

Name of meeting: Cabinet
Date: 29 June 2020
Title of report: Re-opening Town Centres (Active Travel and Cultural Interventions)

Purpose of report: To update Cabinet on the approach being taken for active travel/road-space re-allocation measures (both in operation and being planned) for the district and to seek budget approval for proposed cultural interventions in Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centre to support the safe re-opening of these town centres and the district's economic recovery.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Yes
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Karl Battersby - 17 June 2020 Eamonn Croston - 17 June 2020 Julie Muscroft - 17 June 2020
Cabinet member <u>portfolio</u>	Cllr Peter McBride Cllr Naheed Mather Cllr Rob Walker

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Yes

Public or private: Public report

Has GDPR been considered? Yes. No personal or sensitive data, or other information covered by GDPR, is included in this report.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out some immediate/short term, active travel and cultural interventions, to support the re-opening of Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centres and schools in the district. The aim is to help make sure that people can still socially distance and move safely as they re-open. Practical measures are being taken (such as free parking, signage, hand washing facilities and pavement stickers), but the council is also keen to promote active travel measures into and through these towns; and make changes to streets around schools to make parents and children feel safe when traveling to and from school by foot or bike. At the same time the council is keen to commence a series of cultural interventions to help make the town centre environments more attractive and welcoming to residents and business as these town centres open more fully.
- 1.2 These interventions will also allow the Council to contribute to our public health objectives, help address the climate emergency, and help accelerate implementing parts of the Huddersfield and Dewsbury Blueprints as part of our economic recovery.
- 1.3 This report also sets out how the council might engage with business and residents across the district to determine what actions can be taken in other town centres and across the district to encourage active travel and seeks budget approval to implement some of the immediate and short term cultural interventions (some of which will have a longer legacy, in terms of infrastructure and synergy with other projects).

2 Information required to take a decision

2.1 Covid-19 Response

As part of the country's economic recovery from the pandemic, the government has announced the gradual re-opening of business, including non-essential shops and potentially the re-opening of restaurants, cafes, bars and leisure amenities in the coming weeks. Greater numbers of school children and their parents are also travelling to and from schools. The council's primary concern is the safety of its residents. At the same time the district has seen significant falls in traffic volumes and improved air quality and a vital part of the economic recovery of Kirklees is the re-opening of our town centres.

- 2.2 The Government sees this period of time as a key opportunity to push forward with the economic recovery and to create new opportunities for active travel (particularly walking and cycling) as an alternative to the private car. This is particularly important given it is expected to take some time for public transport to return to previous capacity levels. It's also important to make our town centres feel safe, welcoming and attractive.

2.3 Active Travel

The Government have confirmed that active travel allows people to get around whilst maintaining social distance and has an essential role to play in helping us avoid overcrowding on public transport systems as parts of our economy begin to re-open. There is a window of opportunity to act now to embed walking and cycling as part of new long-term commuting habits and reap the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits; as well as create more attractive places. Greater levels of active travel can help prevent an increase in worsening air quality, help address climate change through the reduction of vehicle emissions and has significant benefits for public health.

- 2.4 The Government sees the temporary re-allocation of road space as a first step to encourage active travel, but to also help with social distancing and road safety in town centres and around school settings.
- 2.5 For Dewsbury and Huddersfield the Council has focussed on a staged delivery approach to make the town centres easier to walk/cycle in and through and to keep users of the town centres safe in accordance with social distancing guidelines.
- 2.6 For Huddersfield, the first stage has involved the creation and trialling of, lightly trafficked routes and cycle-only access in Huddersfield around the core shopping areas. For the second stage, the focus is on investigating the feasibility of extending the cycle only streets within the town centre and the creation of traffic management schemes to link with wider, longer-term initiatives to create high quality cycling routes into Huddersfield. In Dewsbury the proposals focus on trialling the partial closure of road-space to traffic,

except buses and cyclists, creating better pedestrian and cycle space, and the reallocation of some road-space.

2.7 The Council intends to compliment the schemes detailed above with a pop-up cycle and e-scooter hire facility on St George's square, a modest increase in cycle parking provision in the town and at a wider level investigate whether any schools or district centres might benefit from the creation of new temporary cycling or walking facilities, although this will be investigated further if more money is forthcoming from the Department for Transport, as part of tranche 2 (see paragraph regarding 'Funding Sources').

2.9 At the time of writing this report, some of these measures have already been implemented in accordance with the Government's Emergency Traffic Regulation Order system to ensure that support was, and is, in place for non-essential shop re-opening on 15 June 2020 and further re-opening of other business as they announced by the Government. Changes have been discussed with relevant Portfolio Holders and Ward Councillors. In due course and, if appropriate, these will be superseded by Experimental Traffic Regulation orders, which will allow the Council to make changes to the restrictions, as their impact becomes clearer. Over the next 6 months the Council can be responsive to consultation with the public and local businesses, before making any decisions on the permanency or otherwise, of the measures put in place as part of this initiative.

2.10 Cultural Interventions – 'Growing Seeds'

As the town centres being to more fully re-open it is important that urban centres and spaces in our towns are considered carefully to make them safe but also welcoming and attractive to residents, shoppers, workers and visitors. With an initial focus on both Dewsbury and Huddersfield, it is proposed that new cultural spaces will be created, building on existing place-based cultural developments. These will bring a new life and a new sensory experience to our towns, based around key themes of greening, ownership of growth, reshaping the public realm, safety and accessibility.

2.11 This work will be founded on place based cultural development approaches that enables cultural production and celebration, and that will be founded on our cultural DNA and heritage. These activities have been drawn from consultation exercises that fed in and shaped several Council policies, strategies and plans, from culture to planning and regeneration. Details of the cultural interventions are set out in the Appendix.

2.12 At the time of writing the proposed projects outlined in the Appendix are in various stages of delivery. One, which connects with the Great Get Together, over the weekend of the 19th of June will have been delivered. The remaining projects will be in design and development stage, ready to implement as soon as is feasible to connect in and support both the town centre re-opening.

2.13 Accelerating Huddersfield and Dewsbury Blueprint Objectives

The proposals set out in the report also aim to help bring concepts set out in the Huddersfield and Dewsbury Blueprints regarding wellbeing, social integration, family friendly, movement and connectivity. Proposals in this report focus on areas in the towns which are identified for change, with the potential to allow some early delivery of already planned infrastructure changes. The Blueprints aim to create attractive spaces in both towns planning for cyclists and pedestrians and incorporating cultural elements into key spaces will assist greatly in achieving this aim.

2.14 Delivering Active Travel/Reallocation Road Space and Cultural Interventions Together

The intention is to aim to deliver changes to the town centre streets and spaces which help keep our residents safe, assist the economic recovery and create an attractive place and environment. It is acknowledged that measures that have been put in place as an initial measure have used temporary traffic management measures such as cones, barriers and temporary signage in order to be in place for the government's announcement to re-open non-essential shops. Following on from these initial installations, the council will look to replace these with more attractive street furniture elements such as tree planters and art installations which will perform a dual role of light segregation but also improving the town centre environment, where possible and where the two initiatives overlap in a way which supports the delivery of the Blueprint objectives.

2.15 Monitoring and Review

The first phase of planned changes to road space includes the installation of temporary traffic management measures, and in some case more attractive street infrastructure, such as tree planters. Most of the proposed cultural interventions will also be temporary installations. All these measures will be carefully monitored and reviewed. Officers are currently working with local residents, businesses and partner organisations to understand any operational issues and matters arising from temporary re-allocation of road space as they roll forward. Initial preparation of cultural interventions is being carried out but a rolling programme for their implementation is dependent on the recommendations set out in this cabinet report. It is recommended that the Council continues to work with partners over the coming weeks to monitor the impacts on town centres and streets, ensuring people are keeping safe and to identify if any other measures that may need to be put in place. Remedial action can be taken if necessary, given the temporary nature of these interventions.

2.16 With regards to active travel and the re-allocation of roadspace measures have been introduced under emergency Traffic Regulation Orders, but, where appropriate these will be superseded by Experimental Traffic Regulation orders, which will allow the Council to make changes to the restrictions, as their impact becomes clearer. Over the next 6 months the Council can be responsive to consultation with the public and local businesses, before making any decisions on the permanency or otherwise, of the measures put in place as part of this initiative.

2.17 Funding Sources

The Government has announced an 'Emergency Active Travel Fund' which confirms indicative allocations for local transport authorities to fund cycling and walking facilities - the funding is in two tranches. Tranche one supports the installation of temporary projects for the COVID-19 pandemic. Tranche two can help support the creation of longer-term projects. The indicative funding for Kirklees is part of a wider allocation for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The council has submitted a bid to access funding from this fund to the DfT but funding is not guaranteed. There is currently no specific government funding for cultural interventions for town centres as proposed in this report and approval will be needed to provide a budget for these works as set out in the recommendations to this report.

3 Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

3.1.1 The council has already embarked on a comprehensive press and social media campaign to inform residents and businesses of changes being made in Huddersfield and Dewsbury. Further consultation and engagement will take place over the coming weeks as we see further changes in our major town centres. However, for the cultural interventions, the projects outlined in this report link directly with the consultation delivered earlier in the year, in the development of the public art plan for Huddersfield, and links to the Dewsbury public art plan (approved late 2019 as part of the Better Spaces strategy). In addition to this, the ongoing engagement with residents around the planning for WOVEN in Kirklees and the future planning for the Temporary Contemporary initiative has provided invaluable information. Furthermore, we have taken the learning from the engagement and consultation around the draft Play strategy. All this combined, provide the basis for the ideas and cultural interventions.

3.1.2 For active travel measures and where road space is to be reallocated away from general traffic, measures are being put in place using emergency Traffic Regulation Orders but, where appropriate, these will be superseded by Experimental Traffic Regulation orders, which will allow the Council to make changes to the restrictions, as their impact becomes clearer. Over the next 6 months the Council can be responsive to consultation with the public and local businesses, before making any decisions on the permanency or otherwise, of the measures put in place as part of these initiatives. These Orders are specifically used to trial schemes and allow local authorities to engage in on-going consultation with businesses and users of a scheme and undertake detailed monitoring of its effect.

3.1.3 It is recommended that, in the short/medium term, an economic recovery programme is developed working with local communities to help bring forward interventions in different parts of the district, which can include active travel and further measures to help the re-opening of town centres. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority have already launched a consultation system to seek views on active travel across the region and Kirklees Officers are participating in this process.

3.1.4 In the medium/long term it is recommended that the council should bring forward an ongoing programme of economic recovery, cultural interventions and active travel measures to build on the current travel behaviour change to deliver longer term policy objectives and targets and to build on the economic recovery. The Government has also announced the production of a new national walking and cycling plan later this year. Proposed interventions for the medium/long term will be reported to Members at a later date.

3.2 Working with Partners

3.2.1 Officers have also been working closely with partner organisations such as Huddersfield BID, Dewsbury Forward and Dewsbury Chamber of Commerce in developing proposals to assist the re-opening of town centres. As part of development the council's next steps, Officers will be working with a wide range of partners across the district to development further proposals.

3.2.2 With regard to the cultural interventions, we have specifically chosen to work with partners such as the WOVEN in Kirklees Festival Curators, the consultants who delivered the public art consultation for Huddersfield and have identified artists who work locally, and who are able to deliver projects within the current COVID situation.

3.3 Place Based Working

3.3.1 The proposals set out in the report are consistent with the outcomes of Place Standard consultations for Huddersfield and Dewsbury regarding active travel, connectivity and movement. As part of the next steps consultation and engagement will take place building on the Place Standard work and outcomes and allow local residents and business to have a say on how to shape their places. The cultural interventions are built on the foundation of place based cultural development, linking the very commissions with the identity and story of the district.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

3.4.1 The promotion of active travel measures for walking, cycling and e-scooter trials will significantly contribute to the council's objective for climate change and improving air quality and help reduce the dependence on the private car as part of the council's economic recovery plan.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

3.5.1 Safe, socially distanced, access to schools and essential and non-essential shops/facilities for children and their parents will have a significant positive impact on children. Active travel measures, including walking and cycling will have a significant positive impact on children's health outcomes. Cultural investment in town centre open spaces and streets will also positively impact on the health and wellbeing of children and adults using the town centres.

3.6 Covid-19

3.6.1 The proposals set out in this report will have a significant positive impact on the council's response to Covid-19 and the district's economic recovery.

3.7 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

3.7.1 As set out in the funding sources section there is currently no dedicated funding available for the proposed cultural interventions planned for Dewsbury and Huddersfield town centres. It is recommended that an initial budget of £100,000 per town is made available immediately from the Town Centre Capital Programme to allow these proposals to be implemented.

4 Consultees and their opinions

4.1 With regarding to work already undertaken, officers have been working closely with local businesses and partner organisations such as Huddersfield BID, Dewsbury Forward and Dewsbury Chamber of Commerce. For proposed cultural and active travel proposals, comments will be sought from consultees, as schemes are taken forward and developed.

5 Next steps and timelines

- 5.1 Further consultation and engagement will take place regarding changes in other centres across the district.
- 5.2 It is recommended that, in the short/medium term, an economic recovery programme is developed working with local communities to help bring forward interventions in different parts of the district, which can include active travel and further measures to help the re-opening of town centres. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority have already launched a consultation system to seek views on active travel across the region and Kirklees Officers are participating in this process.
- 5.3 In the medium/long term it is recommended that the council should bring forward an ongoing programme of economic recovery, cultural interventions and active travel measures to build on the current travel behaviour change to deliver longer term policy objectives and targets and to build on the economic recovery. The Government has also announced the production of a new national walking and cycling plan later this year. Proposed interventions for the medium/long term will be reported to Members at a later date.

6 Officer recommendations and reasons

- 6.1 The implementation of temporary active travel measures and the re-allocation of road space can be achieved under Officer delegated powers and have been presented in this report for Cabinet member's information.

Recommendation 1:

Members endorse the approach set out in this report regarding the implementation of active travel measures, the temporary re-allocation of road space and the installation of cultural interventions in Huddersfield and Dewsbury to help assist the economic recovery of these towns, make these towns attractive places to visit and spend time in, promote public health, help address the climate emergency and to ensure residents can access these areas safely.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that Members agree the proposed list of cultural interventions set out in the Appendix to this report and approve an initial budget of £200,000 for these.

7 Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

- 7.1 Councillors McBride, Mather and Walker have been briefed on these proposals at a joint Portfolio Holders meeting held 11 June 2020.

8 Contact officers

Richard Hollinson, Head of Major Projects
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9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

None.

10 Service Director(s) responsible

Angela Blake, Service Director - Economy and Skills
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11 Appendices

Appendix attached indicating initial list of proposed cultural interventions, active travel measures and the re allocation of road space for Huddersfield and Dewsbury.

Appendix A:

Dewsbury

What	Description
	<p>Rainbow River</p> <p>Using WOVEN to celebrate weaving and create open yet intimate spaces. HATCH will deliver a rainbow river that will take people on a sky route through Huddersfield.</p> <p>Suggested Location: Open Market, Foundry Street to Market Place</p>



Outdoor Gallery, Dewsbury

Displaying an exhibition of WOVEN images and the textiles heritage.

Location – Long Causeway, Town Hall Skirt, Foundry Street.



Greening the streets: Town Parks

Creatively enhancing existing planting structures through additional greening or yarn bombing, to colourful specifically designed planters, and additional trees.

Location: Across the town and in line with the active travel plans.



Shop Windows: Positive Messages

Using the artwork created on the Southgate Hoarding and replicating this as a digital asset to be reproduced for show windows in both town centres.





Hidden Gallery

Using the bricked-up windows as frames for heritage images, creating vistas on the past, link to the story of the town and what the building used to be.

Proposed location: Open Market and other sites in the town (TBC)



Pop-Up Sculptural Trail:

Bringing a familiar object and structure into the towns, placing them in the heart of our urban centres to start the conversation about what tools and approaches do we need to start a new form of growth – is it sustainable, environmental and cultural?

Sculptures as green and /or textile based.

Locations: 5 sites across the town centre



Digital Exhibition: a project in association with the Great Get Together

An exhibition of thanks and gratitude, that places artists working locally with residents, alongside more renowned artists such as Huddersfield's Ian Berry, who is an international textile artist.

Work to be projected and then captured as a film for legacy use on social media and other channels.



Moments and Memories:

Creating an opportunity for everyone to share a memory, experience or story. Using examples from participatory public commemorations to give ideas for delivery.

A simple method of mass participation, that can come together in a shared location in designated areas, or to display in your own home or garden.

Location: Memorial Garden

Huddersfield



Rainbow River

Using WOVEN to celebrate weaving and create open yet intimate spaces. HATCH will deliver a rainbow river that will take people on a sky route through Huddersfield.

Suggested Location: New Street, Market Place to John William Street



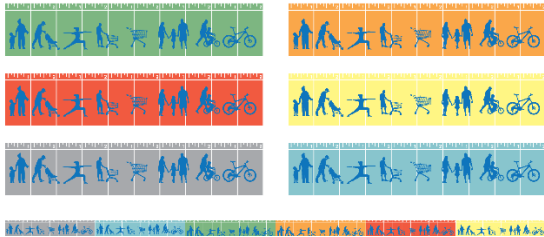
Greening the streets: Town Parks

Creatively enhancing existing planting structures through additional greening or yarn bombing, to colourful specifically designed planters, and additional trees.

Location: Across the town and in line with the active travel plans.



A Very Simplified Version Of What The Mural Could Look Like.



Messaging Murals:

A mural to display positive messages and to help to understand what 2 m social distancing looks like, using the Huddersfield lion as the base for this – as an adult lion is 1.8m – 2.2m long and this connects to the Lions Estates and the stone carving lions across the town.

Shop Windows: Positive Messages

Using the artwork created on the Southgate Hoarding and replicating this as a digital asset to be reproduced for show windows in both town centres.

Location: Artwork – Southgate Hoardings, with digital assets created for use across both towns.



Hidden Gallery

Using the bricked-up windows as frames for heritage images, creating vistas on the past, link to the story of the town and what the building used to be.

Proposed location: Open Market and other sites in the town (TBC)



Pop-Up Sculptural Trail:

Bringing a familiar object and structure into the towns, placing them in the heart of our urban centres to start the conversation about what tools and approaches do we need to start a new form of growth – is it sustainable, environmental and cultural?

Sculptures as green and /or textile based.

Locations: 5 sites across the town centre



Moments and Memories:

Creating an opportunity for everyone to share a memory, experience or story. Using examples from participatory public commemorations to give ideas for delivery.

A simple method of mass participation, that can come together in a shared location in designated areas, or to display in your own home or garden.

Location: TBC