

# Unlocking Your Place Potential – Report and Feedback



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# About the visit and this report

The High Streets Task Force undertook an *Unlocking Your Place Potential* diagnostic on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Sonia Cubrilo was the High Streets Task Force Expert who undertook the virtual workshop.

The attendees representing Hyde can be found in Appendix 1.

**The purpose of the workshop 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 collaborative working as the main barrier to transformation in Hyde.**

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, which will help you and which you have kindly agreed to pilot.

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 Damien Cutting and Mike Reed for organising the session.

From reading the feedback from the visit, and this report, I can see you have a lot going for you in Hyde – 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.



Simon Quin

Executive Director High Streets Task Force

## Hyde – Strengths

- ✓ Local people share a pride for Hyde Town Centre.
- ✓ Opportunities and plans to develop heritage offer and capitalise on buildings of architectural interest.
- ✓ Strong local identity and rich history.
- ✓ Good Public Transport links as town served by a railway station and a new bus station
- ✓ Car-parking
- ✓ Hyde Town Team (group of community volunteers)
- ✓ POP CIC Hyde (not for profit, grass roots live music/recording studios)
- ✓ Active Ward Councillors
- ✓ Diversity
- ✓ Good links to M60 and rest of Greater Manchester

Hyde is Tameside's market town serving the south of the Borough with a range of retail, medical, leisure and employment facilities. It has some attractive architectural buildings with interesting heritage, particularly the former town hall and the vacant library building. It has good and direct transport links particularly to the M60 motorway via the M67. This gives residents and local businesses access to major economic areas including Manchester City centre, Manchester Airport, Media city and Trafford Park as well as Ashton-under-Lyne and Tame Valley.

The Council undertook over £1million public realm and infrastructure improvements works in Hyde, which included the new market square and outdoor market, creating a high-quality focal point in the town's core retail area and freeing up the historic Market area and public sector building for development.

A vision badged as the 'Heart of Hyde', their plans are to focus on health and healthy living, with the creation of a flexible cultural and wellness hub, an 'incubation hub' to attract new businesses to the area and the acquisition and consolidation of under-utilised sites in the town centre to better serve the needs of the community.

In summary, the town has many strengths although it is facing many challenges.

# 4Rs Framework and our method

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><b>Repositioning</b></p> <p>Identifying and making use of appropriate baseline data especially, footfall and health deprivation and disability. Some limited bus services that serve the town.</p>	<p><b>Reinventing</b></p> <p>Communicating effectively with the wider community and engaging them in the delivery of the vision for Hyde to help tackle the decline in footfall and the increase in vacant units.</p> <p>Providing a diverse offer and activating the town to encourage more residents to use the town and attract new visitors.</p>
<p><b>Rebranding</b></p> <p>Co-ordinating information/communication about Hyde and its plans more effectively.</p>	<p><b>Restructuring</b></p> <p>Strengthening partnership or collaborative working with Council, business and community stakeholders focusing on the town. Links are needed to engage a wider range of town stakeholders including business, community and voluntary sector groups and for them to be linked to the decision- making for the town Centre.</p>

Figure 1: 4Rs Framework

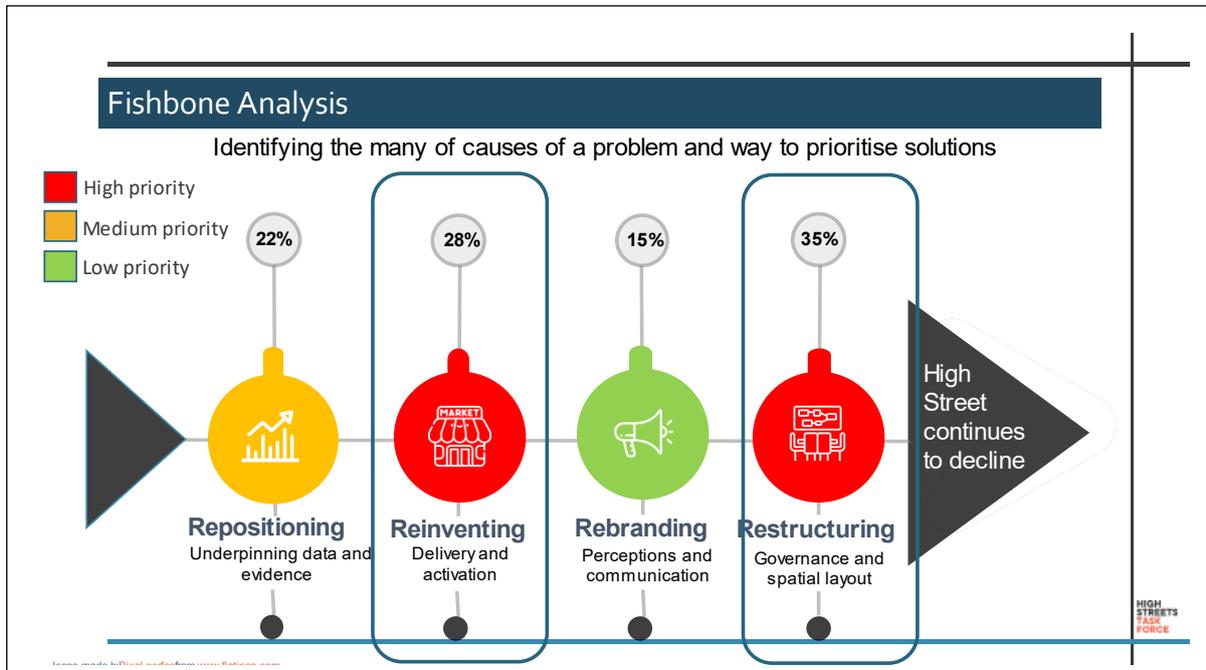
We used all the information we had to identify which of the descriptions above fitted the evidence we had collected. We collected this evidence from looking at your Expression of Interest to the Future High Streets Fund, our feedback to you (Transforming Your High Street Report), the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, including our meeting, discussions and exercises. We also included the information we found out about Hyde 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 Hyde 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 Hyde.

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

# Fishbone Analysis



## Diagnosis of main barrier to transformation

**As a result of the diagnostic process, the Experts have identified collaborative working as the main barrier to transformation in Hyde.**

We believe Hyde can improve its partnerships and communications with business leaders and the wider community. This will enable a better-quality and shared vision to be developed, which can inform future plans, as well as underpinning any future funding bids.

Stronger partnership between the council, businesses and the wider community will also build more capacity for making change in the town. A more coordinated approach will ensure greater impact from any investment and interventions, whether they are initially led by the public, private or voluntary sector.

It was very clear from our meeting that there is a huge amount of enthusiasm and support for the town from the council, the community and business leaders. More frequent and open communication is needed, and we recommend restructuring your governance systems to facilitate a team approach to transformation, with council, business and the community.

In addition, of the diagnostic process, the Expert also identified declining footfall and vacant units in the town Centre, presents challenges to Hyde’s transformation.

Footfall and vacant units are key indicators of a town centre’s vitality and viability; it tells us much about the nature of high streets, how they are used, and how they are changing. However, to ensure its relevance to its catchment area, such as people who work or live in your centre and meet local need, stakeholders need to understand how to reinvent Hyde and tackle these challenges. It also

needs to consider possible competitors and any footfall leakage to neighbouring towns and cities, such as Denton etc.

A focus on looking at how some of the vacant units can be repurposed and providing a more attractive offer/increasing the current under-supply of food and drink, convenience goods in the town Centre will help increase dwell time and footfall. Although a high vacancy rate can be seen as a symptom of decline, it does present an opportunity to change and adapt a centre by encouraging new and diverse activities to take up space often left by retailers.

However, in the short term, there needs to be an exploration of meanwhile uses and some quick wins for the town, that could include, providing more pop-up leisure attractions and a co-ordinated programme of events, which could form the basis of early discussion between the local authority and its partners in relation to how best to facilitate temporary uses.

In addition, we also believe Hyde can further improve its chances of securing additional funding/wider investment, to deliver its vision and any masterplan, by providing more appropriate and detailed baseline data. Access to footfall data is vital and it is important to use data more strategically to influence decision-making and have a better understanding of how the town centre is used. Investing in some footfall cameras may benefit the town, or Hyde might use the guidance provided by the HSTF on manual counting.

Data can also be drawn from various sources and should be linked to the key actions needed to transform Hyde and the HSTF can provide more guidance and help with this. All data gathered and baselines, should be linked to the vision and evidenced in action plans/decision making for the town.

## Recommendations

To improve collaborative working, we are recommending a strategy of *restructuring* 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 four recommendations that if you adopt, will lead to some quick improvements.

1. Share the EOI, our feedback (Transforming Your High Street report), and the final version of this report with everyone that attended the Unlocking Your Place Potential meeting.
2. Form a Town Board/Partnership, a Task Force, or similar, of place leaders across council, business and the community to shape the strategy for the town, oversee key projects and coordinate plans and activity. The Town Board should be focussed on the needs of the town, rather than being council-led, business-led or community-led. Find a structure to work together. The HSTF can prescribe you an expert in place governance to help you identify the best structure that will make your partnership stronger and more effective.
3. Your new structure should then identify who will own or action the areas for improvement identified in your Fishbone Analysis, that you feel need addressing. You may want to structure working groups around the 4Rs – or it may be that your new group just coordinates and ensures all the actions have a home and there is regular monitoring and reporting on progress.

A couple of additional recommendations which sit outside of the Restructuring strategy include:

4. A focus on how to activate the town is needed to stop leakage of footfall. This could be with an emphasis on events or on other ideas to increase footfall and the HSTF can help with providing a workshop on place activation.
5. Data collection and interpretation is vital to improving the focus on stated key issues. Partners must work together to draw some robust baselines and measurable targets for improvement. Better use of IMD and ONS business data can assist this. Again, the HSTF has developed online learning tools and workshops in relation to footfall and data analysis, which people from Hyde might access.

We hope these recommendations are useful. As we explained in the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, you are the experts in Hyde, 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:

- ✓ **Expert visit – Partnership Development**
- ✓ **Reinventing – Place Activation**
- ✓ **Repositioning – Use and Understanding Place Data**
- ✓ **Resource Library**
- ✓ **Best Practice, learning journeys and diagnostics**

### Next steps:

If you would like to accept these products, please let us know by return email, along with a contact for the person/people who will be leading on each product so we can start to make arrangements for future support. More information about these products can be found on the HSTF website [here](#).

# Appendix 1 – List of town attendees

<b>Hyde Town Centre HSTF Stakeholder Attendees</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Sonia Cubrilo	HSTF Expert
Damien Cutting	Tameside Council
Matthew Kershaw	Tameside Council
Anne Heath	Tameside Council
Steven Kirkham	Tameside Council
Cllr Oliver Ryan	Tameside Council
Mike Reed	Tameside Council
John Hughes	Tameside Council
Simon Pateman	Tameside Council
Graham Holland	Tameside Council
Steven Hadfield	Tameside Council
Nick Sayers	Tameside Council
Gregg Stott	Tameside Council
Jayne Traverse	Tameside Council
Patrick Nolan	Tameside Council
Marie Holland	Tameside Council
Andrea Wright	Tameside Council
Alison Lloyd-Walsh	Tameside Council
Julia Harrinson	Chair of Hyde Town Team
Neil Openshaw	Hyde Town Team
Martin Walton	Roberts and Roberts
Jackie Francis	Hyde POP
Dave Stevenson	Rhino Marketing
Sophie Stephenson	Clarendon Centre
Cllr Jim Fitzpatrick	Local Member
Cllr Phillip Fitzpatrick	Local Member
Cllr Joe Kitchen	Local Member
Cllr Phil Chadwick	Local Member
Cllr Ruth Welsh	Local Member
Cllr Jaqueline Owen	Local Member
Cllr Shibley Alam	Local Member
Cllr Jaqueline North	Local Member
Cllr Betty Affleck	Local Member
Cllr Helen Bowden	Local Member
Cllr Peter Robinson	Local Member
Cllr Janet Cooper	Local Member