

Town Centre Recovery

Latest update

The Council is using the Shared Prosperity Fund to help the 4 towns develop and implement their recovery/improvement programmes on the back of the studies and evidence base of need developed under the Welcome Back Fund (completed and now approved by the Council). People and Places, who conducted the studies, are continuing work with Letchworth, Baldock and Royston stakeholders to develop strategy and implement the programmes and all towns' stakeholder groups are putting forward project proposals for funding over the next 3 years. Proposed projects range from improved visitor websites to new planters and pigeon deterrent measure to event equipment and training.

We are also using a Herts Growth Board Towns programme to commission a study in Baldock on the feasibility and set up of a Trade Association of town Centre Businesses both to pull together a group to speak for business, be in a position to receive funding and to work with others on integrating the new Baldock residential developments into the Town.

History of the project

27 Jun 2022

The completion of an Economic Recovery Study for the four towns is still ongoing by the consultants. The report is now expected to be received by the end of July 2022. Any actions being taken forward will be subject to Cabinet approval and will be linked to the review of town centre strategies. There remains uncertainty regarding the resources that will be available to implement actions and we continue to investigate various funding options e.g., Shared Prosperity Fund. The Royston Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) has been completed and the trial period runs to July 2023. Work continues on the development of the Hitchin ETRO and the related permit scheme administration/implementation.

27 Jul 2022

Economic Recovery strategies ongoing and now expected by end of July 2022. To link to review of Town Centre strategies and will depend on available resources. Royston ETRO has been completed and the trial period runs to July 2023. Work continues on the development of the Hitchin ETRO and the related permit scheme administration/implementation.

21 Sep 2022

There has been a further delay in completing the draft recovery plans, which are now expected by end of December 2022. Extra promotion was required for the community and business engagement questionnaires, which delayed analysing the surveys and subsequent preparation of the draft recovery plans. The consultant also contributed to the preparation of our business plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund.

15 Nov 2022

Draft economic recovery plans received and now sharing these with Members. Expect plans to be finalised by the end of January 2023 following engagement with key stakeholders. These link to the review of town centre strategies and will depend on available resources. The Hitchin and Royston ETRO trial periods run to July 2023, and Project Boards have been set up to monitor and review both schemes. Working with Hitchin BID to finalise the draft permit scheme agreement and expect this to happen by March 2023.

13 Feb 2023

Key stakeholders are reviewing the draft recovery plans. No formal responses received so far. Now expect plans to be finalised by the end of March 2023. Work with Hitchin BID to finalise the draft permit scheme agreement is on track and still expected to happen by March 2023. HCC are continuing discussions regarding the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders for Hitchin and Royston, and both are expected to be made permanent by the end of the trial periods (July 2023). Project Boards continue to monitor and review both schemes.

26 Apr 2023

Recovery plans for the four towns now agreed by the Executive Members for Enterprise and Planning. New milestones to be introduced for 2023/24 to reflect key activities we are taking to enable stakeholders to progress delivery of the plans. The studies will inform preparation of an overarching

Town Centre Strategy and associated masterplans for each town. Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders for Hitchin and Royston are still both expected to be made permanent by the end of the trial periods (July 2023), with Project Boards providing oversight. Both related milestones are therefore aligned with this timeframe. Risk level remains low, although this is dependent on successfully taking forward plans and delivering identified improvements to our town centres.

Tourism Strategy

Latest Update

The Tourism Strategy project will no longer be progressed in its current form and will be absorbed into an overarching Enterprise Strategy to include Commercial, Economic Development and Tourism, due to the inter-related aims of each. This will ensure the best use of available resources within the Enterprise Team. The project will be monitored within the 23-24 Council Delivery Plan.

History of the Project

03 Feb 2023

Project has slipped due to resources available within the Enterprise team. Development of a Tourism 'work stream' will now be progressed under an overarching Enterprise Strategy, incorporating Commercial, Economic Development and Tourism. This will be completed in 2023, with details of milestones/timings included as a new project in the 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan.

18 Aug 2022

We will now appoint consultants by the end of October 2022 and still expect to have a Strategy in place by end of year.

05 Jul 2022

Following approval by PLB in June 2022, the Commercial team is now in a position to progress the development of a Tourism Strategy. Although approval of the Strategy is still expected to be achieved by the end of March 2023, the timing of the required steps leading up to this (including appointing consultants) is still to be determined. Although we are in the early stages, the risk level remains low, as we still expect to have an approved Strategy in place by the end of 2022/23.