

# Unlocking Your Place Potential – Report and Feedback



HAVANT

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# About the visit and this report

The High Streets Task Force visited Havant Borough Council on 16 March 2023 to undertake an *Unlocking Your Place Potential* diagnostic visit. Dr Jo Morrison was the High Streets Task Force Expert undertaking the visit.

The attendees representing Havant can be found in Appendix 1.

**The purpose of the visit 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 the lack of an organisation or group to take responsibility for the town centre as the main barrier to transformation in Havant.**

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.

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 Grant Thornton and his colleagues for organising the session and those that led, and contributed to, an informative and well-planned town tour.

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



Matt Colledge

High Streets Task Force Project Director



## Havant – Strengths

- ✓ Cultural heritage
- ✓ Enthusiastic and willing stakeholder communities
- ✓ Strong array of independents
- ✓ Shopping centre with some key attractors, such as Waitrose and banking e.g. Nationwide, Lloyds and Halifax
- ✓ Strong public transport offer
- ✓ Proximity to South Downs National Park and beautiful coastline

Havant has a remarkable heritage and beautiful countryside right on its doorstep. It also enjoys a relatively large catchment within walking distance of the town centre, high occupancy rates and a wealth of rail and bus links. Much of the centre retains the original crossroad configuration (North, South, East and West Streets) and its architectural assets span many centuries - with significant buildings from more recent decades. In summary, the town has many strengths and although it is facing challenges, these strengths give Havant strong foundations to build upon.

# 4Rs Framework and our method

The aim of the Unlocking Your Place Potential workshop is for our High Streets Task Force Experts to identify the key barrier(s) to the improvement of your high street and recommend an appropriate strategic response. To enable our experts to do this in an evidence-based way, the High Streets Task Force uses the '4Rs Framework'.

Research has identified 237 factors that impact on the success of the high street. However, it is too overwhelming to think of all these at once, so we have developed the '4 Rs' framework to provide some structure to the incredibly complex practice of place transformation. Without a framework, it is easy to be drawn into so much detail that you cannot see the big picture.

When you simplify the process of renewal, the reasons why so many regeneration plans do not result in the changes people expect fall into 4 categories:

- The problems facing the centre were not accurately identified
- The plans were good but not enough changed
- The place changed but people's perceptions did not
- There were fundamental issues with governance or the spatial layout of the place.

We looked at these problems and identified 4 strategies to address them, *repositioning*, *reinventing*, *rebranding*, and *restructuring*. So, the framework distinguishes between the processes of analysis and decision making (repositioning), effecting change (reinventing), communication (rebranding) and governance/spatial planning (restructuring). More detail on each of the '4R's' is set out below.



Figure 1: 4Rs Framework  
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# Applying the 4Rs to Havant

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.

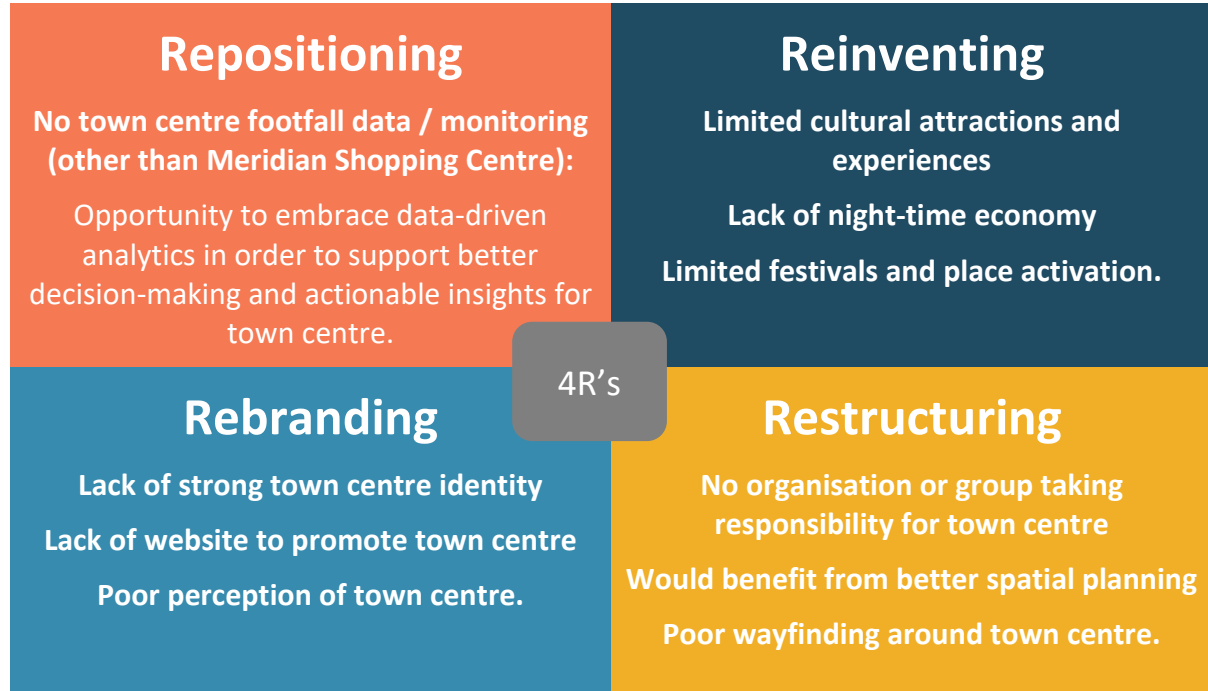


Figure 2: Applying the 4Rs Framework to Havant

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 strategic documents, the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, including our meeting, discussions, exercises and the in-person town tour. We also included the information we found out about Havant 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 Havant is facing major barriers. This then allows us to recommend suitable strategies to overcome these. 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 Havant.

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

# Fishbone Analysis

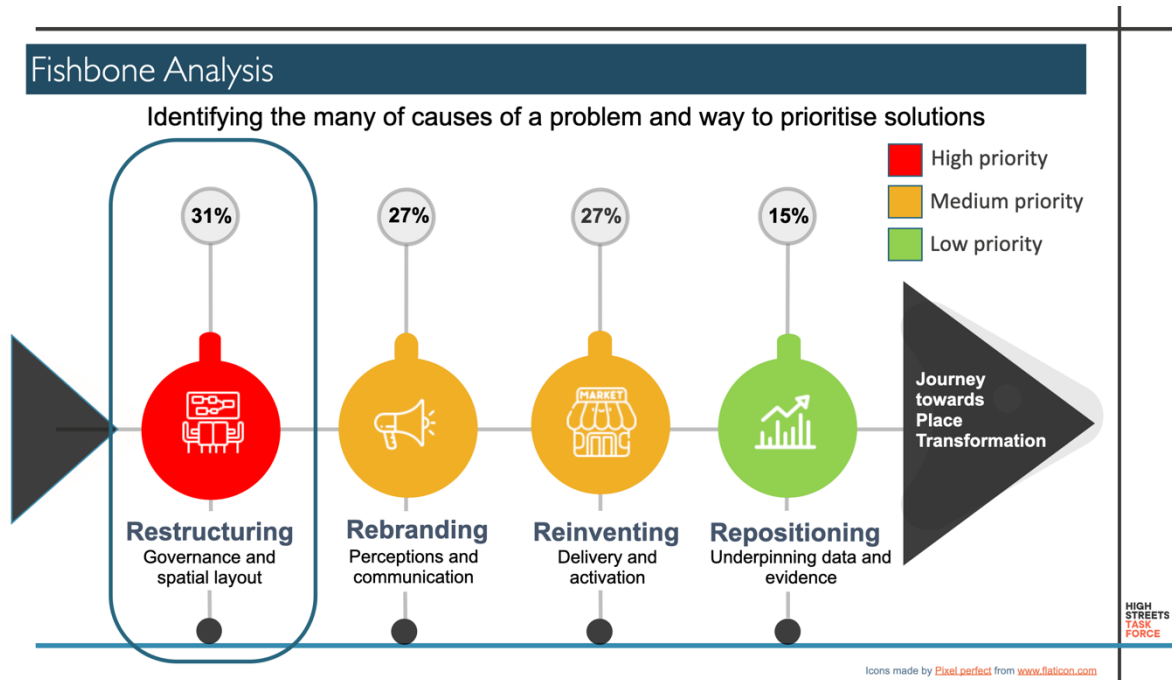


Figure 3: Fishbone analysis

## Diagnosis of main barrier to transformation

**As a result of the diagnostic process, the Experts have identified the lack of an organisation or group to take responsibility for the town centre as the main barrier to transformation in Havant.**

We believe Havant Borough Council can improve its capacity, partnerships and leadership to enable positive change for its town centre.

Building stronger partnerships between council, businesses and the wider community will build more capacity for making change in the town. A more coordinated approach will ensure more impact from the investment and interventions, whether they are initially led by the public, private or voluntary sector. Adopting an iterative test-and-learn approach to change will further support town transformation.

It was very clear from our meeting that there is a huge amount of enthusiasm and support for the town from both the council, cultural and business leaders. For example, the CEO of The Spring Arts and Heritage Centre agreed to explore writing a town centre cultural strategy that could be adopted by the Council – at present there is none. As discussed in the stakeholder community meeting, more frequent and open communication that leads to action is needed, and we recommend restructuring your governance systems to facilitate a team approach to town centre transformation, with council, business, and the community.

# Recommendations

To improve the situation that **no organisation or group is taking responsibility for the town centre**, 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 five recommendations that if you adopt, will lead to some quick improvements.

1. Share the final version of this report with everyone that attended the Unlocking Your Place Potential meeting.
2. Arrange an away day with the local authority, business and community leaders to review challenges facing the town and feedback from the UYPP visit and consider how these may inform a better-quality vision for the town.
3. Form a multi-stakeholder Town Board, 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 centre, rather than being council-led, business-led or community-led. Find a positive structure to work together.
4. The next steps that are set out in the meeting are appropriate, but who delivers each element is important, as is how roles and responsibilities are allocated.
5. 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:

6. Develop a 'quick win' place activation plan for the town centre. For example, build upon the existing Tuesday and Saturday markets by creating cultural events or themed events on other days of the week in the same location.
7. Embrace a data-driven approach to supporting decision-making and informing the next steps in your town centre transformation.

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

Product prescribed	Rationale
<b>Mentor support</b>	<p>Havant does not have a multi-stakeholder group or organisation that works to imagine, co-design and deliver the future of the town centre. The town visit and meeting with stakeholders showed a real desire for collaboration and for action at pace. As such, Mentor support to help create and firm-up local partnerships would be highly beneficial and help the town centre to progress positively.</p> <p>It would be good to include local community representatives as participants.</p> <p>Further detail regarding this support can be found in the attached product summary/guidance documentation.</p>
<b>Workshop</b>	<p>I have recommended that following the above Mentor support, Havant would benefit from a Place Making Programme workshop. The Place Making workshop is open to a wide group of stakeholders and is centred around a 3-hour in-person session for up to 70 people. Using this approach of broad consultation and engagement, the workshop allows for constructive discussion of challenges and future plans for the local area, ensuring that all voices are heard.</p>
<b>Online learning/resources</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>Course - Developing Place Analysts</u></a></p> <p>This course, delivered by Task Force Partner and footfall experts Springboard, is online and can be completed on a module by module basis, allowing learners to progress at their own pace.</p>
	<p><a href="#"><u>Online learning – Restructuring</u></a></p>
	<p><a href="#"><u>Online learning - Rebranding</u></a></p>
	<p><a href="#"><u>Online learning – Reinventing</u></a></p>
	<p><a href="#"><u>Specialist webinars - Understanding Place Sentiment</u></a></p>

	<p><b>Article: 5 fantastic parklet designs and why we need more of them</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=9f3ba56f-1b55-4e7c-bafe-3921587f35c1">https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=9f3ba56f-1b55-4e7c-bafe-3921587f35c1</a></p>
	<p><b>Article: What does a future-proof high street look like?</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/what-does-a-future-proof-high-street-look-like/">https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/what-does-a-future-proof-high-street-look-like/</a></p>
	<p><b>Article: Pedestrianisation</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=cf789177-e0f8-4c47-83a9-c51018ddeb28">https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=cf789177-e0f8-4c47-83a9-c51018ddeb28</a></p>
	<p><b>Article: Revealing Waterloo – a placemaking strategy</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=de79df37-d5a9-4552-b27b-d68b68b9ffa4">https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=de79df37-d5a9-4552-b27b-d68b68b9ffa4</a></p>
	<p><b>Article: Number of landlords</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=29a31f8b-3d4c-4f87-a137-4bed9865e7c0">https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=29a31f8b-3d4c-4f87-a137-4bed9865e7c0</a></p>

**Next steps:**

Please liaise with your Operations contact to make arrangements for the delivery of the next stage of your support. The Operations team are available to assist with any queries relating to the delivery of the above support, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if any aspect is unclear.

More information about all of these products can be found on the HSTF website [here](#).

# Appendix 1 – List of town attendees

- Grant Thornton (Regeneration and Economy Manager) Havant Borough Council
- Cllr. Tim Pike (Cabinet Lead for Levelling Up) Havant Borough Council
- Cllr. Lulu Bowerman (Cabinet lead for Commercial and County Councillor) Havant Borough Council
- Kim Sawyer (Chief Executive) Havant Borough Council
- Alan Downton (Economic Development & Regeneration Consultant) Havant Borough Council
- Rob Fryer (Meridian Centre Manager)
- Cheryl Pierce (CEO 'The Spring' Arts & Heritage Centre)
- Sue Dickinson (Manager 'The Spring' Arts & Heritage Centre)
- Chris Caesar (Crime Reduction Partnership)
- Elizabeth Weighell (Havant Library – Hampshire County Council)
- Martina Spencer (Town Centre Retailer – Endless Gifts, West Street)
- Matthew Carters (Creative Chaos – vol. sector / charity and a retail unit at Market Parade)
- Peter Hammond (Havant Civic Society)