of Infrastructure which owns and operates

Drumgold Street Car Park, Chester Street Car Park and Parade Street Car Park as well as on-street car parking.

Most Requested Shops:

1. Primark: Frequently mentioned as a desired addition to Douglas city centre. Many comments expressed a strong desire for this popular budget clothing retailer.
2. Zara: Another highly requested shop, known for its trendy and affordable fashion.
3. H&M: Mentioned multiple times as a desired addition, offering a wide range of clothing for all ages.
4. B&M: Popular for its variety of household goods and affordable prices.
5. Home Bargains: Similar to B&M, this store was requested for its wide range of products at low prices.
6. Matalan: Known for its affordable clothing and homeware, Matalan was a popular request.
7. George at Asda: Many comments mentioned the need for a store like George, which offers affordable clothing and home goods.
8. The Range: Requested for its extensive selection of home, garden, and leisure products.
9. Dunelm: Known for home furnishings, Dunelm was frequently mentioned as a desired addition.
10. Smyth's: A popular request for its wide range of toys and games.
11. Food Warehouse: Requested for its bulk food items and affordable prices.
12. Greggs: Many comments expressed a desire for this popular bakery chain.
13. Nike: Mentioned as a desired addition for sportswear and footwear.
14. Schuh: Requested for its wide range of footwear.
15. Schuh Kids: Similar to Schuh, but specifically for children's footwear.
16. Lush: Known for its handmade cosmetics, Lush was a popular request.
17. John Lewis: Frequently mentioned for its high-quality products and wide range of goods.

Number of Mentions for Each Retailer:

1. Primark: 13 comments
2. B&M: 5 comments
3. Zara: 3 comments
4. H&M: 3 comments
5. Home Bargains: 3 comments
6. The Range: 3 comments
7. Greggs: 3 comments
8. Matalan: 2 comments
9. Dunelm: 2 comments
10. Schuh: 2 comments
11. John Lewis: 2 comments
12. George at Asda: 1 comment
13. Smyth's: 1 comment
14. Food Warehouse: 1 comment
15. Nike: 1 comment
16. Schuh Kids: 1 comment
17. Lush: 1 comment

These counts reflect the retailers that people most frequently mentioned as desired additions to Douglas city centre.

Conclusion:

The most requested shops reflect a desire for a mix of affordable clothing retailers, home goods stores, and specialty shops. Although the Council has no influence over the businesses that operate in the city centre, officers have regular meetings with the local commercial property agents and will communicate the list of retailers suggested to that forum.

Comments About Toilets:

General Availability:

- Many comments highlighted the need for more public toilets in the city centre. The current facilities are seen as insufficient, especially for families with young children and disabled individuals.
- There were specific mentions of the need for centrally located toilets, as the existing ones are at either end of the street, making it inconvenient for visitors.

Family-Friendly Facilities:

- Several comments emphasized the need for toilets with space to accommodate buggies and children. The current facilities are often too small and not designed with families in mind.
- Parents also mentioned the need for baby changing facilities and spaces where they can feed their babies in a comfortable environment.

Disabled Access:

- The need for more disabled-friendly toilets was frequently mentioned. The current facilities are seen as inadequate, and there were calls for more accessible toilets with longer time limits.

Cleanliness:

- Cleanliness of the existing toilets was a concern. Some comments mentioned that the public toilets need to be better maintained and cleaned regularly.

Specific Locations:

- The toilets at M&S were frequently mentioned, with some comments noting that they are often the only option available, but they are not sufficient for the demand.
- Chester Street toilets were also mentioned, with some comments suggesting that they are not always convenient for everyone.

Summary of Toilet-Related Comments:

- Need for More Toilets: 24 comments

- Family-Friendly Facilities: 11 comments
- Disabled Access: 7 comments
- Cleanliness: 5 comments
- Specific Locations: 4 comments

Example Comments:

- "Toilets too, you have to go to either end of the street, really could do with one in the middle."
- "Clean public toilets would be good."
- "Better facilities for families please! More parent/baby parking spaces, toilets with space to fit a buggy and/or children with you (rather than tiny cubicles with hand dryers that terrify most little ones) and space to feed and change babies in a warm, comfortable environment."
- "Parking and more toilets, be good to see more shops opening not closing."
- "Shops!!! More parking, more toilets (my kids are terrified of the M&S hand dryers), more lunch spots."

Conclusion:

These comments reflect a strong need for improved and more accessible toilet facilities in Douglas city centre. The Council is a provider of public toilets and is therefore well placed to explore the potential to meet the clear demand.

Comments About Food:

Street Markets:

- Several comments suggested organizing street markets with local sellers offering fruit, vegetables, meats, flowers, artisan breads, and cakes. These markets could also include food vans and outdoor seating areas, creating a vibrant atmosphere.

Restaurants and Cafes:

- There were mixed opinions about the number of cafes in the city centre. Some comments suggested fewer cafes and more diverse shops, while others emphasized the need for better-quality restaurants and more diverse food options.
- Suggestions included allowing food outlets to have limited outdoor seating with cosmetic renovations to enhance the dining experience.

Visibility and Promotion:

- One comment highlighted the need for better visibility and promotion of food, drink, and special offers. Making it easier for people to discover what's on offer could help attract more visitors to the city centre.

Pop-Up Shops:

- The idea of utilizing empty stores for pop-up shops, including street food vendors, was mentioned. This could provide a temporary solution to the issue of empty shops and add variety to the food options available.

Family-Friendly Facilities:

- Comments emphasized the need for family-friendly food options, including places where parents can feed and change their babies in a comfortable environment.

Specific Requests:

- Some comments mentioned specific food outlets they would like to see, such as Greggs, which is known for its bakery products.

Example Comments:

- "Canopy to selected areas of the street with permission for food outlets to have limited outdoor seating, granted with cosmetic renovations."
- "More variety of shops and less cafes always opening up. Less closed down buildings too."
- "One thing that would help bring people back is making it easier to discover what's actually on offer — especially around food, drink, and special offers. A lot of people say they'd go more often if they knew what was happening or where to go."
- "Street markets with fruit, veg, meats, flowers, artisan breads/cakes etc all from local sellers. Have space for food vans and outdoor seating. Maybe areas for live music or entertainment. People need more of a reason to head into town and spend some time."

Conclusion:

These comments reflect a desire for more diverse and better-promoted food options in Douglas city centre, including street markets, pop-up shops, and family-friendly facilities. Although the Council has no influence in relation to the businesses that operate in the city centre it does have the potential to organize food related events such as markets and also issues street trading licences.

Comments About Seating:

General Need for More Seating:

Many comments highlighted the need for more seating areas in the city centre. This includes benches and other places where people can sit and rest while shopping or enjoying the city.

Specific Locations:

Some comments mentioned specific areas where seating is needed, such as Regent Street, which is described as a "wind tunnel" and would benefit from more seating options.

There were suggestions to add seating in central parts of the street to make it more inviting for visitors.

Comfort and Accessibility:

Comments emphasized the need for comfortable and accessible seating, especially for older people and those with mobility issues. More benches would make the city centre more welcoming and user-friendly.

Integration with Other Facilities:

Some comments suggested integrating seating areas with other facilities, such as food vans and outdoor seating for cafes. This would create a more vibrant and social atmosphere.

Example Comments:

"Canopy to selected areas of the street with permission for food outlets to have limited outdoor seating, granted with cosmetic renovations."

"Street markets with fruit, veg, meats, flowers, artisan breads/cakes etc all from local sellers. Have space for food vans and outdoor seating. Maybe areas for live music or entertainment. People need more of a reason to head into town and spend some time."

"A good clean might help! The Chinese granite is filthy in places and reflects badly on the town. As everyone says, toilets are badly needed and seating somewhere other than the windy side streets would be good...but not like those godawful monstrosities that have now spoilt the prom walkway!"

"Free or cheap events for families. Extended free parking availability. Park or play area for children. Seating areas to have a break. Better choice of shops."

Conclusion:

These comments reflect a strong need for more and better seating options in Douglas city centre, which would make the area more comfortable and inviting for visitors.

The Council does provide public seating and therefore has the potential to review public seating and provide more seating where there is an insufficiency.

Comments About Music:

Rehearsal Spaces:

- Some comments suggested utilizing empty units as rehearsal spaces for local music and performance groups. This would provide a venue for local artists to practice and perform.

Live Music and Entertainment:

- There were several suggestions to include areas for live music or entertainment in street markets and other public spaces. This would create a vibrant atmosphere and give people more reasons to visit the city centre.
- Pop-up shops and events featuring music were also mentioned as a way to attract visitors and make the city centre more lively.

Buskers:

- Comments highlighted the need to showcase local musicians and buskers. This would add to the cultural and social experience of visiting the city centre.

Background Music:

- One comment suggested playing Manx music through speakers on lampposts to create a unique atmosphere. This would enhance the overall experience for visitors and make the city centre more inviting.

Example Comments:

- "If empty units - particularly large ones - can't be filled with single outlets, utilise them as multiple use/stall emporium style shops, art exhibition spaces, pop up, drop in advice/charity/meeting centres. Allow use for rehearsal space for local music/performance groups. Think out of the box Douglas! And above all make it affordable!"
- "Street markets with fruit, veg, meats, flowers, artisan breads/cakes etc all from local sellers. Have space for food vans and outdoor seating. Maybe areas for live music or entertainment. People need more of a reason to head into town and spend some time."

- "Every lamppost has a speaker. Play Manx music to create some unique atmosphere (but not near a busker!) and today's special offers from retailers."

Conclusion:

These comments reflect a desire for more music and entertainment options in Douglas city centre, including live performances, rehearsal spaces, and background music to enhance the atmosphere. Some of these such as busking the speaker system are within the Council's remit so there is potential to explore development of some of these ideas.

Comments and Suggestions for Events:

Street Markets and Pop-Up Shops:

- Many comments suggested organizing regular street markets with local sellers offering a variety of products such as fruit, vegetables, meats, flowers, artisan breads, and cakes. These markets could also include food vans and outdoor seating areas.
- Utilizing empty stores for pop-up shops, including street food vendors and local artisans, was mentioned as a way to add variety and attract visitors.

Live Music and Entertainment:

- Several comments highlighted the need for live music and entertainment events. This could include areas for live performances, buskers, and music events in public spaces.
- Pop-up music events and integrating music with other activities were also suggested to create a vibrant atmosphere.

Family-Friendly Events:

- Organizing free or affordable events for families was a common suggestion. This could include activities for children, play areas, and family-friendly entertainment.
- Seasonal events, such as Halloween, Easter, and Christmas markets, were mentioned as ways to attract families to the city centre.

Cultural and Community Events:

- Comments suggested hosting cultural and community events, such as art exhibitions, craft markets, and charity stalls. These events could provide a platform for local artists and community groups to showcase their work.
- Encouraging local participation and creating a sense of community through events was seen as important.

Evening and Night-Time Events:

- Extending opening hours for shops and organizing evening events were suggested to attract visitors after work hours. This could include late-night shopping, evening markets, and entertainment events.

- Creating a lively evening atmosphere with food, music, and social activities was seen as a way to make the city centre more appealing.

Special Attractions and Festivals:

- Hosting special attractions and festivals, such as food festivals, music festivals, and themed events, was mentioned as a way to draw visitors to the city centre.
- Events that offer unique experiences and create excitement were seen as important for revitalizing the area.

Example Comments:

- "Street markets with fruit, veg, meats, flowers, artisan breads/cakes etc all from local sellers. Have space for food vans and outdoor seating. Maybe areas for live music or entertainment. People need more of a reason to head into town and spend some time."
- "Pop up shops to use empty space, street food, music events (Tower House seems to be underused) and more popular shops (H&M, Zara, John Lewis) that would open until 7/8pm."
- "Free or cheap events for families. Extended free parking availability. Park or play area for children. Seating areas to have a break. Better choice of shops."
- "Make the island bus service free to all residents, it will lower the use of vehicles & give access to all to travel around the island & access to events, places etc, the cost of fares is limiting families/young people/low income, the money saved would be spent in shops/events."

Conclusion:

These suggestions reflect a desire for a diverse range of events and activities that cater to different interests and age groups, making Douglas city centre a more vibrant and attractive destination. The Council actively organizes events including markets, music and entertainment, family events and community events. There may be potential to expand these to include evening events if we can secure more resource to help organise them.

Appendix 2: Review of Parking Availability in Douglas City Centre

In April 2025 Douglas City Centre Management sought the public's views on what would encourage them to visit the city centre more often. The most popular response was car parking with 38% of responses relating to one of more aspects of car parking including availability of spaces.

In response to this concern Douglas City Centre Management carried out two snapshot surveys of space availability at peak footfall periods both during the working week and the weekend. The first survey as carried out between 1300hrs and 1430hrs on Thursday 26th June 2025 and the second survey was carried out between 1300hrs and 1345hrs on Saturday 5th July.

Thursday 26th June 1300 – 1430 hrs

Car Park	Number of available spaces
Shaw's Brow Level 3	12
Shaw's Brow Level 4	2
Shaw's Brow Total	14
Drumgold Street (M&S) Level 1	6
Drumgold Street (M&S) Level 2	18
Drumgold Street (M&S) Level 3	46
Drumgold Street (M&S) Total	70
Chester Street Level 1	11
Chester Street Level 2	27
Chester Street Level 3	38
Chester Street Level 4	45
Chester Street Level 5	26
Chester Street Level 6	11
Chester Street Level Total	158
Bottleneck Total	11
Parade Street Total	5
Overall Total Spaces Available	258

Saturday 5th July 1300-1345 hrs

Car Park	Number of available spaces
Shaw's Brow Level 3	37
Shaw's Brow Level 4	10
Shaw's Brow Total	47
Drumgold Street (M&S) Level 1	5
Drumgold Street (M&S) Level 2	8
Drumgold Street (M&S) Level 3	31
Drumgold Street (M&S) Total	44
Chester Street Level 1	0
Chester Street Level 2	8
Chester Street Level 3	27
Chester Street Level 4	35
Chester Street Level 5	55
Chester Street Level 6	53
Chester Street Level 7	70
Chester Street Level 8	84
Chester Street Level 9	73
Chester Street Level Total	405
Bottleneck Total	2
Parade Street Total	5
Overall Total Spaces Available	503

It is clear from this review that space availability is not an issue in the city centre. However, if it remains as a perception, that is an issue that needs to be addressed. It can be tackled using a publicity and social media strategy. It is assumed from discussions with Manx residents that some drivers will go to great efforts to avoid paying for car parking and so the number of opportunities to park for free could remain as a disincentive to visiting Douglas.

Publicity and Social Media Strategy

The key messages proposed for dissemination as part of the strategy are;

- There are plenty of places to park in city centre car parks, even at peak periods.
Information on where spaces are likely to be most available can be communicated.
- These are different during the week to the weekend. During the week, the best places to try are;

- Drumgold Street (M&S) Levels 2 and 3
- Chester Street – All levels. Level 1 is short-stay disk parking.
- The Bottleneck Car Park

On Saturdays and Sundays, the best places to try are;

- Shaw's Brow Levels 3 and 4
 - Drumgold Street (M&S) Level 3
 - Chester Street – All levels, noting that there is no contract parking in Chester Street Car Park at weekends so all spaces on all levels are available for public use.
- The easiest way to access Shaw's Brow Car Park by car is by turning left into Church Street from Athol Street. It is less than a two minute walk from the car park to M&S along the largely pedestrianised Nelson Street.
 - The ANPR system in Shaw's Brow is very easy to use. Simply drive in through the entry barrier when you arrive and then pay at the paystation before you leave by inputting your registration number. Cards and cash are accepted. There's also a smartphone app, which is handy if you use the car park regularly.
 - There are over 80 free disk parking spaces on Level 1 of Chester Street Car Park with a maximum stay of 2 hours.

Appendix 3: Survey of Disabled/Accessible and Parent & Child Parking Spaces in Douglas City Centre

As part of its research into factors that are impacting footfall in Douglas city centre, DCCM received 18 comments relating to disabled and parent and child car parking. Comments included;

- Insufficient Number of Spaces - Many commenters noted that there aren't enough disabled parking bays available, especially near key shopping areas and amenities.
- Proximity to Shops and Facilities - Several people emphasized that existing disabled spaces are too far from the main shopping areas, making access difficult for those with mobility issues.
- Wider Bays Needed - A common request was for wider parking bays to accommodate wheelchair users and those needing extra space to enter and exit vehicles safely.
- Better Signage and Enforcement - Some comments mentioned that disabled bays are often misused by non-blue badge holders, and called for stricter enforcement and clearer signage.
- Covered or Sheltered Parking - A few people suggested that covered disabled parking would be helpful, especially in poor weather, to make access safer and more comfortable.
- Time Limits and Accessibility - There were concerns about time restrictions being too short for those who need more time to shop or attend appointments, and suggestions to extend time limits for blue badge holders.
- Drop-Off Zones - A couple of comments proposed dedicated drop-off zones for disabled passengers, especially near pedestrianised areas where parking isn't possible.
- Parent and Child Parking: The need for more parent and child parking spaces was frequently mentioned. These spaces need to be wider to accommodate the extra space required for getting children in and out of cars.

DCCM carried out a survey of disabled and parent and child friendly car parking spaces on Thursday 19th June 2025. During the survey enquiries were made with the Welcome Centre in the Sea Terminal and with the parking team in Highway Services in the Department of Infrastructure but neither of these office were able to provide us with a map or list of disabled parking spaces.

The following table sets out a summary of the Disabled parking spaces identified in the survey.

Location	Number of spaces	Proximity to shops and services	Signage and marking	Size & Accessibility	Under cover?	Time Limit
Shaw's Brow Car Park Level 3	6 dual disabled and EV charging	Poor due to location and gradient of land.	Excellent	Wide with room to manoeuvre chair.	Yes	120 hours – first hour free followed by normal tariff for registered users.
	2 disabled	Poor due to location and gradient of land.	Excellent	Wide with room to manoeuvre chair.	Yes	120 hours – first hour free followed by normal tariff for registered users.
Shaw's Brow Car Park Level 4	3 disabled	Good for Athol Street but not shops	Excellent	Wide with room to manoeuvre chair.	Yes	120 hours – first hour free followed by normal tariff for registered users.
Athol Street	2 disabled	Good for Athol Street but not shops	Good	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. No dropped kerb.	No	90 minutes with disc.
North Quay (St Mathew's Church)	Unmarked, approximately 3	Good for North Quay but not shops	Good although it is not clear where the bay finishes.	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. Flush	No	2 hours

Location	Number of spaces	Proximity to shops and services	Signage and marking	Size & Accessibility	Under cover?	Time Limit
				carriageway with paving and no kerbs.		
Market Hill	1 disabled	Good for Duke Street	Good	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. Low kerb but no dropped kerb.	No	1 hour
Barbary Coast	3 disabled	Good for North Quay but poor for shops	Signage good but marking poor	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. Flush carriageway with paving and no kerbs.	No	2 hours
Sea Terminal (Front)	3 disabled	Good for Sea Terminal but poor for shops	Markings are good but no signage so cannot be identified when occupied.	Wide with room to manoeuvre chair.	No	1 hour
Sea Terminal (Side)	Possibly 4 disabled	Good for Sea Terminal but poor for shops	Markings are very worn and poor and no signage so cannot be identified when occupied.	Wide with room to manoeuvre chair.	No	1 hour
Bottleneck Car Park	3 disabled	Good for Promenade and moderate for shops.	Markings are very worn and poor and no signage so	Wide with room to manoeuvre chair.	No	120 hours – first hour free followed by normal tariff

Location	Number of spaces	Proximity to shops and services	Signage and marking	Size & Accessibility	Under cover?	Time Limit
			cannot be identified when occupied.			for registered users.
Regent Street	3 disabled (currently suspended due to adjacent construction site)	Excellent	tbc	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. Flush carriageway with paving and no kerbs.	No	tbc
Drumgold Street Car Park Level 1	12 disabled	Excellent	Excellent	Wide with room to manoeuvre chair.	Yes	3 hours
Harris Promenade	5 disabled	Good for Villa Marina and Gaiety Theatre and moderate for shops	Good	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. Flush carriageway with paving and no kerbs.	No	3 hours
Market Street	8 marked disabled bays. Other possible disabled spaces but unclear.	Excellent	Extremely Poor and confusing. 7 bays are marked with a sign but others are on double yellow lines with no sign making it unclear whether they can be used.	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. Some dropped kerb but not everywhere.	No	2 hours where signed. Unclear elsewhere

Location	Number of spaces	Proximity to shops and services	Signage and marking	Size & Accessibility	Under cover?	Time Limit
Chester Street Car Park Level 2	2 Parent & Child	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Yes	Pay & Display
	10 disabled	Excellent	Poor. Some of the spaces are hatched, which suggests they cannot be used.	Mixed. Some are wide and some are normal sized spaces.	Yes	Pay & Display
Chester Street Car Park Level 4	2 Parent & Child	Excellent	Poor. It is assumed there are two large spaces but the markings could be read as three normal sized spaces.	Assumed to be two large spaces.	Yes	Pay & Display
	7 disabled	Excellent	Poor. Markings are indistinct and signs are difficult to see behind a fence. Three spaces are hatched which suggests they cannot be used.	Normal sized spaces	Yes	Pay & Display
Chester Street Car Park Level 6	2 parent & child	Excellent	Poor. It is assumed there are two large spaces but the markings could be read as three normal sized spaces.			
	6 disabled	Excellent	Poor. Signage is unclear.	Mixed. Some are wide and some are	Yes	Pay & Display

Location	Number of spaces	Proximity to shops and services	Signage and marking	Size & Accessibility	Under cover?	Time Limit
				normal sized spaces.		
Markwell House	3 disabled	Excellent	Good signage but poor marking.	All three are abnormal shapes. One is too small to be used safely.	No	2 hours
Victoria Street (Colebourns)	3 disabled	Excellent	Excellent	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. No dropped kerb.	No	90 minutes
Victoria Street (Nag's Head)	3 disabled	Excellent	Excellent	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. No dropped kerb.	No	1 hour
Ridgeway Street	2 disabled	Good	Excellent	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. No dropped kerb.	No	2 hours
Myrtle Street	2 disabled	Poor due to slope	Excellent	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. No dropped kerb.	No	
Hill Street	1 disabled	Poor due to slope	Excellent	Normal parking space. No room to	No	2 hours

Location	Number of spaces	Proximity to shops and services	Signage and marking	Size & Accessibility	Under cover?	Time Limit
				safely manoeuvre chair.		
Finch Road	3 disabled	Poor due to slope	Excellent	Normal parking space. No room to safely manoeuvre chair. No dropped kerb.	No	2 hours

Key Findings and Conclusions

There are 98 disabled parking spaces in Douglas City Centre. There are no guidelines or standards for the number of on-street accessible spaces but British Standard BS 8300-1:2018 recommends that for off-street parking, at least 5% of the total capacity should be designated as accessible spaces. Douglas City centre has around 1,400 public on-street and off-street public parking spaces, 5% of which equates to a requirement for 70 disabled spaces. Against this benchmark Douglas appears to score highly in relation to the total number of spaces. However BS8300 also states that accessible spaces should be 2.4m wide with a 1.2m access zone on either side and at the rear for boot access. Of the total number of spaces;

- 46 are wide spaces with room to manoeuvre a chair and 52 are normal-sized parking spaces. 39 of the normal-sized spaces open onto a carriageway and only 9 of these are located next to dropped kerbs or flush paving.
- 46 are under cover and 52 are open air.
- Only 48 of the spaces have good or excellent signage and road markings. Many of the spaces are poorly marked or lack signs. In the worst cases, such as Market Street (see Figure 1) and Chester Street Car Park (see Figure 2), there are spaces where the markings are confusing to the point that they are likely to put drivers off using them for fear of receiving a penalty notice.
- 66 of the spaces are considered to be well located for city centre shops, however, others such as those at the Sea Terminal, serve specific locations in the city centre.

- During the survey, only one space was being used without a blue badge being displayed.
- There are only 6 parent and child parking spaces, all of which are in Chester Street Car Park.
- There is only one designated drop-off and pick-up layby in the city centre, outside the Premier Inn in Market Street, but the signage is so confusing as to make the layby unusable for this purpose.(See Figure 3)

Recommendations:

It is recommended that;

- The poor marking and signage of disabled parking spaces in Chester Street Car Park and Market Street is brought to the attention of the Department of Infrastructure.
- The confusing signage and road markings for the drop-off/pick-up layby in Market Street is brought to the attention of the Department of Infrastructure with a request for the Department to also consider designating other similar areas in the city centre. See Figure 4 for a suggested site at the eastern end of Market Street.
- The Council explores the potential to include some parent & child spaces in the Bottleneck Car Park when it is re-marked.



Figure 3 Spaces on Market Street that are labelled "DISABLED" but are located on double yellow lines making it unclear as to whether they can be used.



Figure 4 Hatched markings on disabled spaces in Chester Street Car Park making it unclear as to whether they can be used.



Figure 5 Road markings in Market Street suggest the layby is for "PICK UP / DROP OFF" but the sign suggests it is a loading bay.



Figure 6 Site for a possible second drop-off/pick-up layby in Market Street

Appendix 4: Toilet Review July 2025

Drumgold Street/M&S

Unisex/separate Men's & Women's: Separate

How many toilets: Men's: 1 toilet & 2 urinals, Disabled: 1, Ladies: 5 cubicles

Disabled toilets: Separate disabled toilet next door

Baby Change facility: Separate baby change room

Could a Pram fit in a cubicle: No, but could in baby change

Condition: Needs updating but ok.

Cleanliness: Men's: Average Ladies: Good

Total number of toilets in location: 9

Comments: Not many toilets so can get busy

Chester Street

Unisex/separate Men's & Women's: Separate

How many toilets: Men's: 3 toilets & 3 urinals, Disabled: 1, Ladies: 4 cubicles

Disabled toilets: Separate disabled toilet next door

Baby Change facility: Separate baby change room

Could a Pram fit in a cubicle: No, but could in baby change

Condition: Good

Cleanliness: Very Good

Total number of toilets in location: 11

Comments: Nice and tidy. One urinal out of order

Villa Marina Arcade

Unisex/separate Men's & Women's: Separate + 1 unisex

How many toilets: Mens: 11 urinals & 5 toilets & 1 baby change, Disabled: 1, Ladies: 12 cubicles

Disabled toilets: Separate disabled toilet at arcade entrance

Baby Change facility: 1 in men's, 1 in arcade entrance. There is a separate room in the ladies which has a 'baby change' sign on but there is a notice on it saying that the baby changing is at the entrance to the arcade.

Could a Pram fit in a cubicle: No

Condition: Old but work well

Cleanliness: Good

Total number of toilets in location: 29

Comments: A very good number of toilets. Steps into men's and women's but a baby change and disabled toilet are also located at the arcade entrance.

Loch Promenade – Central- Currently closed

Unisex/separate Men's & Women's: Unisex

How many toilets: 4

Disabled toilets:

Baby Change facility:

Could a Pram fit in a cubicle:

Condition:

Cleanliness:

Total number of toilets in location:

Comments: Closed for roof repair

Loch Promenade - Bottleneck

Unisex/separate Men's & Women's: Unisex

How many toilets: 4

Disabled toilets: Yes, one of the four cubicles is bigger for disabled access

Baby Change facility: Yes, disabled toilet also used as baby change

Could a Pram fit in a cubicle: Yes

Condition: Poor

Cleanliness: Poor

Total number of toilets in location: 4

Comments: Two of the four toilets are currently closed due to vandalism.

Sea Terminal

Unisex/separate Men's & Women's: Separate

How many toilets: Men's: 7 urinals & 5 toilets, Disabled: 2, Ladies: 7 cubicles

Disabled toilets: Yes, one in men's, two separate and one in women's

Baby Change facility: Yes, one of the separate disabled toilets has baby change also.

Could a Pram fit in a cubicle: Men's: Yes, Ladies: No

Condition: Very Good

Cleanliness: Very Good

Total number of toilets in location: 21

Comments: one toilet in men's doubles as baby change but no pull down so not currently working.

Shaws Brow

Unisex/separate Men's & Women's: Separate

How many toilets: Men's 1 urinal & 1 toilet, Disabled: 1 Ladies: 2 cubicles

Disabled toilets: Yes, separate.

Baby Change facility: Yes, separate

Could a Pram fit in a cubicle: Not in toilet cubicle but yes disabled.

Condition: Good

Cleanliness: Very Good

Total number of toilets in location: 5

Comments: Open daily from 7am to 7pm.

Appendix 5: Request for Changing Places Toilet

From: Daniel Collister

Sent: 13 May 2025 15:11

To: Oliver Cheshire

Subject: Request for a Changing Places Toilet in Douglas City Centre

Dear Mr. Cheshire

I am emailing with regards to the post asking for help from the public to improve the Douglas city centre that you recently posted on Facebook. It's encouraging to see such a genuine effort being made to gather and act on the community's ideas.

I'm writing in response to your update, particularly regarding plans to improve toilet facilities in the city. I would like to strongly advocate for the inclusion of a **Changing Places toilet** in Douglas city centre as part of this strategy.

As someone who works in social care and also has a close family member with a disability requiring these specialist facilities, I can say firsthand how essential Changing Places toilets are. Currently, the only available facility nearby is in the Manx Museum, which is quite a distance from the central shopping area. Unfortunately, by the time we manage to get there, accidents often occur — making visits to Douglas stressful and difficult for both carers and individuals with complex needs.

The lack of a centrally located Changing Places toilet has a very real impact on how long we can spend in the city. As a result, we are often forced to cut our visits short, which ultimately means less time and money spent in local shops, cafés, and other businesses in the high street area.

I would also like to highlight that **every other city council across the British Isles has provided a Changing Places toilet** — Douglas is currently the only exception. As the capital of the Isle of Man, I believe Douglas should set an inclusive standard for accessible public spaces, and this would be a meaningful step in that direction.

Thank you for considering this request as part of your strategy review. I would welcome any opportunity to support this initiative further, or to provide input from the perspective of both a professional in social care and a family member of someone affected by these issues.

Kind regards

Daniel Collister