

# Historic England High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme Evaluation

## Overview and outcomes

for Lead Partners, Cultural Consortia and  
National Cultural Commissions

Co-authored by Historic England and The  
Audience Agency



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## 1. Introduction

Historic England is committed to unlocking the potential of high streets across England, to fuel economic, social and cultural recovery and breathe new life into them for future generations.

The High Streets Heritage Action Zone is funded with £40 million from the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport's Heritage High Street Fund and £52 million from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Future High Street Fund. A further £3 million will be provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support a cultural programme.

We want lead partners to work with us to deliver a comprehensive and robust assessment of impact and performance, that captures all of the diversity and uniqueness of each of the 67 participating high streets. Collectively we have a responsibility to demonstrate the difference this initiative has made, both to funders and to local citizens.

Strong evidence will help us all - from lead partners to national bodies - make the case for investing in local areas, communities

and our treasured heritage assets. Effective monitoring and evaluation is vital in helping us to achieve this.

Historic England (HE) leads the overall Programme evaluation, with a focus on the physical strand, and have commissioned an external evaluator, The Audience Agency (TAA) to evaluate the Community Programme and Cultural Engagement strands at a programme level. TAA will deliver thematic evaluation, including data collection, at the programme level, and will be looking to collaborate with schemes and projects on this. TAA will also deliver an annual survey to Project Leads to gather feedback and data from across the projects.

As schemes and projects are responsible for their own evaluation, TAA has also provided evaluation guidance and a toolbox (in a separate document) to support its effective delivery.

This document introduces schemes and projects to the programme level evaluation. It summarises the programme outcomes frameworks for community engagement and cultural programmes which schemes and projects may find useful for their own evaluation.

## 2. Evaluating the Programme

This evaluation is an exciting opportunity to understand if and how investing in 67 high streets across the UK, through the physical interventions, community engagement and cultural programme, activities deliver on the objectives. The aim of the evaluation is to do justice to the huge investment of time, commitment resources, experience and expertise, not only from strategic partners and funders, but also the communities, creative organisations, visitors and businesses across the high streets. The High Street HAZ objectives are:

- To support sustainable economic (retail and commercial) and cultural growth on and around high streets
- Change perceptions of heritage and high streets
- And restore and enhance local historic character.

This evaluation is a story of unpicking how and why and to what extent the objectives are achieved, from broad evidence around changes in footfall and commercial vacancy rates, to in-depth, rich stories of impact and change for the people that live, work and play there.

Further, it will consider the seven critical success factors to understand whether or how the programme leveraged the benefits

of heritage- and community-led regeneration to ensure that the outcomes are inclusive and socially and economically sustainable:

1. To revitalise historic high streets by investing in the repair and restoration of vacant or under-utilised heritage assets and public realm assets.
2. To address changing consumer demands by using the local historic character and distinctiveness to differentiate the high street from competitors and provide unique and memorable experiences.
3. To add economic value over the long term by creating and facilitating new employment and training opportunities that can be taken up by local people.
4. To invest in clusters of historic buildings and the associated public realm, and stimulate new private investments in mixed commercial, leisure, residential and community uses.
5. To work with local communities to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the heritage on their high streets.
6. To work with local businesses and communities to ensure that local knowledge, insight and narratives drive the local investment programme.

7. To create public value through effective use of public resources and through influencing existing or planned regeneration initiatives to maximise their wider socio-economic benefits.

These translate into the following Programme outcomes:

- 67 high streets are both economically and socially sustained
- Increased GVA in 67 high streets
- 67 unique destination heritage high streets created
- High street regeneration results in positive investment in wider area
- A heritage led approach is recognised as crucial to economic and social regeneration
- Local heritage of 67 high streets is better interpreted and understood
- Stronger place brand and increased vibrancy of 67 high streets
- Communities are enthused by and invested in their local high streets and have an increased sense of place and identity

- Perceptions are changed by revealing the stories of places and communities are reengaged with the uniqueness of their place
- HE is recognised as a facilitator of economic growth by local and national partners
- HE is recognised as effective local operator
- Staff are more committed to Historic England
- Construction professionals have increased skills relating to historic buildings.

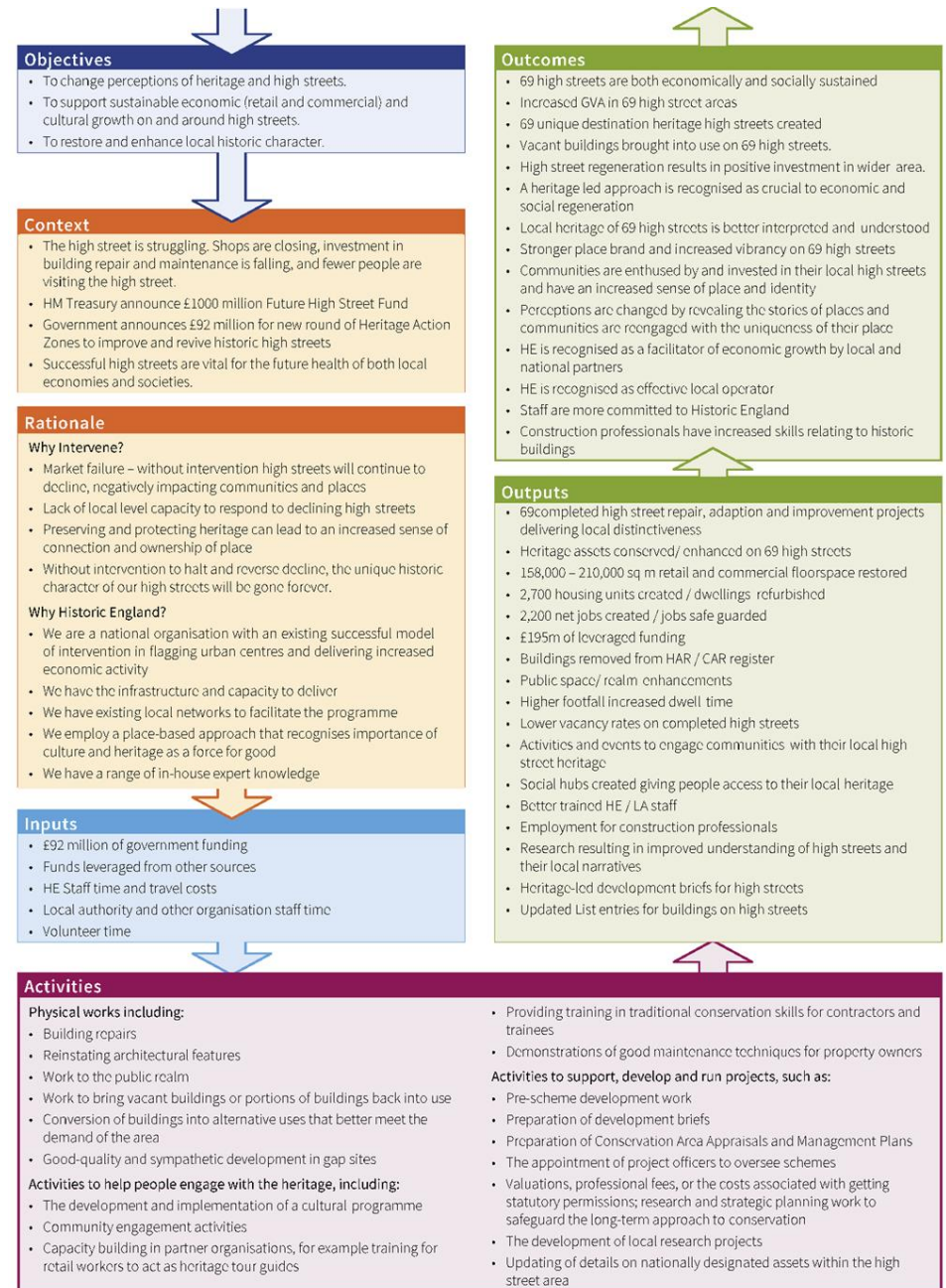
*Source: High Street HAZ Business Case Logic Model*

At a programme level, the evaluation will articulate a holistic view of how High Streets HAZ is performing overall and its progress in achieving its aims. Through a structured way of listening to audiences, partners and wider stakeholders, as well as reflecting internally - at programme, scheme and project levels, the evaluation aims to understand the differences the Physical Interventions, Community Engagement, and Cultural Programme are making collectively across all 67 High Street HAZ. This will involve documenting activity, understanding who is involved and measuring the outcomes and impacts. It will also be important to look ahead to legacy plans.

**The key evaluation questions have been developed by Historic England to guide the evaluation:**

- Is the High Street HAZ programme being implemented as intended?
- How is the High Street HAZ programme operating in practice?
- Where can the programme be improved?
- What was the overall impact of the High Street HAZ programme?
- To what extent did the programme achieve its stated business objectives and critical success factors?
- Does the High Street HAZ programme offer value-for-money, from a public value perspective?
- What can we learn from the High Street HAZ in terms of ‘what works’ and ‘what doesn’t’, in terms of heritage- and culture-led regeneration and its policy?

*High Street Heritage Action Zone Business Case Logic Model*





## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 Role of The Audience Agency (TAA)

The Audience Agency is commissioned to support the programme evaluation of the community engagement and cultural programme in the following ways:

- Design a programme level outcomes framework for the community engagement and cultural programmes for HSHAZ.
- Deliver thematic evaluation of the community engagement and cultural programme in collaboration with HE and the schemes - this may include, but is not limited to, depth studies or a more longitudinal view of particular schemes or projects which provide a holistic view of the ambition of HSHAZ; or a focus on notable practice by schemes or projects to exemplify a key area of the outcomes framework, such as impacts in the areas of wellbeing, co-creation with communities, volunteering, youth engagement or digital engagement.

- Support and advise on individual scheme and project level evaluation of the community engagement and cultural programmes.
- Support a learning community across the schemes and projects to support evaluation, including training and reflective discussions.
- Deliver an annual survey to Project and Cultural Consortia Leads as a way of understanding more about your experiences.

*The programme evaluation does not include data collection or evaluation of every single Scheme or at every single event or activity. However, the Programme evaluation will be representative of the 67 High Street HAZ schemes' activities, outcomes and impacts as whole.*

### 3.2 Scheme and project responsibilities

Schemes have a **responsibility to undertake their own scheme and project level** evaluation - for both the Community Engagement and Cultural Programme strands - informed by area-specific priorities. At a minimum level, this involves submitting monitoring data to HE via the quarterly Scheme Plans, however,

we advise schemes to deliver a more in-depth project evaluation - whether delivered by their own internal project team or commissioned from an external agency.

To support this project level evaluation for schemes, the following is provided by TAA:

- Outcomes Framework for the Community Engagement and Cultural Programme, with indicators and measures, included in this document, which can be used to inform scheme or project level evaluation.
- Guidance and a toolbox to support evaluation delivered by schemes and projects. These resources range from questions banks, to tips on quantitative, qualitative and creative data collection tools.
- N.B: We would encourage Schemes to provide this guidance to any externally commissioned evaluation agencies to support their work and give context to their findings.
- A learning community will be facilitated by TAA to nurture a positive, supportive and reflective approach to evaluation. TAA will facilitate around 3 reflective evaluation workshops/events each year. These will showcase interim findings as well as focus on particular themes or evaluation results. The workshops will provide

Schemes with an opportunity to reflect on their own evaluation and place this within the context of the wider Programme.

TAA will write up a short summary report from these discussions to share. These events will not be mandatory but we hope most Schemes will want to attend some of them as an opportunity for exchange and learning.

Implementation of project evaluation is supported through a programme of training, mentoring and support for schemes delivered by TAA, *starting in October 2021*.



### 3.3 Overview of how to contribute to and benefit from the programme level evaluation

## Programme level evaluation delivery

Selected thematic in-depth impact evaluations led by TAA

Final summative in-depth evaluation with all schemes led by TAA

### Training and reflection

Training workshops and resources delivered by TAA

Reflective learning events each year, facilitated by TAA

### Core monitoring & evaluation

Annual Scheme and Cultural Consortia Lead partner survey delivered by TAA

Quarterly Scheme Plans and Cultural Programme Plans returned to HE

## Outcomes frameworks

The following outcomes frameworks for the community engagement and cultural programmes, define what will be evaluated at the Programme level in these areas. These frameworks are informed by the overall aims of the Programme. The outcomes describe the changes expected as a result of the activities delivered by the schemes and projects across the Programme. A set of indicators and a question bank accompany the outcomes frameworks (provided in a separate document as part of the guidance and toolbox).

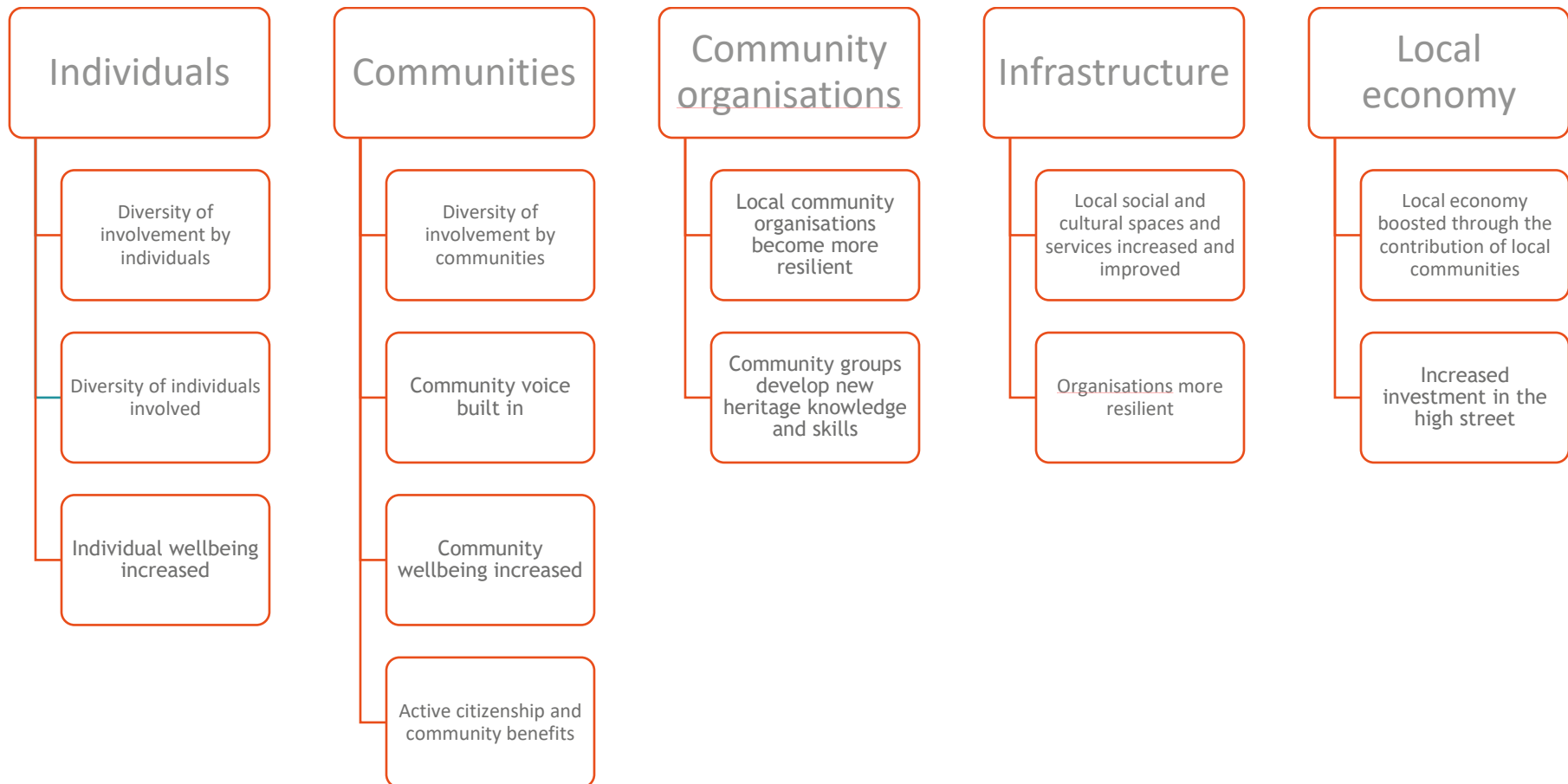
- Outcomes: what we will see, what change has taken place, if the activity is delivered successfully.

- Indicator: how we will know the change has happened or outcomes achieved
- Measure / Metric: what the evaluation will measure (what combination of things will be measured)

While the frameworks for the community engagement and cultural programmes are provided separately, it can be seen that they cross over in some areas, and therefore schemes and projects may want to consider their evaluation approach holistically across the community engagement and cultural activities.

Schemes and projects can draw on these frameworks to inform their own evaluation approach.

## 4.1 Community engagement outcomes overview



## 4.2 Community engagement outcomes, indicators and metrics

N.B: please refer to the question bank for more detail

Outcome	Indicator	Measure / metric
Diversity of Community involvement	Diversity of communities/people Targets reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic data</li> <li>Participation monitoring and audience estimates</li> </ul>
	Communities are aware of HS HAZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness</li> <li>Recognise change</li> </ul>
	Communities/people attend Targets reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbers of attendees/volunteers/participants (physical/online)</li> <li>Volunteer hours</li> <li>Numbers/Types of event or activity (physical/online)</li> </ul>
Community voice built in	Communities engaged meaningfully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement methods used to inform, shape, lead design/delivery, and for legacy</li> <li>Communities' ideas/contributions valued</li> <li>Results of community input visible</li> </ul>
Wellbeing	Individual Wellbeing increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life satisfaction score</li> <li>Feel connected and spend time with others; feel involved; feel part of the community; meet new people; meet new people not like you.</li> <li>Been active</li> <li>Noticed and enjoyed engagement</li> </ul>

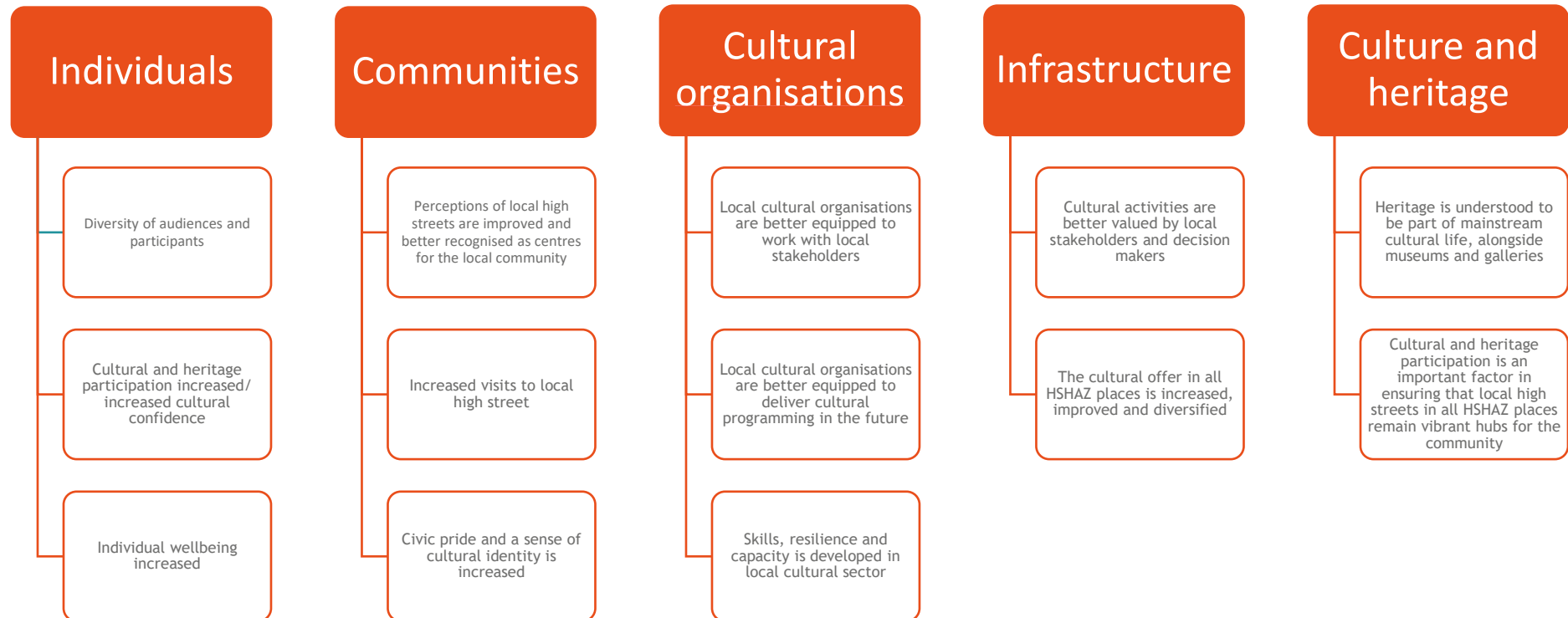
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learned/discovered something / increased knowledge or understanding, confidence or self-esteem / acquired skills</li> </ul>
	Community wellbeing increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel Connected</li> <li>• Given to the community through the activities</li> <li>• Pride in involvement</li> <li>• Optimism/hopefulness</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> </ul>
Active Citizenship	Positive experience  Changed behaviour/attitude  Changed attitudes or values (perceptions) of heritage or high streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience rating - overall / enjoyment</li> <li>• Inspiration to do more, volunteer again, be part of something to make positive change</li> <li>• Increased trust in others in the community</li> <li>• Positive perception of the area or high street</li> </ul>
Investment in high streets	Increased positivity towards high street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More likely to work in, spend time in or recommend the high street</li> </ul>
Community organisations become more resilient	Staff and teams develop business skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD</li> <li>• Wider business skills</li> <li>• Increased understanding / ability to attract funding</li> <li>• Business</li> </ul>
	Business more financially secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased turnover</li> </ul>
Community organisations heritage knowledge and skills developed	Increased knowledge and skills benefit the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business skills</li> <li>• Heritage skills</li> </ul>

### 4.3 Community Engagement Programme cross-cutting questions

*The following questions will inform the thematic Programme level evaluation delivered by The Audience Agency and the questions included in the annual surveys to Project and Cultural Consortia Lead.*

- COVID: How is/has Covid impacted community engagement? To what extent and how is the programme supporting communities' recovery from Covid? Has the continued delivery of the programme in the pandemic driven innovation, adaptation and resilience - for example in terms of digital engagement.
- GOVERNANCE MODELS: How do the different models of community representation within scheme governance and working groups impact the success of the programme?
- ENGAGEMENT PRACTICE: What can be learnt around engagement practice - in relation to the different themes or communities schemes are working with? How successful has the delivery of community engagement activity been (including in relation to the cultural programmes)?
- HE SUPPORT: How can HE better support schemes/partners to deliver community engagement plans/outcomes?
- VALUE OF HERITAGE & PLACE-BASED CE: To what extent has the HSHAZ community engagement supported the cultural sector to value the historic environment and place-based community engagement more?

#### 4.4 Cultural programme outcomes





## 4.5 Cultural programme outcomes, indicators and metrics

N.B: please refer to the question bank for more detail

Outcome	Indicator	Measure / metric
Diversity of audiences/participants	Diversity of communities/people Targets reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic data</li> <li>• Participation monitoring and audience estimates</li> </ul>
Increased visits to the high street	Footfall increase Increased dwell time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footfall counters</li> <li>• Length of visit</li> </ul>
	Culture is a motivation to visit the high street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is the reason for visiting the high street</li> </ul>
Cultural offer increased, diversified, improved	% increase of number/type/range/regularity of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number / type of activity on and offline</li> <li>• Increased budget/funding</li> <li>• Number cultural organisations or venues/sites</li> <li>• Frequency of events</li> </ul>
	Quality of cultural offer increases and experience improves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Enjoyment</li> <li>• Inspiring/memorable/emotional</li> <li>• Relevance to/representative of the community</li> <li>• New experiences</li> </ul>

Civic pride and sense of cultural identity increased	<p>Increased valuing of high street increased likelihood to live/work in place</p> <p>Perception the cultural programme represents/is relevant to them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is what makes living here good</li> <li>• Cultural activity made value heritage/high street more/increase pride</li> <li>• Cultural activity increases likelihood of young people to live and work in the place</li> <li>• The cultural programme inspires connections to the area, is relevant, representative</li> </ul>
Changed perceptions of high street	<p>High Street more than a place to shop</p> <p>Cultural programme makes high street look and feel safer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High street a place to learn, discover; experience culture &amp; arts; be creative, get together with other in their community.</li> <li>• Feels safer to visit the high street, looks better, more welcoming</li> </ul>
Active citizenship	Communities/people aware of Cultural programme (in wider community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness (relates to attendance)</li> </ul>
	Communities/people inspired to do things for their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of volunteers/participants (physical/online)</li> <li>• Volunteer hours</li> </ul>
	Increased cultural confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New cultural engagers</li> </ul>
Wellbeing improved	Individual Wellbeing increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel connected and spend time with others; feel involved; feel part of the community; meet new people; meet new people not like you.</li> <li>• Been active</li> <li>• Noticed and enjoyed engagement</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learned something / increased knowledge or understanding, confidence or self-esteem / acquired skills</li> </ul>
	Community wellbeing increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel Connected</li> <li>• Given</li> <li>• Pride in involvement</li> <li>• Optimism/hopefulness</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Increased skills</li> </ul>
Local cultural organisations develop	Develop programme, resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New ways of working identified</li> <li>• New opportunities</li> <li>• Increased SPD</li> <li>• Increased capacity / turnover</li> </ul>
Local stakeholders recognise the value of culture	More positive attitudes towards cultural programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths of cultural programming recognized for engagement with heritage</li> </ul>

#### 4.6 Cultural Programme cross-cutting questions

*The following questions will inform the thematic Programme level evaluation delivered by The Audience Agency and the questions included in the annual surveys to Project and Cultural Consortia Lead.*

- THE ROLE OF CULTURAL PROGRAMME: Exploring if and how stakeholders, partners, Cultural Consortia and communities talk and think about heritage, and the role of cultural programmes within changes made by schemes and projects.

- COVID: How is/has Covid impacted the CP? How have areas adapted and what key lessons have been learnt to shape future practice? Particularly with reference to digital engagement
- QUALITY: What does quality (process and outputs?) look like for cultural programming within a heritage, place-based context?
- GOVERNANCE MODELS: How/why does the different Cultural Consortia governance models impact the success of the programme?
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICE: How have cultural programmes complemented/delivered community engagement?