



**Extraordinary Finance and Economic  
Overview Scrutiny Committee**

**Thursday 16 January 2025, 10.30am**

**Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter, The  
Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member  
for Finance, HR and Economic  
Development.**

## **Grantham Town Centre Action Plan**

### **Report Author**

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### **Purpose of Report**

To update and seek the views of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) Members on the progress made towards the production of a Grantham Town Centre Action Plan.

### **Recommendations**

**That the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- 1. Notes the content of this report in respect to the Grantham Town Centre Action Plan.**
- 2. Endorses the Grantham Town Centre Action Plan.**
- 3. Agrees to receive a further report on progress made against the action plan in six months.**

### **Decision Information**

**Is this a key decision?**

**No**

**Does the report contain any exempt or  
confidential information not for  
publication?**

**No**

**What are the relevant corporate priorities?**

**Connecting communities  
Sustainable South Kesteven  
Enabling economic opportunities**  
**(All Wards);**

**Which wards are impacted?**

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

1.1 All activities identified in the draft Grantham Action Plan, contained within Appendix 2, can be delivered from existing budgets. The following table shows the allocation of the Council approved budget:

Budget	Spend 2022- 2023	Spend 2023- 2024	Proposed Spend 2025 to deliver Action Plan
£379,092.00	£64,000	£105,000	£210,000

*Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer.*

### ***Legal and Governance***

There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report.

*Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer*

## 2. Background to the Report

2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to “enable and support a dynamic, resilient and growing local economy”. The Grantham Future High Street Fund (FHSF) is one means by which the Council seeks to meet this ambition. A key component of this activity is the economic health of Grantham Town Centre.

2.2 To support this ambition, in 2021, Cabinet agreed to a £5.6m programme of works funded by the Government's Future High Street Fund (FHSF). The programme focuses on improvements to Grantham Town Centre, including public realm improvement schemes to the Market Place and Station Approach. This included, a commitment to provide £379,000 as the Council's match-funding. This was ring-fenced for activities including the employment of a Grantham Engagement

Manager who would be responsible for the development and implementation of a Town Centre Action Plan.

- 2.3 Since the start of the highway works in May 2024 Members of this Committee have been concerned of the possible effects of this activity on the levels of footfall in the town and by consequence a reduction of financial spend in local businesses in the vicinity of the works.
- 2.4 To ward against this scenario officers have been supporting businesses through a range of activities to maintain and attract footfall. Initially this included engaging street entertainers on a weekly basis to support the market over the period of the works.
- 2.5 On completion, the refurbished Market Place was launched in October 2024, through a well-received 'Community Event'. This attracted a multi-generational audience and culminated in a lantern procession. The lanterns were designed and made by the Grantham community over the summer; with over 500 members of the public engaged in the workshops. Further public events have since been held including the popular Christmas lights switch event on 1 December 2024..
- 2.6 These events have been generally well received. In addition, officers have sought to engage local businesses and to reassure the general public, through a variety of mediums, that Grantham is 'Open for Business'.
- 2.7 A further measure of support that had been expected to start before the end of 2024 was the introduction of a loyalty voucher scheme for those businesses in proximity to the Market Place FHSF works. However, prior to its planned launch in October, Grantham retailers expressed a strong desire to do their own incentive scheme independent of the Council. As a result, the scheme has been paused whilst proposals are drafted by the Grantham retail community. The budget allocated to this activity has been ringfenced to respond to their needs, subject to them being fully inclusive and in line with the Council's objectives for the area. This is now expected to be a medium-term activity, starting in 2025.
- 2.8 The success of these activities will be evaluated against footfall data, which is one of the most reliable sources of information available to understand the health and vibrancy of the town centre which is a reporting requirement of the Future High Street Funding.
- 2.9 **Appendix 1** identifies footfall data for three geographies in Grantham, The Town Centre, The Market and Westgate / Market Place. It also includes plans identifying the three locations. The data is available back to 2020, so it is possible to make comparisons over time. The data shows that within the Town Centre 'Total

footfall' has been falling slightly over that time period (-1%), stimulated by the pandemic in 2020.

2.10 For both the Market and Westgate / Market areas, footfall has considerably increased over the same period by 50% and 90% respectively. This indicates that these areas have become more popular for visitors to the town over that timeframe. Additionally, we can see from the 'Mean Footfall' information provided that the average number of visitors has increased, indicating a higher consistent level of footfall in those areas over time and compared to the rest of the Town Centre.

Year	Town Centre		Market		Westgate/ Market Place	
	Total Footfall	Mean Footfall	Total Footfall	Mean Footfall	Total Footfall	Mean Footfall
2020	19049026	56862.76	975803	2912.8	1686292	5033.71
2021	18992276	56863.10	1024838	3068.4	2053680	6148.74
2022	18930704	56678.75	1235338	3698.6	2464425	7378.52
2023	18868724	56493.19	1119250	3351.0	2691561	8058.57
2024	18816783	56169.50	1460261	4359.0	3214139	9594.44

2.11 In addition to resilient footfall performance, a number of retailers have displayed confidence by choosing the town as a place to start businesses. These include Westgate Bakery, The Olive Tree, The Shire's Larder and Ayka. Across 2024 Grantham Market has shown significant growth and there are now in excess of 45 traders regularly at Grantham Market.

2.12 The purpose of the FHSF was to boost the economic activity of the Town Centre and it is important that the Council builds on this through the adoption of a Grantham Town Centre Action Plan. A draft Action Plan has been prepared and is appended to this report (**Appendix 2**). An indicative event programme is included in **Appendix 3**. These has been informed by a fully costed feasibility study of activities including consideration to the following Interventions recommended by this committee at the June 2024 Meeting of this Committee:

- 1 **Parking:** Free parking on market days/midweek to encourage shoppers.
- 2 **Marketing:** implement a grant scheme to enable better promotions.

- 3      **New Traders** – offer financial incentives to new market traders taking up stalls.
- 4      **Rent** – offer financial support rent costs for new town centre businesses.
- 5      **Transport** – provision of free buses to Grantham on market days.

2.13 Following discussions with the Grantham Town Team, the draft Grantham Town Centre Action Plan has been prepared to support an overall strategy for Grantham Town Centre. This includes the period during the FHSF works and the initial period after, up to December 2025. The draft Action Plan is fully funded from existing budgets.

2.14 In producing this plan, the options identified in paragraph 2.12 above have been fully considered. **Appendix 4** to this report contains a summary of this feasibility work and identifies which options have been included within the action plan. For example, providing incentives to market traders has been included however it also identifies where further work is required to understand their viability, such as the provision of free buses on market days.

2.15 This plan has also considered information and ideas obtained in June 2024 following a ‘Brainstorming exercise’ between a local ward Member and businesses in the vicinity of the Market Place and in dialogue with the Grantham Town Team. **Appendix 5**.

2.16 The initial phase (between January and July 2025), will investigate

- Additional activity to market the town to a wider regional audience,
- Providing incentives for the occupancy of void retail units,
- Developing a pipeline of potential future ‘Regeneration projects’, and
- Providing a comprehensive programme of events to further increase footfall.

2.17 A critical element of the Action Plan will be to develop a longer-term strategy to sustain and increase footfall in the Town Centre over the next five years. As well as dialogue with the Grantham Town Team, this will continue to require the support of a broad partnership of public, private and third sector stakeholders.

2.18 The contents of this report were first discussed by FEOSC Members at the meeting on the 26 November, when they were asked to:

- 1      Consider the findings of the feasibility study into options proposed by FEOSC members at their June 2024 committee meeting.
- 2      Endorse the Action Plan for Grantham Town Centre (Appendix 2).

3 Agrees to receive an updated Action Pan after six months.

After debating the Action Plan, the committee agreed to endorse the first part of the Action up – Short Term proposals up to the end of the calendar year 2024. However, to allow time for further consideration of the medium-term elements of the plan they requested that a further Extraordinary General Meeting of this Committee be held.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 The adoption of an action plan for the medium to long term is vital to sustain the activities that have been started and to ensure Grantham continues to attract visitors and boost the economy of the Town.
- 3.2 Grantham Town Team expressed support for the draft Action Plan at a meeting on the 4 November 2024.
- 3.3 FEOSC Members debated the Action plan on the 26 November, but, requested further opportunity to scrutinise the medium and long-term elements of the Action Plan, through an Extraordinary Meeting. The Committee did, however, endorse the short-term elements of the Action Plan.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 An alternative option would be to “do nothing” and decide not to adopt an Action Plan, but this would fall short of the commitment that was part of the original FHSF bid.  
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- 4.2 Further work is being undertaken to identify additional activities or actions for the longer term Town Centre Action Plan and will be reported to this committee in six months.

### **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 Delivery of the Grantham Town Centre Action Plan will ensure a collaborative and coordinated approach to sustaining interest and activities in the town centre to ensure Grantham continues to grow and attract visitors. The development of the Action Plan will provide a strategic framework to ensure activities are targeted to ensure that the economic, social and environmental benefits identified in the Future

High Street Fund Business Case are delivered and further benefits are derived in the years to come.

## 6. Background papers

**A** –Report to Cabinet “Future High Street Fund” February 2021; Cabinet [Future High Street Fund.pdf](#)

**B** - Report to Full Council “Future High Street Fund”: [Full Council Report FHS July 2020.pdf](#)

**C** - Report to Council May 2024 “Grantham Market Place – Possible interventions to encourage footfall and support businesses”; [Grantham Market Place Final Report.pdf](#)

**D** - Report to Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee May 2024 “Grantham Future High Streets Fund – May 224 update”; [FINAL FHSF FEOSC Report - 8th May 2024.pdf](#)

**E** - Report to Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee 27 June 2024 [Grantham Future High Streets Fund Market Place Footfall Activity.pdf](#)

**F** - Report to Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee 17 September 2024; [Footfall Final Version.pdf](#)

**G**- Report to Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee 26 November 2024 [Marketplace Footfall Report.pdf](#)

## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1	Footfall Data
Appendix 2	Grantham Town Centre Draft Action Plan
Appendix 3	Proposed Events Programme
Appendix 4	Feasibility Study
Appendix 5	Local Business Ideas
Appendix 6	Bus Services to Grantham