



Cabinet
17 August 2020

**Report from the Strategic Director
of Regeneration & Environment**

Harlesden Gateway High Streets Heritage Action Zone

Wards Affected:	Harlesden Conservation Area – Kensal Green Ward
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
No. of Appendices:	Appendix One: HAZ Scheme Programme Delivery Plan
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s):	Mark Allen, Economic Development Officer, mark.allen@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 1561

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To notify Cabinet that LB Brent has successfully secured £437,600 of funding from Historic England as part of The High Streets Heritage Action Zone (“HSHAZ”) for shop front improvements, and community space provision, within the designated conservation area in Harlesden town centre. LB Brent will be complementing this funding with £454,000 of match from existing programmes, so no further funding is required.
- 1.2 The HSHAZ is a funding stream that forms part of the wider Historic High Streets Fund announced by the Government in 2018. The purpose of this fund is to ‘help local leaders implement bold new visions to transform their town centres and make them fit for the future’. HSHAZ aims to deliver a programme of physical improvements, community engagement and cultural activities to revive England’s struggling historic high streets and town centres.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the project as described in this report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The HSHAZ is a funding stream that forms part of the wider Historic High Streets Fund announced by the Government in 2018. The purpose of this fund is to 'help local leaders implement bold new visions to transform their town centres and make them fit for the future'.

3.1.1 LB Brent has successfully secured £437,600 of funding from Historic England as part of the HSHAZ for shop front improvements, and community space provision, within the designated conservation area in Harlesden town centre.

3.1.2 LB Brent has developed and will deliver the programme in conjunction with local partners including community groups, landlords, and business owners and £454,000 of match funding has been secured to supplement the programme:

- £366k of NCIL awarded to the Refugee Support Network for internal renovations at 60-62 High Street Harlesden
- £64K of S106 for road and pavement improvements
- £18k LBB Apprentice Levy transfer
- £6k LBB officer time/fees

This makes the total project value £891,600. All match funding is being provided from existing sources/programmes and no further funding is required to deliver this project. 50.9% of the funding is from LB Brent and 49.1% from Historic England.

3.1.3 LB Brent and Historic England have discussed the impact Covid-19 will have on the timescales for the programme and have agreed the delivery plan timeline will need to be revisited before the programme can commence.

3.1.4 The aim of the HSHAZ will be to focus on returning some of the architectural merit to a key section of Harlesden High Street, improve the look and feel of key 'gateway' points to the town centre, and to support the provision of more community space, and workspace. This will support a thriving local economy where groups from all backgrounds can fully partake in the socio-economic life of the town centre.

3.1.5 A bespoke partnership of relevant council and community stakeholders, created for the purpose of this project, will work together in the best interests of Harlesden residents, businesses, and visitors. It will push forward the agreed programme of work designed to be a catalyst for the entire area, and to attract footfall and dwell time from neighbouring areas. The project will complement others taking place in the wider Harlesden vicinity and cumulatively they will provide significant socio-economic and regeneration benefits, as well as boosting the economic vibrancy and vitality of the town centre overall.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 The HSHAZ programme work clearly supports the vision of both the Harlesden Neighbourhood Plan, the Harlesden Design and Planning Framework, and the November 2019 Harlesden Cabinet paper as these pieces of work are intrinsically linked. Individual projects will include renovating the shopfronts of listed buildings in the conservation area, as well as wider public realm and pavement improvements. It will involve working with the owners of the former HSBC bank and the Brent Cultural Centre to renovate and bring much needed community and workspace back to public use.

3.2.2 Harlesden town centre has a wealth of potential, a place where people can live and work, meet and exchange, and spend their leisure time. However, the town centre is located in one of the most deprived parts of the borough and has a higher vacancy rate than average. The environmental quality of the centre has benefited from investment and improvement in recent years, however there is a need for further investment in the centre to improve its physical appearance, most particularly in respect of the High Street south of the Park Parade junction as a key gateway into the centre. The 2018 impact assessment (Retail and Leisure Needs Study 2018) identified that there is scope for Harlesden town centre's vitality and viability to benefit from the developments within the OPDC, but this will require improvements to the physical and functional linkages between Harlesden and the OPDC area. Therefore, the key objectives of the HSHAZ scheme include:

- Repair and reinstate lost features of historic buildings at key gateways to the town centre
- Create a safe and secure street environment to enhance visitor experience and improve access to town centre amenities
- Boost economic vibrancy and vitality of town centre
- Celebrate the culture of the town centre and its communities, enhance access to heritage and improve social inclusion
- Renovate and bring community space back to public use to create a sense of place
- Build capacity and resilience of local communities

3.2.3 The HSHAZ objectives and outcomes strongly align with the vision of the local community. Over 1,000 local people endorsed the 2019 Harlesden Neighbourhood Plan developed by the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a series of objectives which relate to development work, and which can be seen as intrinsic to the legacy of this scheme. The priority for the community is to maintain and enhance Harlesden town centre in the face of competition from elsewhere, and especially from the potential threat from new town centre development at Old Oak on its doorstep. Consequently, the HSHAZ scheme outcomes meet a number of objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2.4 Once this scheme has completed it will have created a place-based approach to regeneration and, whilst also aiding community cohesion, it will protect the culture and heritage of historic buildings for future generations. The project will be heralded as an exemplar for those parts of Harlesden High Street not in the conservation area to aspire to replicate.

3.2.5 The project will deliver:

- **Shopfronts and façade improvements** on the stretch of Harlesden High Street within the designated conservation area from 97-109 High Street. This stretch of terraces comprises nine listed or locally listed buildings and is bookended by two pubs of significant architectural merit, The Green Man Public House (Grade II Listed) and the Royal Oak Pub (Locally Listed). The ground floor of the Brent Cultural Centre at 107 Harlesden High Street is an existing community space where the proposed improvements to the shopfront and entrance to the building will improve access for the community who use the centre as a place of worship and a general meeting point.
- **External improvements to the former HSBC Bank building at 60-62 High Street (non-designated heritage asset)** This building, which previously served the community as a bank, has been vacant for over 5 years to the detriment of the high road. It has recently been purchased by a local charity, The Refugee Support Network, and the Council has supported by committing funding to deliver the internal refurbishments needed to bring the building back to use.
- **Public Realm improvements** such as improving highways at key gateway approaches, improving two road crossings and improving pavements across six streets. In light of the impact of Covid-19 this work programme will need to be amended, as discussed with Historic England. This will now include widening pavements and creating cycle lanes in the area to help assist with social distancing guidelines.

3.2.6 An EOI was submitted to Historic England in July 2019 requesting funding from the High Streets Heritage Action Zone to support the project work. We were notified in September 2019 that we had provisionally been successful and were required to work up a delivery plan. This was submitted and subsequently approved by Historic England early in 2020. The project rationale is aligned to the Harlesden Framework and the November 2019 Cabinet paper. This project is part of a wider package of investment and place making in Harlesden which includes £5.1m of council funding for refurbishment of Picture Palace and Challenge House (subject to funding agreement).

3.3 Timescales

3.3.1 The below timeframes could be subject to change following ongoing discussions with Historic England in relation to Covid-19.

Milestone	Start	Finish
Project Business Case approved by Cabinet		17 August 2020
Project Initiation Document approved by Regen Board		30 September 2020
Procurement of technical consultants, including contract award	1 September 2020	30 September 2020
Initial community engagement and consultation (if safe to commence)	19 August 2020	23 October 2020
Design/scope of works	30 September 2020	13 November 2020
Planning Submission and Approval	16 November 2020	22 January 2021
Procurement of contractor, including contract award	30 November 2020	29 January 2021
Shopfront restoration, and Brent Cultural Centre and 60-62 High Street building works	1 March 2021	25 February 2022
Evaluation of project commences	4 April 2022	30 June 2022
Project Closure	1 July 2022	31 August 2022

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The capital costs requirement is set out in detail below. All funding is secured. £437,600 has been secured from Historic England and £454,000 of match funding has been secured from already approved or ongoing projects. This includes: NCIL for Refugee Support Network (£366k), S106 funding (£64k), Apprentice Levy transfer for the training element of 2 apprentices (£18k), LB Brent officer time for work on the project will be met through business as usual costs (£5k) and internal legal fees (£1k).

4.2 Total capital investment and spend profile

Project Task	2020-21	2021-22	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Construction (capital works delivery)	512.8	225.2	738.0
Acquisition	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0
ICT	0	0	0
Consultancy (community engagement)	5.0	0	5.0
Fees (architects, project management, legal & planning, apprenticeship training)	71.5	75.1	146.6
Other (shop front guide)	2.0	0	2.0
Total Investment	591.3	300.3	891.6

4.3 An architect with demonstrable experience of working on heritage buildings and shopfronts visited the site and offered us guidance on the work required and

the cost implications of carrying out such work. This was used as the basis for our funding request and breakdown. Other cost factors were determined through officer input, such as officer time and costs.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The project will require the procurement of Low Value Services Contracts and a Medium Value Works Contract. All procurement will be conducted in accordance with Contract Standing Orders. Approval to procure and subsequently award the contracts will be sought from the relevant Operational Director in line with their delegated powers as set out in the constitution.
- 5.2 The Grant Agreement with Historic England will be signed subject to suitable project approval being secured from Cabinet following consultation with the Council's legal department. The signed approval of the Director of Finance will be obtained prior to the signing of the Grant Agreement, as required by Finance Regulation 9.1.1 of Part 2 of the Constitution.
- 5.3 The Council will be responsible for ensuring that any funding awarded will be spent in accordance with all applicable legal requirements, to include state aid, public procurement law, wider public law (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and planning law.
- 5.4 The Council will make sure all permissions are sought and agreed before any renovation work commences, including entering into grant agreements with landlords of the properties taking part in this project.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 This programme of works seek to increase capacity for workspace, community space and civic space in Harlesden town centre. Consultation with the local community will occur throughout, as set out in the Historic England programme guidance, whilst also remaining in line with government advice on social distancing and other health and safety measure. It is important to recognise that new interventions of the kind specified above can have negative equality implications if the access to and benefits from the new facilities are not equally distributed amongst the various communities and groups who currently live and work in Harlesden.
- 6.2 To mitigate this risk two of the Council's project partners, the Refugee Support Network (RSN) and the Brent Cultural Centre, are both key community stakeholders in supporting inclusion.
- 6.3 The renovation to the new RSN building, at 60-62 High Street Harlesden, will benefit people of all ages. Children will benefit from a variety of group-based activities specifically targeted to their age group. The entire mission of Refugee Support Network is to support the education of refugee youth (15-25 year olds) and all of their activities are aimed at disadvantaged youth within this age group. Non-refugee youth will also benefit from youth group facilities in the basement. Adults will benefit from increased working space for professionals, there will also be English classes, money management workshops, a multitude of volunteering opportunities, and the many creative performance events hosted in the building out of work hours.

- 6.4 Events at the renovated RSN building will welcome people of any race or nationality. RSN currently works with 400 young people from 44 different countries, providing them with a variety of education and emotional wellbeing services. RSN's services are specifically targeted at people who have had to flee conflict or persecution in their country of origin. Services currently provided by their guaranteed tenants serve people identifying as Western and Eastern European, Afro-Caribbean, Latin American, African and Asian.
- 6.5 This project will create a fully accessible building, at 60-62 High Street Harlesden, with a refurbished lift and step free access, to promote equal access for people with disabilities to all services and activities taking place in the building.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 The official announcement on successful HSHAZ awards is currently embargoed due to Covid-19. Once this has been removed, our Communications team will issue news of the award and full engagement can commence.
- 7.2 As mentioned in the timescales table at 3.3.1 we hope this will be August-October 2020 but we will be led by Historic England on these dates. This will include consultation with Ward Members once permitted.
- 7.3 Due to the number of works planned to take place in Harlesden a working group has been set up to ensure a joined up approach to these schemes, including on engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the community. This project will be part of that conversation and, should Covid-19 restrict our ability to consult and engage in the normal way, we have opened dialogue with Historic England about engaging with the community in other ways, such as online.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 8.1 The proposals offer an opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of the shops. The tender documents should include a requirement to investigate potential for fabric improvements as part of works (taking into account the historic requirements).
- 8.2 Where any particular changes to lighting, heating or ventilation, these should investigate opportunities for lower energy and lower emission equipment to reduce costs to occupiers and potentially improve air quality.
- 8.3 Where refurbishment and fit/out of a unit is to be undertaken for community use, this should endeavour to minimise the running costs for the occupants whilst ensuring good indoor air quality and occupant comfort. Grants may be available to improve the specification and these can be investigated further at detailed design.

Report sign off:

Amar Dave

Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment