



## Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Executive                      17 November 2021

Wards affected:            All

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### Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone Hub and Youth Hub

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Report of Director (Community Services)

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To inform members of the location options available for the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone Hub and a DWP Youth Hub, and to seek approval to proceed as recommended.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 Endorse the proposal to locate the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone Hub and the Youth Hub in the Atkins Building.
- 2.2 Approve an income and expenditure budget of £50,000 to support fit out costs, funded through the Heritage Action zone funding.

#### **3. Background to the report**

- 3.1 In 2020, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council secured funding from Historic England and the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ). The £1.85 million scheme is located within Hinckley's Town Centre Conservation Area and will be delivered by March 2024. The scheme aims to use Hinckley's unique historic environment to revitalise the town centre and secure lasting improvements to historic high streets and the communities who use them. The Hinckley HSHAZ comprises a range of projects to help safeguard and celebrate the heritage of the town, with the Hinckley HSHAZ Hub being one of them.

3.2 The original funding application to Historic England included a proposal to establish a temporary/pop-up Hub as part of the HSHAZ scheme. Original proposals included a cost of £50,000 for fit out of the Hub. Though the funding application was successful, the cost for the HSHAZ Hub was removed at the request of Historic England in December 2019 as part of a value engineering process. The Hinckley HSHAZ Hub project however remained part of the wider scheme with the following outcomes:

- To establish a high quality and engaging HSHAZ Hub.
- To engage people in the wider Hinckley HSHAZ scheme.
- To enable people to visit and attend the Hub as part of wider community engagement.

3.3 In March 2021, Historic England encouraged national HSHAZ schemes to submit a request for additional funding for projects that would be completed by March 2022. Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council submitted a request for additional funding to support the delivery of the Hinckley HSHAZ Hub project. As a result, the Council were successfully awarded an additional £50,000 from Historic England towards fit out costs. This funding must be spent before the end of financial year 2021-2022.

3.4 The aim of the Hub is to provide a space that will support and encourage community engagement and facilitate participation in the HSHAZ scheme and other Council, stakeholder and partner projects. It is envisaged that the space will be used for exhibitions, consultations and as a possible part-time base for the Hinckley HSHAZ Project Officer. In addition, the HSHAZ Hub will provide a space within the core of the town centre to aid with the delivery of the projects identified within the Community Engagement Plan and likely events of the Cultural Programme. Additional ideas include making the space available as a pop-up gallery for local artists and creatives.

#### **4. DWP Youth Hub**

4.1 Alongside the development of the Heritage Action Zone Hub discussions have taken place with DWP around their ambition of opening a Youth Hub. Youth (18-24) employment is a priority for the government's plans around economic recovery. In the last 12 months young people have been affected by the increase in unemployment during the pandemic and in Hinckley & Bosworth up to the end of April 2021 there were a total of 511 18-24 year olds claiming Universal Credit. This is a 149% increase compared to the previous year and this is likely to have increased again when young people left education this summer.

4.2 A Youth Hub is an external space where employers, providers and work coaches come together to support 18-24 year old Universal Credit customers. The Youth Hub will focus on addressing barriers to employment and promoting a wide range of options and local opportunities to young people. There will be a blend of booked one to one appointments, group sessions, drop-in sessions and planned events such as job fairs.

- 4.3 The aim of the Youth Hub is to:
- Increase young people attending.
  - Better engagement.
  - Barriers to work being addressed quickly through an immediate referral to support.
  - Increase in Kickstart vacancies.
  - Quicker movement into work.

## 5. Proposed Location

- 5.1 Rather than having a number of Hubs in the Town Centre it makes sense to explore whether there could be a join up of the two Hubs.
- 5.2 A number of locations including:
- Occupying a vacant unit within the Crescent
  - Hinckley District
  - Atkins Building.
- 5.3 Based on the reasons outlined below, it is recommended that the Hinckley HSHAZ Hub and Youth Hub are located within the downstairs space at the Atkins Building (Partridge Suite). With this space there would be minimum financial impact as there would be no loss of rent just loss of potential conference booking income. The space could be used flexibly to enable some conferences to take place should demand pick up. Fit out requirements are likely to fall within the £50,000 budget.
- 5.4 Though geographically located outside the Hinckley HSHAZ boundary area, the Atkins Building is ideally situated in the town centre to provide access to a multi-use space for the HSHAZ Hub.
- 5.5 The Hinckley HSHAZ is a scheme delivered in partnership with several stakeholders and local organisations. Several partners are strategically positioned in close proximity of the Atkins Building, including both North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College located next door and Hinckley District Museum. It is also envisaged that the Rural Communities Council, located within the Atkins Building, will be involved in supporting and delivering aspects of the Cultural Programme of the HSHAZ which is currently being developed.
- 5.6 Occupying a space within a Borough Council owned building will assist in being able to manage and control the project during the fit out phase.
- 5.7 The history of the Atkins Building aligns with and complements the historic and cultural focus of the HSHAZ scheme. The building is Grade II Listed and the former home of Atkins of Hinckley who established a presence in Hinckley in 1722 and produced hosiery until 1995, by which time it was the oldest existing and operating hosiery factory in the world. In 2008 Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council purchased the building and renovated it into a

creative business centre, providing an excellent example of successful town centre regeneration.

- 5.8 The Atkins Gallery provides a diverse range of flexible space and facilities that would complement the role of the Hinckley Hub, including break-out space, gallery space for events and larger activities and exhibition space on the ground floor which could be used by partners of the scheme.
- 5.9 As sole funders of this individual project, Historic England have confirmed they are supportive of the proposal.
- 5.10 Discussions have taken place with DWP and their representatives have visited the Atkins Building. Benefits to joining up the Hubs include:
- A true partnership to working with the young people of the borough around the key priority of employment and skills.
  - The Heritage Action Zone work, with links to culture/arts etc, will be an additional pull to getting young people to engage.
  - Key partners for the DWP are located close by – the College and Rural Community Council and would enable joint initiatives to be progressed. For example, linking into volunteering opportunities and into college courses.
  - Space for events such as job fairs, Kickstart promotion – increase the footfall into the Atkins Building.
  - Opportunity to work with the businesses located in the Atkins Building around areas such as work experience, apprenticeships, Kickstart.
  - Opportunity for specific support services to work from the Hub, breaking down the barriers to work.
  - Economies of scale and particularly in resourcing just one hub which could include potentially longer opening times than if run separately.
- 5.11 Supporting a Youth Hub would contribute to our Corporate Plan and recovery priorities around employment and skills and young people, and could provide an exciting centre to focus young people activity and engagement.
- 5.12 It should be noted that the DWP do not have any funding towards the rental cost of any space. This meant that they were looking at space such as the library, but arguably this will be as equally unattractive to a young person as going into a job centre. Our partnership working around Employment and Skills, and commitment to improving the position of young people, means that consideration should be given to supporting this initiative despite the lack of financial contribution from DWP.
- 5.13 Discussions are also taking place with the Rural Communities council to develop a Volunteering Hub in the same space.

## **6. Legacy Plans**

- 6.1 Upon completion of the HSHAZ scheme in March 2024, there may be the opportunity for the HSHAZ Hub to either:

- Continue to operate from the Atkins Building and be managed by project partners.
- Transfer to the new community hub being considered by charitable partners.

Discussions regarding the longer term transition of the HSHAZ Hub and community hub will continue in the interim.

## **7. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules**

7.1 None.

## **8. Financial Implications (IB)**

8.1 If the move to the Atkins Building (Partridge Suite) is endorsed, fit out costs will need to be met from the £50,000. Income from the Suite (pre-pandemic) was in an average year approximately £4,000. This dropped to around £1,000 in 2020/21. Therefore, the general fund impact is minimal, but this income will be lost.

8.2 If endorsed, a fit out budget will require approval in accordance with financial procedure rules. A budget between £25,000 and £50,000 would require Executive approval.

8.3 This scenario assumes there are no additional revenue costs arising from the proposal, and that no other changes will be needed in the operation of the Atkins Building that may lead to additional costs in relation to providing accommodation to the Hinckley High Street Heritage Action Zone Hub and the Youth Hub in the Atkins Building

## **9. Legal Implications (MR)**

9.1 Section 1 Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do and to do it for, amongst other things, the benefit of its area or persons resident or present in its area.

9.2 Section 142 Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to provide information about the services available in its area provided by itself or by other authorities.

9.3 Section 144 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to encourage people to visit its area in order, amongst other things, to hold conferences trade fairs and exhibitions.

## **10. Corporate Plan Implications**

10.1 People, Place, Prosperity.

## 11. Consultation

11.1 Historic England. DWP. Hinckley High Street HAZ Partnership Board.

## 12. Risk Implications

Management of significant (Net Red) risks		
Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
HAZ funding isn't spent according to guidelines	Officers will ensure correct expenditure	Stephen Meynell

## 13. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

13.1 Establishing a high quality and engaging hub at the Atkins Gallery will support and facilitate community engagement in the HSHAZ project. The central location will enable better interaction between HSHAZ partners and Will provide opportunities for communities to engage more easily and effectively with HSHAZ officers and stakeholders. The aim of the DWP Youth Hub is to make accessing the service more attractive to young people.

## 14. Climate Implications

14.1 Work will be delivered to limit carbon impact where possible.

## 15. Corporate Implications

15.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

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Background papers:

Contact officer: Sharon Stacey/Stephen Meynell  
Executive member: Councillor Keith Nicholls/Councillor David Bill