

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	23 June 2021
Executive Member:	Councillor Oliver Ryan – Finance and Economic Growth
Reporting Officers:	Jayne Traverse – Director of Growth Gregg Stott – Assistant Director - Investment, Development and Housing.
Subject:	HIGH STREET TASK FORCE
Report Summary:	This report provides recommendations as to the High Street Taskforce programme recently announced by government as part of a package of support to help communities and local government to transform their high streets. Hyde Town Centre has been identified as one of 70 local authority areas across the country to receive the support.
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To formally participate and engage with the programme and with government delegates responsible for delivering the support. (ii) That the focus of the support will be Hyde Town Centre.
Corporate Plan:	The proposed measures shall contribute to delivering corporate priorities – housing, economic growth and employment opportunities.
Policy Implications:	In light of the recent impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and the generally poorly performing town centres, the regeneration of Tameside's town centres is essential for a range of social and economic reasons in order to create sustainable communities and thriving and vibrant town centres. The recommendations of this report will assist with the delivery of this objective and will bring in new people, inward investment, businesses and jobs.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>There are no direct financial implications arising from the report at this stage as the report sets out details of the package of training, support and expert advice that will be provided via the High Street Task Force which is financed by central Government.</p> <p>Section 3.4 of the report references the One Public Estate. Members are reminded that the Council received £ 0.100m via the Cabinet Office relating to this initiative, which was subject to a report to the Executive Board on 4 March 2020 with a subsequent Executive Decision approved on 9 March 2020 to enter into a memorandum of understanding for the sum awarded.</p> <p>Section 4.2 of the report references a subsequent action plan that will be developed at a later date and reported to the Executive Cabinet. Members should note that this report will also include any related financial implications for the Council that may arise from the action plan.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough	As set out in the main body of this report Hyde town centre has been identified by central government's High Street Task Force to be one

Solicitor)

of the first 70 areas to be offered support.

From the details in section 2.2 of this report it appears that the support is not financial but is training, support and expert advice to help support the officers responsible for the regeneration of Hyde town centre.

The report does not mention a requirement for any agreement to be entered into to receive the support but if this were to transpire then it would be advisable for legal officers to consider the terms of any such agreement.

There is a new Prosperity Index which measures institutional, economic, and social wellbeing across the UK's 379 local authorities <https://li.com/reports/uk-prosperity-index-2021/>, which we should use to get leverage with government and policymakers to determine specific areas that require action to help drive increased prosperity in left-behind towns and regions; and get the rightful support for our communities.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Damien Cutting – Economic Growth Lead, Development and Investment.



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 19 March 2021, the High Street Task Force (HSTF) was announced by government and will run until 2024. The HSTF provides support to local leaders in town centres and high streets in England. Funded by government, this support includes expert advice, training, and data delivered directly to local stakeholders in towns and cities, and a range of resources online that are available to all.
- 1.2 Run by the Institute of Place Management on behalf of government, the Task Force brings together a range of expert organisations on reinventing and restructuring places. The support will enable benefitting authorities to make the best decisions on the future of their high streets and how they best serve their communities, and to build long-term capacity for local transformation.
- 1.3 The first 70 local authorities, have been selected to enable support to be delivered where it's needed most. Regional indicators of deprivation and inequality have been used, alongside research on the impact of COVID-19 on high street retail, to produce the list of areas that would most benefit from support for their local place making capacity. Hyde Town Centre has been identified as one of the 70 local authority areas.
- 1.4 Accessible to all, the HSTF website hosts a wide range of training, learning, and data insights, including the 'COVID-19 Recovery Framework' to help places identify what they need to do now, as well as how to plan and build capacity for recovery.
- 1.5 A 'Routemap to Transformation' has also been developed. As town centres reopen, it is clear that COVID-19 has accelerated change in the high street. Multiple retailers will no longer be the dominant attraction in most town centres and so we have to redefine the high street. The Routemap identifies resources and steps that have to be taken to make transformation happen.
- 1.6 This programme is part of a wider package of proposals declared by the government to support town centres in the wake of the recent pandemic and is linked to the Build Back Better initiative including funding schemes such as the Levelling Up Fund (LUF).

2. FOCUS AND BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME

- 2.1 Establishing long term partnerships will be a focus for the support and the Task Force will deliver a range of services that are aligned to four objectives and will provide practical support to people and places. These are:
 - i. Boosting Local Authority capacity
 - ii. Building place making skills
 - iii. Coordination
 - iv. Intelligence and data
- 2.2 Benefits of being part of the programme include:
 - Expert advice on local plans, enabling local authorities to create the best strategies for transformation and investment,
 - Facilitation of a local leadership and stakeholder sessions to help build consensus, good will, and momentum behind authorities' plans,
 - Training for place leaders and development staff, as well as local stakeholders, based on the latest research on high streets, which can help build capacity for longer-term impact,
 - Resources and inspiration for local stakeholders to inform their own action and involvement in place making, and

- Boost trust and confidence in local plans and bids by evidencing adoption of Task Force support and good practice

3. HYDE TOWN CENTRE

- 3.1 The government announced an initial number of local authority areas to receive the support and a number of reasons were considered when deciding on which town centres the focus of the research would be:
1. Research on the likely impact of COVID-19 alongside national indicators of deprivation and inequality were used to produce this shortlist of areas that would most benefit from support for their local place making capacity.
 2. Those town centres that were unsuccessful in their bids for Future High Street Fund were prioritised, and
 3. To a lesser extent, a measure of retail unit concentration on towns particularly affected by the economic fallout and restrictions imposed following COVID-19.
- 3.2 Following consultation, the Task Force team have nominated Hyde Town Centre as the area of focus in Tameside. As Hyde Town Centre is identified as one of the first local authority towns to benefit from the programme of support, some initial discussions have taken place with the Task Force in relation to the type and level of support being offered to the Hyde.
- 3.3 To help make change happen, Hyde Town Centre will receive a range of tailored support services offered by the Task Force, which may include; targeted expert consultancy, mentoring, visioning or place making workshops, access to local footfall data, and training programmes for place managers and leaders.
- 3.4 Hyde Town Centre will benefit from the extra capacity offered as part of the programme and will ensure a joined up approach to the work already taking place including the One Public Estate. It is accepted that all of the town centres will benefit from the HSTF programme as the Council and officers will be able to learn and cascade ideas around the other centres.
- 3.5 In terms of timescales, the Task Force team will immediately appoint an expert advisor who will begin to undertake desk based research around Hyde Town Centre. This will be followed by a half day diagnostic visit to Hyde by the advisor. Once a tour of the centre has been undertaken, the advisor will look to meet with local place makers, ward members, Council staff and other key stakeholders identified in a 3-hour work shop.
- 3.6 The visit and proceeding research will aim to identify the key barriers to and opportunities for improvement in Hyde. The type of support offered will be dependent on the findings of this initial research and could include specialist advice on planning matters, visioning, design, branding and marketing, leadership, mentoring and training. A Data Dashboard will also be set up and will monitor such indicators like footfall in Hyde town centre.
- 3.7 A post-visit report, produced by the High Streets Task Force Expert, which will Hyde's key strengths and challenges, and provide a prescription of future support from the Task Force.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Once Tameside has been appointed an advisor from the Task Force team of experts, they will contact the Council to discuss scheduling the first 'Unlocking your Place Potential visit'.
- 4.2 From this visit, further tailored support will be programmed in for Hyde. This work will determine the necessary intervention required for the town centre. From this, the Council will seek to prepare an action plan in order to begin to implement recommendations that are

identified as a result of this programme of work. There will be a further report to Cabinet outlining the findings of the diagnostic and focus for the action plan.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.