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HSHAZ Closure Report A: Objectives, lessons learned and feedback

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SECTION A - Your scheme

Question 1: Did any of your objectives change from your original Programme Design to final delivery? (include those that changed and/ or were not met).	Yes
Which objective changed?	Objective 1: Revitalise the Historic Core, specifically : Public Realm Enhancements In the initial programme design public realm enhancements were outlined, which were to be driven by public consultation, but particularly focused within the Market Place.

????How did it change? (i.e. in what way did it change from your original design)

The original project design included funding for limited public realm works which were to be identified and designed via public consultation, but largely focused on Market Place and Conduit lane.

However, in year two of the programme this element of was removed and the funding transferred to the Westgate Hall regeneration project.

Why did it change? (i.e. what circumstances led to the change)

There were three principal circumstances which led to the redesign of this element of the programme:

Firstly, SKDC succeeded in securing funding from the Future High Street Fund to deliver a wider and more substantial public realm programme in the area of the Market Place. As there needed to be clear delineation between the use of funding the HSHAZ and Future High Street Fund, it was no longer deemed appropriate to use the funding in the marketplace. Secondly, the impact of inflation on costs for any scheme meant that the modest amount of funding which had originally been allocated to public realm would not have resulted in an impactful or value for money scheme. Finally, following an options appraisal completed in the first year of delivery, the owner of Westgate Hall secured a tenant for the building who was in the position to contribute financially for fit out costs and support the regeneration of the building. It was therefore considered that utilising the funding to support meeting the conservation deficit on Westgate Hall, and the completion of necessary repair works which would facilitate the long-term use of the building, would have a greater and longer-term beneficial impact on both the historic building itself, and the regeneration of the town centre, than a very limited public realm scheme could achieve in isolation.

Add another?

Yes

Which objective changed?

Objective 2: Reinstate the original Architectural form of buildings within the town centre. Specifically: Gap Site Development Appraisal (part of the community design framework).

????How did it change? (i.e. in what way did it change from your original design)

Within the original programme design, budget was allocated to explore the potential for reinstating the original form of Grantham marketplace by the closure of Conduit Lane to traffic and enclosing the market square through the reinstatement of a building in the gap site created by the demolition of the Butter Market and Blue Sheep Inn in the 1950s.

This work included a feasibility study, heritage assessment and development appraisal. Considerable community consultation and engagement work was also planned, which would have included trial road closures.

However, following a change in direction from key stakeholders it was not possible to complete this element of work -although the feasibility study and development appraisal were completed.

Why did it change? (i.e. what circumstances led to the change)

As the authority responsible for highways in the district, Lincolnshire County Council were principal stakeholders for the project. Unfortunately, despite initial support and encouragement to investigate the potential of the future closure of Conduit Lane, they later withdrew their support for the project.

Without the backing of the County Council, it was not possible to pursue the project further.

While delivering community engagement and consultation in order to potentially build a case for the project, however, ultimately was considered community engagement around the project, including trial road closures, would be redundant and would result in residents and businesses being given a false impression of what it would be possible to deliver.

As a result, further work on this project relating specifically to Conduit Lane was removed from the programme.

Add another?

No

Description Area

Question 2: Tell us about your successes and challenges. Our work together set out to make lasting improvements to our historic high streets for the communities who use them. The aims and objectives in your logic model were designed to achieve this and make the high street a more attractive, energising and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time.

i. Which objective has been successful?

Capital Grants for Repair and Reinstatement.

The delivery of this element of the programme supported Objective 1: Revitalise the Historic Core, and Objective 2: Reinstate the original architectural form of buildings within the town centre.

Why has it been successful?

The shopfront regeneration grant scheme (project 3) and the Westgate Hall regeneration project (project 5) both fell under the umbrella of this objective. Both were successful in delivering change to the High Street, improving the quality of Grantham's built heritage, and preserving that heritage for the future.

Of course, the delivery of the schemes was not without challenges, and these are discussed later in this report, however the benefits of the project have exceeded the physical regeneration of the buildings themselves.

Through the delivery of the scheme, we have improved relationships between property owners and the Local Authority, and now have a regular and active dialogue with those property owners who received funding.

Some of the property owners who received grant funding have continued to invest in their building stock and the historic environment beyond the scope of the grant funding.

Buckminster Estates, who own significant numbers of properties within the HSHAZ, have increased their investments in the town centre. This has included carrying out repair works to other shopfronts which did not receive grant funding, making internal improvements within vacant units, and converting vacant upper floor spaces to residential use or improving the quality of existing upper floor residential spaces, supported street greening efforts, and have become more actively involved in discussions around further regeneration of the town centre.

Within the district of South Kesteven, Grantham's historic environment often gets compared unfavourably to Stamford, which often leads to the perception that Grantham's heritage has been lost or is of low quality. Throughout the projects we have drawn attention to the abundance and quality of Grantham's historic buildings, and highlighted how through appropriate treatment and maintenance it can be utilised to support the town centre, and be a driver for civic and community pride.

Tenants of one of the shopfront regeneration scheme properties, 1 Market Place, reported anecdotally that following the shop front reinstatement on their property customers had highlighted the improved feel of the shop, and a perceived increase in quality in both the business and their merchandise.

The completion of works to Westgate Hall, which will support the ongoing regeneration of the grade II listed former corn exchange, have prevented further deterioration of the building. As part of the project local residents and community stakeholders were encouraged to share their memories of the place, and as a result we gained a greater depth of knowledge about the affection that people had for the building, and its importance to the community.

Although works to bring the building back into use continue beyond the scope of the HSHAZ programme, the funding which was crucial to the successful delivery the initial phases of works, kick started the reimaging of

the building, and reconstructed its links to the community after an extended period of vacancy and increasing dereliction.

Add another?	Yes
i. Which objective has been successful?	Engender a local sense of identity and pride through exploration and celebration of Grantham's rich heritage.
Why has it been successful?	<p>The HSHAZ programme provided the opportunity for us to engage residents and other stakeholders with Grantham's heritage on multiple levels.</p> <p>What proved particularly successful were opportunities which engaged people with the town's heritage for the first time.</p> <p>Projects including the Grantham Trump Cards project which highlighted 62 of Grantham's historic buildings through a familiar card game format, and the Trigge library colouring book which celebrates the towns historic chained library which dates from 1592.</p> <p>Prior to the HSHAZ scheme, there was a belief among residents that the majority of the town's heritage had been lost or fallen victim to post war redevelopment. However, these projects offered an easy access way for residents and visitors to begin to explore the town's history, and feedback received often highlighted that these projects introduced people to aspects of the town's heritage that they were not previously aware of.</p> <p>Likewise, the introduction of a digital trail of the town has provided another mechanism by which people have been able to explore heritage within the town.</p> <p>All of these projects are long lasting and will continue to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to discover Grantham's heritage beyond the lifetime of the HSHAZ programme.</p>
Add another?	While it was unfortunate that participation in consultation activities such as the community charrette was lower than anticipated, those who did take part gave very positive feedback on the events and commented that they were very appreciative of the opportunity to shape thinking about future regeneration works in the town.
ii. Which objective has been challenging?	<p>The events highlighted that there is a lot to be proud about as a Grantham resident, business owner or other stakeholder, but that it is incumbent upon the local authority to be consistent and positive about that messaging to continue overcoming local pessimism about the town.</p>
Add another?	No
ii. Which objective has been challenging?	<p>Capital Grants for Repair and Reinstatement.</p> <p>The delivery of this element of the programme supported Objective 1: Revitalise the Historic Core, and Objective 2: Reinstate the original architectural form of buildings within the town centre.</p>

Why has it been challenging?

In many ways, this objective was successful, however it was not without challenges for delivery.

When the programme design was submitted a target of 12 shopfront regeneration projects was set, however the dramatic increase in costs for materials seen in the early years of the project, and the ongoing high levels of inflation which were experienced throughout the project meant that the originally planned maximum grant of £25,000 per storefront was not sufficient to make the works viable in many cases.

In mitigation SKDC secured agreement to lift the cap on the value of individual grants (while maintaining the maximum intervention rates), and while this did encourage uptake of grants, for some property owners, particularly smaller independent landlords the grants were still not able to meet the viability gap on completing the works.

Navigating the national shortage of suitably qualified contractors was also a challenge. It often took longer than expected for grant applicants to be able to secure the required three quotes, and when a contractor was appointed, there was a high likelihood that they would also be working on other HSHAZ projects elsewhere meaning that project timetables were often extended.

The strict end of financial year deadlines for spend also proved challenging to navigate and were off putting to some potential applicants who were less able to absorb any loss in funding due to an overrun in project timeline, which is not atypical when working on historic buildings.

Had it been possible to carry forward underspend into subsequent financial years, the grant programme would have been more successful and far reaching, and underspend would have been significantly minimised.

The required profiling of the funding across the four years of the project also proved to be a challenge within the delivery of the capital scheme. The requirement for the majority of funding to be spent in years two and three of the programme meant that some property owners felt there was pressure to apply when they were not ready to do so given the wider economic context, and therefore dropped out. Conversely a number of property owners missed out on funding as they enquired about the scheme too late in the programme, even though there had been underspend in previous years which could have been utilised to deliver their schemes if the majority of funds had been profiled in year three and four instead.

Add another?

Yes

ii. Which objective has been challenging?

Objective 5: Engage the community in the development or the town centre.

Why has it been challenging?

At the outset of the scheme a comprehensive community engagement plan was produced by SKDC, however, this ultimately proved challenging to implement and the community engagement strand of the programme became the weakest element of project delivery.

Unsurprisingly, the Covid 19 pandemic had significant impact on the ability to deliver community engagement activity in the first year of the scheme, and there was continued reticence from some demographics of residents to participate at in person events through the second year of delivery.

In general, these were older people who considered themselves to be more vulnerable, but who were also less likely to choose to engage with alternative presentations, such as online talks, workshop sessions and consultations.

One major element of planned public engagement work focused on the development appraisal for Conduit Lane and the potential for closing the road.

Within the original scheme plan comprehensive community consultation was planned, as were trial road closures.

However, following a change in strategy from within Lincolnshire County Council Highways team it was apparent that it would not be possible for this work to be brought to completion, and that public consultation would be abortive and potentially raise expectations which could not be met.

In general, there was a hesitancy among residents to take part in consultation and engagement activities. While those who did take part found them to be beneficial and enjoyable, participation and attendance was lower than anticipated and desired.

Along with external political changes, there was also a significant internal restructure within SKDC. Initially the scheme was being delivered by InvestSK (then SKDC's Economic development Company). Following a formal restructure in 2020/21 the team was downsized which resulted in a loss of capacity from the project team as originally outlined in the programme design. In 2022 InvestSK was folded, and the staff bought back in house as the SKDC Economic Development team.

While it was beneficial that the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project manager remained consistent throughout the project delivery, other staff changes resulted in a reduction in overall capacity and impacted the ability to deliver the community engagement elements of the scheme.

Finally, the introduction of restrictions in delivering 'new' projects, which were not specifically included in the original scheme plan partway through the delivery of the HSAZ reduced our ability to be flexible in our approach to engagement and adapt to make use of the underspend in other areas of the community engagement strand, such as the discontinuation of works supporting the potential closure of Conduit Lane.

CLL

Add another?

No

Description Area

Question 3: Tell us what lessons you have learned through the delivery of your scheme
We want to learn from the valuable insights and experiences you have gained in delivering your scheme.

i. Reflecting on your successes - what lessons have you learned that will inform your ongoing work and the advice you would give to others working in heritage-led high street regeneration?

The HSHAZ programme has provided a wonderful platform for learning, and in particular will shape approaches to local regeneration projects going forward.

In particular, the successful projects highlighted the following key lessons:

- Early and consistent engagement with stakeholders is crucial

Engagement with stakeholders began before the start of the project, as part of the development phase. This allowed us to affectively shape our proposals to respond to local need and desires for the preservation and promotion of Grantham's historic environment.

As the programme worked to tight timelines for delivery of projects, early engagement was critical to give stakeholders time to develop projects and submit funding applications. This was especially important for the capital projects which had a reasonably extensive lead in time before they could begin delivery, encompassing design, planning and procurement.

Continued engagement throughout the process not only gave confidence to grant recipients, particularly applicants who had not previously received grant funding in any form ; but also ensured that any problems or risks to the project could be addressed early and quickly resolved.

Early engagement was also beneficial for the project board, as they were able to fully understand the complexity of projects and build good relationships with partners.

- The project officer should be able to offer in person assistance and remain available throughout.

For several of the participants in the scheme - particularly those applying for capital grants, this was their first experience of applying for funding, and completing an application form was somewhat daunting. By having a project officer who was knowledgeable about the scheme, and about the requirements of historic buildings, available to potential applicants they were able to receive comprehensive support and fully understand the commitment they were making.

While it is not always possible to achieve, it was useful that the same project officer was responsible for delivery throughout, meaning that participants were encouraged and supported by a consistent, trusted point of direct contact.

- A flexible approach is required.

With all projects in the historic environment a degree of flexibility and pragmatism was required from all parties to ensure that projects were delivered effectively. This was particularly crucial within capital projects as works to historic buildings almost always result in unforeseen issues which require solutions.

- Create multiple opportunities to engage at different levels

Throughout the project we were conscious of ensuring opportunities for

people to engage with the town's heritage at various levels. For some the project acted as an introduction to Grantham's historic buildings, places, and social history, and for others who were already well versed in the town it was an opportunity to share and develop their knowledge. This was really beneficial when it came to delivering public engagement and strengthening community buy into the scheme.

- Be an advocate and ambassador for your town/ community

The perception of Grantham among residents is often of a failing town with little to redeem it, however, while this is far from the truth it was often a significant barrier to engagement.

It was crucial that the project officer, and wider project team become effective ambassadors for the town, and while acknowledging that challenges remain, be consistent in highlighting opportunities and celebrating the town to encourage a greater buy in from local stakeholders. It was also important to ensure that the project officer was an advocate for community voices, particularly those who felt that their opinions were not typically included in discussions.

- Demonstrate trust and forward movement

While delivering community engagement activity such as the Community Charrette event, we received feedback that residents of Grantham had seen multiple masterplans and strategies being produced in recent years, with very little being delivered as a result.

This dissuaded some people from taking part as they did not see value for their time.

It was important to demonstrate how the information generated through the community events would be utilised, to build greater trust with the community.

It was also important to highlight that when there have been opportunities for forward movement on issues raised by the community, such as working with the Woodland Trust on options to improving street greening, that these options are being pursued.

However, it is important to be open and transparent around expectation management. By being clear about the potential timeframes involved for the development and delivery of change, and the obstacles that are faced by the community and the local authority in delivering regeneration, participants were more likely to offer up ideas and solutions with the understanding that they may be part of a long-term

ii. Reflecting on your challenges - what lessons have you learned that will inform your ongoing work and the advice you would give to others working in heritage-led high street regeneration?

While the capital grant schemes within the HSHAZ were generally successful, feedback received from local stakeholders indicated that smaller, independent property owners found it more difficult to access the scheme - and this was borne out by the completed applications which were received.

While some of this was due to the economic climate during the delivery period of the HSHAZ scheme, and independent property owners being less confident that they could absorb any additional expense compared to Grantham's larger estate holders; we believe that the the structure of the grant allocation process may inadvertently resulted in greater difficulties for independent property owners to access funding.

When the scheme was developed it was decided that to benefit from continuity, it would be operated in the same manner as the previous Shopfront improvement scheme which was funded through a Historic England PSiCA Scheme, which had run from 2015 -2020.

As a result, we had an open application process with no fixed deadlines, and expressions of interest were accepted and evaluated as they were submitted, until the point that the funding was fully allocated.

While our intent was to deliver a funding programme which was easy access to all, and all applicants were offered one to one support in completing expression of interest and applications; it is apparent that the result was that larger estate holders who had greater organisational capacity were able to submit applications earlier on in the process, while independent property owners tended to submit later when the majority of the funding had been allocated, or missed out entirely.

Having learnt from this experience, should we be able to run a similar project in the future it would be recommended that the grant application process be run in distinct rounds, with all the applications accepted in that round being assessed at the same point.

This would allow all applicants a similar timeframe to develop projects, but also allow for the applications to be assessed on their merits against one another, rather than simply if they did or did not meet the eligibility criteria for available funding.

Community Engagement efforts would have benefitted from a longer lead in time, not just in terms of supporting promotion, but also to allow project officers to deepen relationships with stakeholders prior to requiring their involvement in consultation.

The impact of the pandemic was deeply felt by Grantham's community stakeholders, particularly on smaller community groups and schools which saw a reduction in capacity and a significant increase in demand, limiting

their capacity or interest in engaging with the project.

While it would be hoped that should we have the opportunity to run a similar project in the future, the same pressures would not apply - nonetheless this programme would have benefitted from scheduling the large community engagement activities such as the Charrette, later in the delivery of the programme.

This would also have had the benefit of being able to demonstrate delivery of projects on the ground and build on a sense of momentum for the continued regeneration of the town.

Description Area

Question 4: Tell us how the 3 HSHAZ programme strands have worked together. The 3 strands are: Physical Interventions, Cultural Programme and Community Engagement.

Using the 5 star rating, rate how well the 3 programme strands have worked together in the delivery of your scheme (i.e. Physical Interventions, Cultural Programme and Community Engagement)

Tell us more about how the strands have worked together to explain your rating.

Throughout the programme there were opportunities for the community to become involved in the delivery of physical interventions through consultations and calls for research. This was particularly effective with the Westgate Hall project when community members were asked to share their memories and history of the building to support the options appraisal and feasibility study.

It unfortunate that one of the most closely linked projects in terms of community engagement and physical intervention - that of the Condit Lane development appraisal was not able to be delivered as envisaged due to the change in political support for the project, and this considerably lessened opportunities for the strands to work together.

As has been previously discussed in this report, the community engagement strand was a weaker aspect of delivery within the scheme, and in general participation was lower than anticipated. However, considerable learning has been taken from this, and this will continue to impact and shape consultation and engagement about regeneration within Grantham going forward.

Some aspects of the cultural programme exceeded expectations and effectively reignited conversation of what Grantham's town centre could be. The programme demonstrated both the depth of talent within the town centre, and a desire for heritage, arts and culture to be at the forefront of regeneration within the town.

While there are areas where the delivery of the cultural programme could have been more strongly and clearly linked to the delivery of physical interventions in the town centre, it served to highlight the quality and quantity of heritage which remains in the town and to begin to overcome perceptions that much of Grantham's heritage has been lost.

By being given multiple opportunities to engage with and explore Grantham's heritage, the community have underlined how important they consider the historic environment to be in the continued regeneration of the town, which will be carried forward into future projects.

Question 5: What opportunities and threats do you see to your ongoing work in heritage-led regeneration of your high street in the next 5-10 years? (focusing on the area as defined by your HSHAZ boundary polygon).

There are significant opportunities for heritage-led regeneration within Grantham in the short term with the continued delivery of the Future High Street Fund programme, which has been extended into 2025.

This will include extensive public realm works in Marketplace which will create a more unified space and reestablish the marketplace as the heart of the town. This will be accompanied by a programme of events and activities which will re-enliven the historic core of the town and support the regeneration of the town's historic market.

As well as increasing the footfall and usage of Marketplace, this will allow us to continue public engagement and consultation about the regeneration of these spaces and develop projects which will highlight and preserve the historic environment for the benefit of local communities and the economy. There will be opportunity to capitalise on the reduction in traffic (especially HGV traffic) in the town centre which is expected following the completion and opening of the Grantham Southern Relief Road (anticipated in 2025). Throughout the consultation and engagement which took place as part of the HSHAZ programme, community members and stakeholders highlighted a clear desire for there to be a stronger focus on pedestrian travel and accessibility to the town centre.

While this stopped short of a clear preference for pedestrianisation of town centre areas, it will be important to maximise the potential for improvements to the pedestrian experience before the benefits of reduced traffic are lost to the expected increase in population over the next 10 - 20 years.

The delivery of shopfront regeneration in the town centre has been powerful in highlighting the benefits of a well-maintained historic environment to businesses, and there continues to be strong interest in support for improvements to historic buildings within the HSHAZ, and also along gateway routes.

SKDC will seek to maximise on this opportunity by seeking alternative funding to continue to support these impactful regeneration efforts within the town.

The programme has also highlighted a desire for increased access to arts and culture within the town centre. The cultural programme was beneficial in beginning to create a network and has also left a legacy of enhanced facilities; however, it is apparent that there is a continued interest and a wider cohort of arts and cultural practitioners who are looking to base permanent activity in the town centre.

This provides an opportunity to build on the work completed to date and support these practitioners in creating a strong arts and cultural presence, both to develop professionally, but also as key facilitators of cultural activities which will support footfall, generate civic pride, and celebrate both Grantham's heritage and its future.

Through the community engagement strand of the HSHAZ a clear desire for enhanced greening in the town centre became apparent. This has created an opportunity for SKDC to work with the Woodland Trust, who have their head office in Grantham, to develop a partnership approach to improving greening within the town centre. This has already begun with the

Woodland Trust committing £10,000 of funding to support the development of a feasibility study.

The grade II* George shopping centre which links Westgate to the High Street is both an opportunity and threat to the regeneration of the town centre. The former coaching inn was converted into offices and a shopping centre in the 1990s, however now is almost entirely vacant and is responsible for approximately half of the town centre's retail vacancy. The building has incredible regeneration potential should the property owners be willing to engage with the local authority and invest in the future of the property, however if they are unwilling or unable to do so, and the building continue to deteriorate, it will have a disproportionately negative impact on both the economic regeneration of the town centre, and its historic environment.

The largest threat to the regeneration of the town centre - heritage led or otherwise is the continued reduction in resourcing and funding of Local Authorities and partner organisations which persists in undermining the regeneration which could be achieved. While in some areas it has been possible to leverage additional support through Levelling Up funding, South Kesteven is not a priority area for investment (despite Grantham's high levels of deprivation), and therefore has not been able to access additional funding to continue the positive work undertaken so far.

Should momentum be lost for the regeneration of the town it will prove a far greater challenge to gain community support any buy in for future efforts. Shortage of suitably trained and qualified heritage contractors is also an issue, and currently the pool of available contractors in the region is diminishing, which will continue to make the delivery of heritage led schemes challenging.

Section B – Your feedback to Historic England

Description Area	Guidance on this section: Use the 5 star rating to rate your response as follows: 1 star = Very poor, 2 stars = Poor, 3 stars = OK, 4 stars = Good, 5 stars = Excellent
Description Area	Question 1: How useful have Historic England's staff, templates, website resources and other sources of information been in supporting you in the following activities during delivery of your HSHAZ?
Project management	4
Explain your answer	<p>Throughout the project SKDC's HSHAZ project manager received comprehensive support and guidance from both the Historic England HSHAZ Project officers (Ross McGivern and Rachel Foy) as well as the Principal Advisor (Clive Fletcher).</p> <p>Regular communication with them throughout the project enabled effective delivery and allowed the appropriate and where necessary rapid management of change.</p> <p>However, the uncertainty around governance and delay in receiving Programme guidance in the very beginning of the project did delay an effective start to programme delivery, although it is understood that this was largely due to the impact of Covid-19 on operational capacity.</p>
Technical conservation advice or guidance	5
Explain your answer	<p>The Historic England team were exceptionally knowledgeable and supportive in sharing knowledge and advising on technical conservation matters. This was of particular benefit to the scheme during periods in which the SKDC conservation officer post was vacant.</p> <p>The high-quality published guidance available from Historic England was very useful, especially to be able to share this with grant recipients as clear examples of expectations and best practice.</p>
Financial and grant management	4
Explain your answer	<p>In general the support received around financial and grant management aspects of the scheme were excellent, and the guidance and resources available made grant management straightforward.</p>
Peer to peer learning opportunities and networking	3

Explain your answer	There were great opportunities for online networking across the midlands region, which resulted in our own self directed project officer group meeting regularly, however this could have been improved by more opportunities for networking across all the HSHAZ projects nationally as well as regionally.
Training videos (e.g. how to run an area scheme)	3
Explain your answer	These were very useful as refreshers throughout the project, but the live sessions were more useful for initial learning and development.
Stakeholder engagement and community outreach	4
Explain your answer	Good training was provided as well as opportunities to learn from other schemes in the initiation phase of the programme. It would have been beneficial if there had been more opportunities to share examples of successful outreach approaches throughout.
Marketing and branding advice and assets	3
Explain your answer	Guidance was clear, and templates were easily accessible. The design service was brilliant and added much needed capacity to our inhouse designer to support the HSHAZ programme.
	However, Cultural Consortium members did not always find the cultural programme resources easy to navigate independently.
Description Area	Question 2: How well has the way we have worked supported you in the delivery of your scheme?
Swiftness of providing information and responding to queries	4
Explain your answer	The project officer and lead officers were very responsive to queries and forthcoming with advice, which was of considerable support to the delivery of the project. There were clear lines of communication, and regular support meetings.
	However, written information and guidance was often slow to be developed and delivered
Clarity of information and messaging	3

Explain your answer	In general information was clear and precise, however at times written guidance was slow to be delivered, and frequently changed/ updated after its release which impacted the delivery of certain areas of the programme management, in particular reporting requirements, requests for additional information, and changes in deadlines.
Range of communication channels	4
Explain your answer	<p>The range of communication options was very good, and enabled the HSHAZ project manager and other relevant officers to find information quickly and efficiently.</p> <p>However, the Knowledge Hub site was not particularly useful beyond a repository for information, however as the majority of the information available through the site was also emailed directly to project officers so in most cases it was not necessary to use the site to access the information.</p>
Proactive signposting to wider resources	3
Explain your answer	Historic England project officers and project leads were very useful in sharing and signposting wider resources when needed, and also to support professional development throughout the course of the four-year programme.
Relevant events and training	3
Explain your answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the first year of delivery the training which was offered was very relevant and supported the delivery of the programme, however later on in the project some of the training offered was either less relevant, or related to elements of the project which were either well underway or which had completed, and so were less useful.
Opportunity for professional networking 3 (e.g. events and online communities)	
Explain your answer	Throughout there were good opportunities for professional networking, however the most common elements of this focused on the regional areas, and although this led to the creation of strong local networks, more opportunities to network across the national scheme would have been beneficial
Effective problem solving related to the delivery of your scheme	5

Explain your answer

The support of historic England staff was essential in supporting problem solving within the scheme. They were readily available to discuss any issues and work through potential solutions to find assist in finding a satisfactory solution for all.

Within the Grantham project this was evidenced particularly strongly in relation to the Westgate Hall regeneration project, which regularly experienced difficulties in delivery which benefited from the support and experience of the Historic England team.

**General expertise and experience within 5
the Historic England team****Explain your answer**

The level of expertise shown by the team supporting the Grantham project was considerable and gave great confidence to both the Grantham project manager, and the project board - which included senior officers and Councillors.

The advice given by Historic England staff allowed the Project Manager to feel completely confident in communications with key stakeholders and property owners and was of great benefit to the project overall.

Question 3: Tell us about any other examples where you have felt supported through our work and/ or the information we have provided

The most significant example of support from Historic England staff was in the development phase of the Westgate Hall regeneration project.

Initially the support from Historic England staff was invaluable in facilitating a transfer of budget which has originally been allocated to the delivery of a small public realm project, to support a substantial grant for the capital works to the property. Additionally, the support from the Historic England team (principally Clive Fletcher and Ross McGivern), and their external verification of the proposed benefits of the project was beneficial in securing the support of the Council's cabinet to approve the grant.

Although a relatively clear path had been laid out through an options appraisal and feasibility study which was completed in 2020/21, the impact of rapidly inflating costs and of the scope of the required works was very concerning to the property owner, who had a limited and fixed budget to contribute to the project and was understandably cautious of overextending themselves financially.

However, with a future tenant in place who is willing to contribute funding to the fit out of the building for use as a restaurant, the property owner was keen not to miss the opportunity for support.

Following the tender process for the capital works, it became apparent that the scope of the scheme would have to scaled back to be able to achieve a successful result. Technical advice provided by Historic England was invaluable in supporting the decision-making process.

Following the initiation of the project, continued involvement of the Historic England team in site visits and meetings provided additional support to the Grantham HSHAZ Project Manager, and confidence to the property owner that impartial expert advice was available to them.

Similarly, involvement of the Historic England team in supporting the project board and attending meetings as advisors facilitated decision making.

Question 4: Other than what you have shared above, what else could Historic England do to further enhance partner organisations' capacity to deliver effectively?

Thorough the delivery of the programme guidance from Historic England about their requirements for delivery often changed, which made predicting outcomes, and reacting to risk or opportunities within the programme difficult.

This included changing stance on the inclusion of new projects to address underspend or unforeseen circumstances which could have minimised underspend and opened up new opportunities for community engagement.

While it is acknowledged that as this is first round of HSHAZ projects to be delivered by Historic England, there was inevitably learning being implemented throughout on both sides of delivery which would likely not be the case as often in any subsequent repeats of the scheme, an increased consistency in approach would be beneficial to effective delivery.

The turnover of staff at Historic England towards the end of the project reduced the level of support available. While the Historic England officers who took over the roles of departing staff were excellent, they naturally were less familiar with the projects and the complicating factors inhibiting delivery, so support was less effective.

Important information before you submit form

Description Area	By submitting this report, I confirm the information provided has been verified and approved by this scheme's Senior Responsible Officer or equivalent person within this scheme's governance arrangements.?
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Name (of person submitting this report form)	Claire Saunders
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Name of Senior Responsible Officer or equivalent who has verified and approved this report for submission	Nick Hibberd, Head of Economic Development and Inward Investment
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Signature (of person submitting this report form)
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Saunders', is placed over a horizontal line.