

Subject:	Haslingden 2040 Update	Status:	For Publication		
Report to:	Full Council	Date:	13 th September 2023		
Report of:	Head of Housing and Regeneration	Lead Member:	Economic Development		
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
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1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1 To note the progress made to date on the Haslingden 2040 vision.
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development, Head of Legal and Lead Member for Economic Development to:
- Accept additional external grant funding to support the Haslingden TH programme supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and enter into any necessary grant agreements.
 - Deliver the Haslingden Market scheme including securing the necessary permissions such as planning permission.
 - Procure a main contractor to deliver Haslingden Market improvements under JCT design and build.
 - To close Haslingden market for a period of 6-8 weeks while improvement works take place.
- 1.3 To delegate authority to the Haslingden 2040 Strategic Board to:
- Approve the development of the plans for Haslingden Market.
 - Execute recommendations in the High St Task force Report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025.
- 2.2 UKSPF has replaced the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

The main aims of UKSPF are to:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards
- Spread opportunities and improve public services
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging
- Empower local leaders and communities

- 2.3 As UKSPF funding has now been approved, the delivery of the UKSPF Programme is key to meeting those needs, and supports delivery of the Council's priorities. This report is focused on the following Priority – **A Thriving Local Economy**.

- 2.4 £300k of UK Shared Prosperity Funding was awarded to Haslingden Market for capital spend, supported by a further approved capital allocation of £200k by Rossendale Council in December 2022 (<https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1349/council>)
- 2.5 This priority of the corporate plan is also reinforced by the Council's Economic Development Strategy, where the vision by 2033, includes Haslingden becoming known for its unique offers and establishing it as a destination for shoppers and visitors.
- 2.6 Nationally, there has been a shift in town centres and their viability as traditional shopping destinations. The 2017 retail and leisure study for Rossendale identified that Haslingden was benefitting from a number of food and drink focused leisure destinations. However, the businesses referenced in the report have now closed. This has become a trend since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and now the vacancy rate, 22%, is significantly higher than pre-covid levels and significantly higher than the national average of 13.8%.
- 2.7 This decline is a common trend among High Streets and is recognized across the nation. To address this, a High Street Task Force has been set up to redefine High Streets by providing tools, guidance and skills to local communities.
- 2.8 Prior to the pandemic, the town of Haslingden, which is a designated Conservation Area, came together to develop a 2040 Vision and Town Centre Masterplan. Work has been underway to progress the identified actions within the Vision. This includes applying to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a project work £2.3m in the town centre. This report seeks authorisation to continue to progress some of the actions of the Haslingden 2040 Vision.

3. BACKGROUND

Haslingden TH Big Lamp Project

- 3.1 The National Lottery Heritage Funded project, the Haslingden TH Big Lamp began delivery in Autumn 2021, with a programme of works to achieve the following outputs:
- To deliver a programme of third party grants to repair and re-instate historical features focusing on shopfronts, roofs, windows, and masonry work to 11 high priority buildings on Upper Deardengate and Lower Deardengate. Haslingden will be in a better condition as a result;
 - The restoration and repurposing of one large vacant building;
 - Significant public realm improvements including rain gardens, sustainable urban drainage, lighting etc;
 - A diverse range of community engagement events and training opportunities each year of the project;
 - Micro grants of up to £3k for community groups to apply for to deliver community projects within the Conservation Area.
- 3.2 The Haslingden 2040 Strategic Board have now approved grants to several buildings on Upper Deardengate. A main contractor has been procured and following the completion of several formalities, works will start on site in Autumn 2023. In-depth development with the repurposing project has also taken place. Alongside this, significant progress has been made in engaging the community, who have attended several events, training and workshop sessions.
- 3.3 In August 2022 an open, OJEU compliant tender exercise was completed to procure a contractor to deliver approved public realm proposals submitted in the stage 2 bid submission. The externally appointed Cost Consultant reviewed and clarified the tenders and the lowest return was still over 50% higher than the budget allocated for this element of the project.

3.4 The Haslingden 2040 Strategic Board evolved the public realm scheme to create public spaces, improve connectivity across Deardengate, introduce traffic calming measures and create a greener environment. After the tender returns, the Board expressed their concern that the Public Realm scheme was not achievable in the budget. Immediate action got underway to consider options.

The following options were appraised:

- 1) Further funding from RBC for the gap;
- 2) Source other external funding, including Lancashire County Council;
- 3) Not deliver a public realm scheme;
- 4) Value engineer the scheme to a reduced design;
- 5) Approach NLHF for an uplift.

3.5 Option 1 - Further funding from RBC was discounted due to the immense pressure on Local Authorities to reduce services nationally.

3.6 Option 2 – Source other external funding, this is still an option if an appropriate and suitable funding programme can be identified. It has been discounted at present due to the parameters and potential long timescales.

3.7 Option 3- Not deliver a public realm scheme, the Haslingden Strategic Board felt this would be demoralising and the potential for Haslingden Town Centre would not be realised.

3.8 Option 4 – Value Engineer a scheme.

This option has been developed in detail as follows:

- Each tenderer was approached to put forward an appraisal of how they would recommend meeting the budget – for example removing high cost items or changes to materials - this includes changing the original clay paving for ‘Innish’ concrete paving;
- The cost consultant has rigorously tested these ideas against other market parameters and similar schemes being delivered elsewhere in Rossendale and across the country;
- The design team have met to appraise how they would revise the scheme to meet the budget.

Following a review and a collation of the information, the design team made dramatic revisions to the scheme to meet the existing budget. This has meant:

- The materials are of a much reduced quality, which raised concerns about the Conservation Area;
- The size of the scheme is dramatically reduced;
- Omission of pavement widening;
- Omission of green corridors;
- Omission of carriage relaying;
- Omission of street trees and ornamental shrubs.

This option will be progressed if the final option cannot be achieved.

3.9 Given the journey to date and the overall disappointment expressed by the Haslingden 2040 Strategic Board, the National Lottery Heritage Fund have been approached for the opportunity of a Grant Uplift to deliver its original stage 2 public realm proposals. It is felt that this is essential to help Haslingden:

- Rejuvenate its brand and identity;
- Place residents, shoppers and visitors at the heart of its design and champion accessibility

- Increase connectivity;
- Introduce green corridors;
- Enhance the street scene.

3.10 A formal request is being considered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to cover the funding shortfall. A decision is due in Mid-September. It is important to note that the request also includes the continuation of the project officer, who is currently employed until March 2024, until the end of the Big Lamp Project (August 2026).

3.11 This report requests Director of Economic Development, Head of Legal Services and Lead Member for Economic Development to accept and enter into any further agreements, and accept further external funding, to support the Haslingden TH Project.

3.12 To support the delivery of the Public Realm works a communications plan has been developed and will be delivered prior and alongside the capital works.

Haslingden Market Investment UK Shared Prosperity

3.13 In recent years, the popularity of Haslingden Market has significantly declined. The once successful market had only three permanent traders occupying cabins when the Economic Development Team took over management of the market in July 2022.

3.14 Through the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UK SPF), Haslingden Market was awarded £300,000 of capital funding. Rossendale Borough Council contributed an additional £200,000 of capital funding for Haslingden Market to be regenerated. A Town Centre Regeneration Officer has also been appointed as a result of this funding.

3.15 Consultation began in February 2023 and March 2023 to understand the views of local residents and how they would like to see the market improved.

3.16 Consultation methods included:

- 1) Drop-in sessions at the library
- 2) Online surveys and questionnaires
- 3) Press Releases
- 4) Paper surveys at local businesses and organisations such as VIC, HCL and the Library
- 5) 1-1s with several businesses
- 6) 1-1 discussions with existing and former Market traders and local community groups

3.17 Over 400 people responded to the consultation, which was representative of various minority groups.

3.18 The feedback was clear that the market was currently under-utilised. Comments included, a poor range of existing traders with some selling poor quality items, opening days and times that don't fit around people's work schedules, inconsistent events and a feeling of unsafety around the market due to inadequate lighting and low footfall making it a prime location for anti-social behaviour.

Many of those who responded to the survey did use other nearby markets, with the vast majority of those saying they visit Rawtenstall and Bury Markets.

Popular suggestions for improvement for Haslingden Market included:

- A roof covering over some of the market;
- Ample tables and chairs for outdoor dining under the roof covering;

- Levelling and re-paving of the floor to allow it to be more accessible for those who use a wheelchair, have a pushchair or are unsteady on their feet;
- Removal of the fixed stalls that are down the middle of the market currently;
- A flexible space for pop up stalls, to allow for a small stage for theatre and music performances, and for additional tables and chairs;
- More lighting and colour around the market to make it feel modern, vibrant and safe;
- Suitable toilet facilities for customers;
- More street food venues;
- Better signage and wayfinding between nearby car parks, the market, and the main parade of shops on Deardengate; and
- To see the NLHF Big Lamp Project linking to the market regeneration scheme.

3.19 Traders also requested a functional area to prepare food and a revamp of the common facilities to ultimately attract better quality traders.

3.20 The Economic Development Team visited a number of markets across the North West to see what did and didn't work well at other markets, and gain inspiration for how this could be applied to Haslingden. Beyond the design of the market, careful branding and curation of traders was a common theme amongst other successful markets in the region.

Procurement

3.21 In June 2023, a Placemaking Expert, Wilson Mason LLP was procured to design the changes at Haslingden Market. Placemaking capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that improve urban vitality and promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

3.22 Wilson Mason will be working closely with Gosling Consulting who are the independent quantity surveyor and are also acting as external project manager for the scheme.

3.23 A main contractor to deliver the scheme in February 2024 will be procured through a tender award in November 2023. This report requests Delegated Authority to the Lead Member and Director of Economic Development to appoint the contractor.

Design

3.24 The first concept designs that have been created by Wilson Mason encapsulate the key findings from the public consultation that was carried out earlier in the year. Feedback has been taken from officers within Economic Development, members of the Haslingden Strategic Board, the Head of Planning at RBC, and the Lead for Specialist Services at Growth Lancashire (who assess conservation-related planning applications). This feedback has been collated and passed back to Wilson Mason for a second concept design to be developed.

3.25 The revised concept designs are attached at Appendix A. An exercise has taken place to cost the concept designs and these are within the budget allocated. This includes levelling out the market to allow for greater accessibility and a covered area, a functional communal traders area, a railing overhaul to break up the wind, new cabin canopy's and painted designs on the shutters, as well as the demolition of the stalls in the central area, to allow for pop ups and events.

3.26 Delegated Authority is requested to the Haslingden 2040 Strategic Board to develop the concept plans and to the Lead Member for Economic Development and Director of Economic Development to deliver the scheme, securing all of the necessary permissions.

3.27 Programme:

The Haslingden Market Improvements will follow this programme:

- RIBA stages 1 and 2 - to be carried out by 15/09/23
- Site surveys – to be carried out by 06/10/23
- Planning submission gateway – 15/09/23 - 11/01/24
- RIBA stages 3 and 4 – 22/09/23 - 23/11/23
- Tender for building contractor – to be issued 23/11/23 with contractor award given on 19/01/24
- Construction – market to temporarily close on 02/02/24, with construction commencing on 05/02/24. Construction period of 10 weeks.
- Market to reopen to the public on 19/04/24.

High St Taskforce

3.28 In May 2023, Rossendale Council was allocated support from the High Street Taskforce to support our 2040 strategy for Haslingden Town Centre.

3.29 A High St Task Force Expert has completed a site visit, with key stakeholders and Haslingden 2040 Board Members, to diagnose the barriers to the transformation of Haslingden. The themes discussed included:

- 1) Reinventing;
- 2) Rebranding;
- 3) Repositioning;
- 4) Restructuring.

3.30 Following the visit, an Unlocking Your Place Potential report was received. This is attached at Appendix B.

This report puts forward the following opportunities to improve those working in Haslingden:

- 1) Expert Advice Visit – considers place activation, marketing and branding along with vitality and vibrancy
- 2) Place Making Programme- a 3-hour interactive workshop (how vitality and viability can be improved through focussing on one or more of 25 priorities identified in the High Street UK 2020 project) as well as more strategic recommendations (for repositioning, reinventing, rebranding or restructuring).
- 3) The Teenage Market Programme- Work with the Teenage Market via the High Street Task Force to provide a regular opportunity for young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills. These skills could then be developed with the potential for longer term new traders for units in the high street.

3.31 It is requested that authority to the Haslingden 2040 Strategic Board to progress the recommendations of the report.

4. RISK

4.1 Both the Haslingden TH Big Lamp Project and the Haslingden Market UK SPF project have their own risk registers, both monitored by the Council's Programme Board and monitored by the relevant steering groups on a monthly basis so that anything emerging can be resolved.

4.2 Not receiving the Grant Uplift Request – this would mean that the project would not successfully meet the approved project outcomes as hoped, and would mean that the Public Realm works are much more diluted. Further grant funding would need to be secured in order to deliver the remainder of the Masterplan.

- 4.3 Not enough contingency in the public realm element of the Big Lamp Project- the designs for the public realm are now at RIBA Stage 4, featuring detailed architectural and engineering specifications which were published in a competitive tendering procedure
- 4.4 Inflation / delays - close collaboration has taken place with bidding contractors to minimise delays and mitigate risks related to inflationary pressures on the Big Lamp project. The works will be set to be delivered in January 2024 which is ahead of the programme submitted in the stage 2 bid which stated a start of June 2024
- 4.5 Changes to construction programme of public realm or issues with the road network causing issues and/or delays to the programme and traffic management requirements - regular meetings with Highways Authority and Transdev to ensure both are kept up to date with progress and changes to the construction programme - also to ensure that they are able to time manage their role in the work.
- 4.6 Timescales not met for delivery of the UKSPF grant for Haslingden Market - consultation, options appraisal and capital delivery by March 2025 – the Economic Development team have an excellent track record of procuring professionals/delivering grant funded projects within tight timescales. The team has been increased with two members of staff - a Business Advisor and Town Centre manager (latter specifically for Haslingden)
- 4.7 Unable to attract tenderers – the tender will be published on the council website, contracts finder and in-tend for 4 weeks. Meetings prior to the tender exercise will take place with several contractors.
- 4.8 Tenders received for the Market works are out of the budget – a value engineering exercise will take place to bring the scheme into budget without detrimentally impacting the outcomes.
- 4.9 Phasing constraints and arrangements with market traders - regular stakeholder meetings and discussions with traders will be held along with regular updates across social media, the Haslingden 2040 website, Haslingden Community Partnership and through press releases.

5. FINANCE

- 5.1 If the NLHF uplift application is unsuccessful the project will need to be re-engineered to remain within the current budget.
- 5.2 There are no additional financial implications for the Council if the NLHF uplift application is successful, as there is no additional match funding requirement.
- 5.3 The Council’s contributions to the Haslingden 2040 and the Haslingden Market UKSPF schemes are included within the current Capital Programme.

6. LEGAL

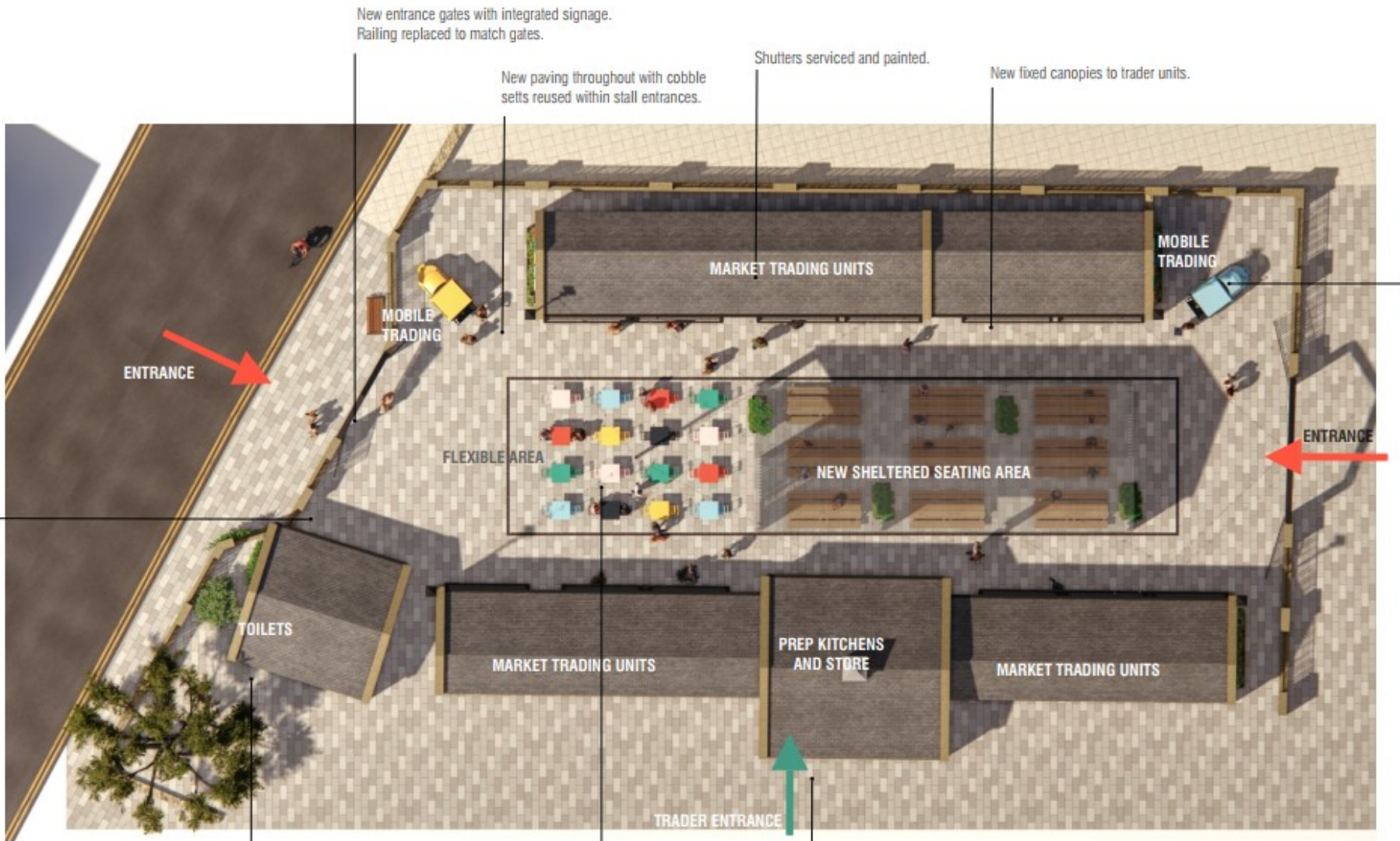
- 6.1 The legal implications are on the whole covered within the body of the report. All necessary procurements will be carried out in accordance with the Council’s Constitution and Public Procurement Regulations with all necessary legal agreements being completed as necessary.
- 6.2 Further reports to members will be presented as necessary where delegations are not already in place either via this report or the Council’s Constitution.

7. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any policy implications are included within the body of the report. There are no equality implications.

8. REASON FOR DECISION

8.1 Approving the recommendations of this report will contribute to Haslingden becoming a thriving and functional town centre, supporting the local economy and the Haslingden 2040 aspirations.



New entrance gates with integrated signage.
Railing replaced to match gates.

New paving throughout with cobble sets reused within stall entrances.

Shutters serviced and painted.

New fixed canopies to trader units.

ENTRANCE

MOBILE TRADING

MARKET TRADING UNITS

MOBILE TRADING

Mobile 'tuktuk' tea /coffee or bar.

ENTRANCE

FLEXIBLE AREA

NEW SHELTERED SEATING AREA

Entrance to the toilets modified so that they are accessed from within the market.

TOILETS

MARKET TRADING UNITS

PREP KITCHENS AND STORE

MARKET TRADING UNITS

TRADER ENTRANCE

Refurbished toilets, to include new sanitaryware, deep clean and decoration.

Refurbished trader area to provide 2no. Prep kitchens and a store room which could be used for fridges or to store tables and chairs. A new entrance from the rear is to be provided.

Flexible area with power which can accommodate further seating, trading or events.









Unlocking Your Place Potential – Report and Feedback



Haslingden

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About the visit and this report

The High Streets Task Force visited Haslingden on 11th July 2023 to undertake an *Unlocking Your Place Potential* diagnostic visit. Emma James was the High Streets Task Force Expert undertaking the visit.

The attendees representing Haslingden can be found in Appendix 1.

The purpose of the visit was to diagnose the main barrier to your transformation. In other words, what problem, if not resolved now, will make it difficult for the town to change. To do this the Expert wanted to understand more about the challenges facing the town, your plans for transformation, meet key stakeholders, ask questions and tour the town.

As a result of the diagnostic process, the Expert has identified a need for improving the offer and animating the town in the short and medium term as the main barrier to transformation in Haslingden.

The rest of this report identifies the strengths of the town, the main barrier to transformation the Expert found, as well as clear recommendations the Local Authority and partners can action now to accelerate the transformation process. The report ends with a list of High Streets Task Force Products that the Expert has prescribed.

On behalf of the High Streets Task Force, may I take this opportunity to thank attendees who gave up their time to attend the meeting, and who contributed to a frank and positive discussion. Thank you to Megan Eastwood for organising the session and those that led, and contributed to, an informative and well-planned town tour.

From reading the feedback from the visit, and this report, I can see you have a lot going for you in Haslingden – and many strengths both in the town and in your people. The High Streets Task Force is here to help you build on those strengths, and I hope you find it useful.



Matt Colledge

High Streets Task Force Project Director

Haslingden – Strengths

- ✓ Industrial heritage
- ✓ Proximity to countryside, and to commuters to Preston and Manchester
- ✓ Strong community
- ✓ Evidence of community engagement in developing 2040 vision
- ✓ Strong vision for its future
- ✓ Excellent educational provision
- ✓ Town Centre Manager appointed
- ✓ Some stand out independent businesses
- ✓ Market which is already seeing positive change ahead of longer terms plans
- ✓ Close to attractions including Halo, Helmshore textile Museum and the Grane reservoir

Haslingden is an attractive Northern town, with remarkable heritage and countryside right on its doorstep. The town centre is compact but retains the original streetscape with architectural assets remaining from the industrial heyday of the town, assuring a charm and personality for the visitor. Much work has been put into developing a vision for 2040 with consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, and a successful bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support some of the works to progress this vision. The strategy for reaching the vision is detailed and based on evidence, a clear understanding of challenges faced, and progress is now being made on the strategy.

In summary, the town has many strengths and although it is facing challenges, these strengths put the town at a significant advantage in relation to other similar towns of its size in the region.

4Rs Framework and our method

The aim of the Unlocking Your Place Potential workshop is for our High Streets Task Force Experts to identify the key barrier(s) to the improvement of your high street and recommend an appropriate strategic response. To enable our experts to do this in an evidence-based way, the High Streets Task Force uses the '4Rs Framework'.

Research has identified 237 factors that impact on the success of the high street. However, it is too overwhelming to think of all these at once, so we have developed the '4 Rs' framework to provide some structure to the incredibly complex practice of place transformation. Without a framework, it is easy to be drawn into so much detail that you cannot see the big picture.

When you simplify the process of renewal, the reasons why so many regeneration plans do not result in the changes people expect fall into 4 categories:

- The problems facing the centre were not accurately identified.
- The plans were good but not enough changed.
- The place changed but people's perceptions didn't.
- There were fundamental issues with governance or the spatial layout of the place.

We looked at these problems and identified 4 strategies to address them, *repositioning*, *reinventing*, *rebranding*, and *restructuring*. So, the framework distinguishes between the processes of analysis and decision making (repositioning), effecting change (reinventing), communication (rebranding) and governance/spatial planning (restructuring). More detail on each of the '4R's' is set out below.



Figure 1: 4Rs Framework

Applying the 4Rs to Haslingden

Although the town and its people have many strengths, we did identify a number of weaknesses. We have grouped these using the 4Rs framework – see below.

<p>Repositioning</p> <p>Need to stop positioning as secondary to neighbouring towns. Need to meet needs of local catchment, and to build commercial confidence in the town. Need to give clarity who town is for.</p>	<p>Reinventing</p> <p>Need quick wins to show that action is underway. Need to add animation now to build on market progress. Need to increase offer to meet needs of wider demographic to drive footfall and loyalty.</p>
<p>Rebranding</p> <p>Need to communicate progress more effectively, and encourage stakeholders to amplify messages. Focus on living up to tag line with comms to support.</p>	<p>Restructuring</p> <p>Need to build local resource such as new business group, and placemaking action group to get stakeholders working together on the 'now' with support from town centre regeneration officer.</p>

Figure 2: Applying the 4Rs Framework to Haslingden

We used all the information we had to identify which of the descriptions above fitted the evidence we had collected. We collected this evidence from looking at your strategic documents, the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, including our meeting, discussions, exercises and the in-person town tour. We also included the information we found out about Haslingden from our desk research.

We then grouped each piece of evidence under the 4R headings of Repositioning, Reinventing, Rebranding, and Restructuring. You can see our working on the Fishbone Sheet included in this report.

By classifying every clue, we could see how these are grouped and where Haslingden is facing major barriers. This then allows us to recommend suitable strategies to overcome these (see Figure 2). These strategies are *ways of working*, rather than 'magic bullets' relating to any particular intervention in your town. As mentioned at the start of the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, you are the experts in Haslingden.

You can see the major barriers to your transformation in the next section.

Fishbone Analysis

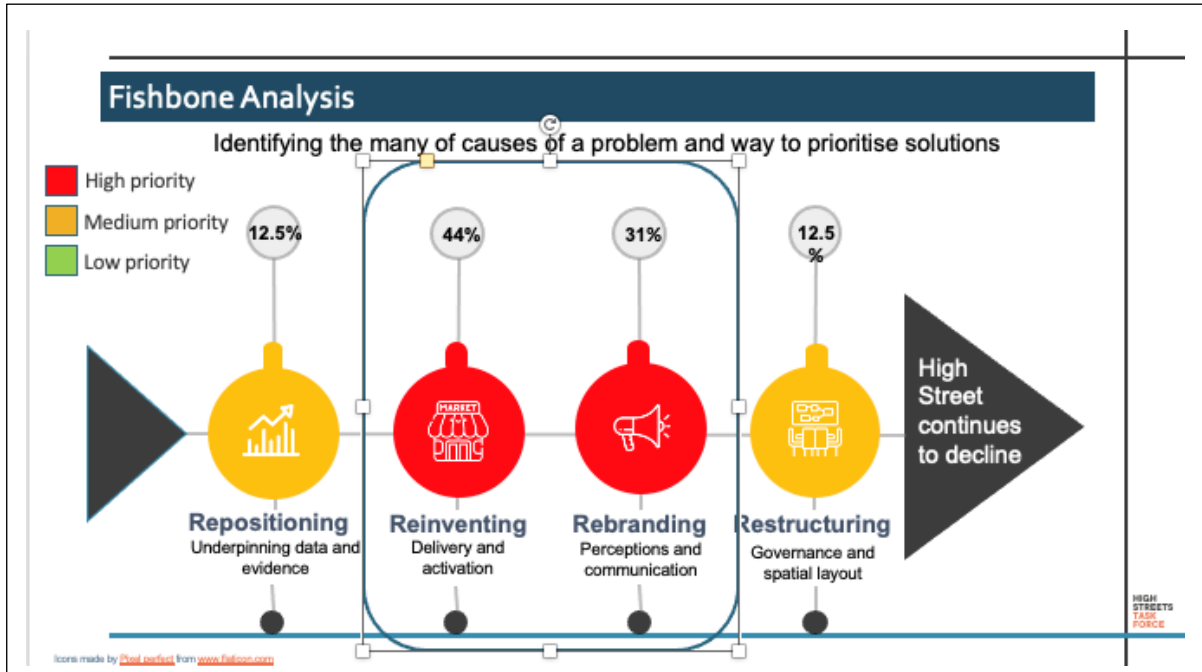


Figure 3: Fishbone analysis

Diagnosis of main barrier to transformation

As a result of the diagnostic process, the Experts have identified Reinvention as the main barrier to transformation in Haslingden.

Haslingden has a strong 2040 Vision towards which progress is being made, but in the meantime more traction is needed, with the support of local stakeholders, to raise the aspirations of local people, and get them more involved in the transformation of the town.

Through the workshop as a group, we identified some clear barriers to the success of the town centre that would sit under the Reinventing banner including:

- The need for an improved town centre offer for local people, in particular young people
- The need for a stronger night-time economy
- The need to create reasons to visit throughout the year
- The need for Haslingden to start to shine in the local area, to hold its own next to neighbouring towns who are arguably further ahead in their regeneration plans.

Great progress is being made with the market offer, both now and for its future, representing an opportunity to build additional activity around this to attract different demographics, and to draw footfall at different times of day.

Whilst larger plans are already afoot through the 2040 Vision and Heritage Lottery Funded plans, much of these plans will take time to deliver. Therefore, an additional focus on how some of the town centre can be repurposed to provide a more attractive offer in the short term will help improve footfall and dwell time. This could include short term activations in the form of pop-up leisure and dining options, or trialling informal co-working spaces or leisure opportunities. With a Town Centre Regeneration Officer in post already, there is great scope to develop ideas and action with local businesses.

Such animation should be co-created with local people to ensure it meets their needs, but also encourages their support in delivering the agreed activities. It should also clearly link to the 2040 Vision.

It was very clear from our meeting that there is a huge amount of enthusiasm and support for the town from the council, community, and businesses. Establishing an additional forum of Stakeholders to activate the town, and communicate its benefits, such as a Placemaking Action Group would be beneficial in increasing capacity to support the work of the Council and the 2040 Strategic Board.

Recommendations

To improve the offer and animation in the town centre we are recommending a strategy of *Reinvention* to refresh your approach to place leadership. We understand it is not always easy to change cultures, structures, and behaviours to work in a more collaborative way, so we are giving you five recommendations that if you adopt, will lead to some quick improvements.

1. Share the final version of this report with everyone that attended the Unlocking Your Place Potential meeting.
2. Identify empty premises and spaces which could be quickly adapted for temporary use, focusing on the offer for young people and those not currently using the town centre. Consider how these spaces might be used in cost effective and innovative ways that meet local needs, as well as those of the property owners. This activity would be best supported with a grants programme to encourage people to come together to deliver ideas that are generated. Some ideas for consideration are:
 - a. Empty shop units as meanwhile spaces for makers and artists
 1. If units are vacant but the landlord is paying rates there are options for charitable organisations such as East Street Arts based in Leeds to lease spaces taking on the rates liability from the landlord (but not paying rent) and then offering affordable spaces to local artists and creatives.
 - b. Create a pop-up park in the wasteland between Deardengate and Bell Street.

On the town tour we looked at this space and discussed the possibility of the owners allowing it to be used. Could you consider getting support to clear it and create a pop-up park/:

 1. Adding some much-needed green space into the town centre.
 2. Sourcing outdoor ping pong tables from Sport England/ Table Tennis National Governing body as free activity for young people.
 3. Creating some temporary seating and an opportunity for pop up food trucks to operate at weekends to provide an F&B option for visitors to the town while there are limited alternative café options.
 4. Consider using a working group of local stakeholders, including young people, to work up ideas for how the space could best be used.

3. Developing the market offer to include wider demographic and build the evening economy

a. Teenage Market

Work with the Teenage Market via the High Street Task Force to provide a regular opportunity for young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills. These skills could then be developed with the potential for longer term new traders for units in the high street.

b. Night markets

Visit successful night-time market and food offers including Stockport Foodie Friday, Levenshulme Night Market or The Night Market UK events and look at how could develop in Haslingden market and the surrounding streets to extend into the wider town centre. There is also an opportunity to consider other specialist markets – Oldham previously ran a successful monthly Indian Market with a great range of food and produce stalls.

4. Developing an event and animation programme

Curating and promoting a programme of activity across the year, not only drives footfall but also provides a regular stream of positive communications to put out in the town. These don't need to be large scale expensive events, but more collaborative activity that helps tell your story, encourages people to visit, and improves the aesthetics of the town. Working with your town centre This could include:

Winter window displays to tell the story of the town – community groups, businesses and artists are all given empty window spaces to create displays that are lit up at night that tell story of the town's history. The trail is then promoted across social media and beyond to encourage people to follow the trail and explore the town.

Flower Festival – taking inspiration from Manchester BID, create an annual flower festival where businesses and residents are encouraged to either dress their exteriors florally, or create a floral installation. The event looks fantastic, engages a range of businesses, and creates Instagrammable moments that also then promote the town.

A couple of additional recommendations which sit outside of the Reinvention strategy:

5. Communications

The work your Town Centre Regeneration Officer is doing in engaging with stakeholders is really positive, but there are still more people to reach, in particular groups of hard-to-reach residents. Working with stakeholders to find additional ways to communicate with local people about positive progress being made is key. Sometimes a voice/channel that is not Council-led can be more effective. There is already strong progress being made against the 2040 Vision, and communicating more effectively to people locally is key. Our desk research unveiled such a small percentage of the great things happening in your town. A focus on communicating on progress and opportunities with both local people and further afield is needed. Where are the touch points that people find information about the town, how can you use those touchpoints to communicate more? Can relationships with your local paper be improved? social media channels harnessed in different ways? Or can local people work as ambassadors to amplify your messages to different audiences?

6. Building capacity

The Placemaking workshop from the HSTF would be a great way to kick off this area of work in helping a group of stakeholders come together to generate their own ideas, and think about how they could take them forward, perhaps by establishing their own placemaking action group.

7. Engaging Young People

We talked on the Town Tour and in the workshop about some ongoing issues with ASB with young people, and the lack of things for young people to do in the town. Setting up a Young Persons Task Force in partnership with local schools could start to help to address this by giving young people a voice and an opportunity to activity contribute to what is happening in the town now. The groups could be approached to get involved in the Teenage Market, to plan an event for young people in the town, and to shape plans for pop up spaces.

We hope these recommendations are useful. As we explained in the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, you are the experts in Haslingden not us. Nevertheless, we have experience of working with many towns around the country that face similar challenges – so when we undertake a diagnostic visit, we are well trained in looking for strengths and weaknesses in the town's offer, as well as the structures and processes that manage and change the town.

High Streets Task Force Product Prescription

Based on our recommendations, we would like to offer you the following products. This has been decided after considering your key barriers to transformation and what we have concluded as the best way to help you achieve your transformation goals.

High Streets Task Force Products Prescribed:

Product prescribed	Rationale
Expert support	<p>I am recommending Expert Support for Haslingden to assist in working with local stakeholders to develop an events and animation programme that can start now. The expert will have the following specialisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place activation (events, festivals, arts and culture, markets, pop-ups) • Identifying local priorities for improving vitality and viability • Place marketing and branding <p>Further detail regarding this support can be found in the attached product summary/guidance documentation.</p>
Workshop	<p>I have recommended that prior to the above Expert support Haslingden would benefit from a Place Making Programme workshop. The above Expert visit will be an opportunity to further discuss this product with you, to ensure that it is something that you will benefit from. If during the Expert visit, the need for the workshop is agreed, arrangements will begin to put this in place, and further guidance supplied.</p>
Teenage Market	<p>Having identified a lack of opportunities for young people, alongside the need to improve skills of local people, and given the existing market structure already in situ, a Teenage Market would be a strong way to tackle these issues.</p>
Online learning/resources	<p>Online learning – Improving High Street Vitality and Viability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To assist in developing immediate plan of small changes <p>Online learning – Reinventing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To assist in developing Reinvention Strategy

	<p>Online learning - Rebranding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To assist with communications planning and re-building civic pride <p>Specialist webinars – Understanding Place Sentiment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To understand progress in what people are thinking about the town
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Next steps:

Please liaise with your Operations contact to make arrangements for the delivery of the next stage of your support. The Operations team are available to assist with any queries relating to the delivery of the above support, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if any aspect is unclear.

More information about all of these products can be found on the HSTF website [here](#).

Appendix 1 – List of town attendees

Full Name	Job Title	Organisation Name
Eleanor Wood	Architect	Wilson Mason LLP
Kathy Fishwick	Chair	Rosendale Civic Trust
Adrian Lythgoe	Chair of Haslingden Strategic Board	Rosendale Borough Council
Dave Rothwell	Strategic Board member	Resident
Selene Bridge	Shop Owner	Unscripted
Rob Huntington	Chief Exec	Rosendale Borough Council
Dawn Lawler	Town Centre Regen Officer	Rosendale Borough Council
Jan Nangale	Chair	Haslingden and Helmshore Civic Pride
Maria Shellard	Haslingden Library Officer	Haslingden Library
Hina Qureshi	Member	CHAI Rosendale
Laabiyah Iqbal	Haslingden Project Officer	Rosendale Borough Council
Mhorag Saxen	Regeneration Project Lead	Rosendale Borough Council
Dan Gosling	Quantity Surveyor	Gosling Consultancy

Luke Parker	Student	Gosling Consultancy
Leah Armitage	Economic Development	Rosendale Borough Council
Megan Eastwood	Head of Housing and Regeneration	Rosendale Borough Council