

UXBRIDGE AND HAYES TOWN CENTRES UPDATE

Committee name	Residents' Services Select Committee
Officer reporting	Julia Johnson, Director of Planning and Sustainable Growth
Papers with report	None
Ward(s)	All but specifically focused on Uxbridge and Hayes Town

HEADLINES

This report outlines the work currently being undertaken by services within the Planning and Sustainable Growth Directorate to promote investment and improvements in Hayes and Uxbridge town centres.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes and comments on the programme of work outlined in the report

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

The Council's Regeneration and Economic Development service has been leading on a programme of work in the Borough's two largest town centres – Uxbridge and Hayes. This work has been externally funded through grants received from the Greater London Authority (GLA) (£140,000 for Uxbridge and £450,000 for Hayes) and Central Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This has enabled the Council to engage internal temporary resources and external partners in delivering a programme of work aimed at supporting the future success of both centres.

Town Centre Challenges and Opportunities

The first stage of this work has been to identify the current challenges and opportunities within both town centres:

Uxbridge

Uxbridge serves as the sole metropolitan town centre within the Borough. In light of recent global economic challenges and changes in working habits due to Covid-19, Uxbridge, although not in

a state of decline, has become susceptible, particularly due to the increasing vacancy rates prevalent in retail and office spaces. The funding awarded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) through its 'High Streets for All' programme has been utilised to develop a future vision for Uxbridge that addresses these challenges while ensuring its long-term economic prosperity. Evidence collected indicates that despite these challenges, Uxbridge harbours significant strengths. These strengths include excellent transport connectivity, a historically rich High Street, good civic facilities, a growing residential population, and a relatively robust local economy supported by prominent employers such as Coca-Cola and General Mills. However, preliminary feedback underscores the necessity for a more diverse retail and cultural offering, enhanced evening and leisure activities, and public spaces that are safer, greener, and more inviting. Overall, public feedback highlights the importance of preserving the town's social character while simultaneously enhancing its cultural identity and amenities.

Hayes

Hayes is classified as a district-level town centre. It is characterised by a rich industrial history and a dynamic, multicultural population, but it faces pressing socio-economic and spatial challenges. Once a manufacturing hub with companies such as EMI and Nestlé, the area has undergone significant evolution, particularly following the arrival of the Elizabeth Line. This has spurred regeneration, notably through developments like the Old Vinyl Factory and Hayes Village. The town's demographic is youthful and ethnically diverse, with high concentrations of residents under 30 and significant communities identifying as Asian, Black, and mixed heritage. While new developments have brought economic activity and younger residents, contrasts persist between these newer, more affluent zones and older, more deprived parts of town, often with physical and social barriers reinforcing inequality.

Challenges for Hayes include areas of relatively high deprivation compared to other parts of the Borough. There is also some strain on the social infrastructure which has not kept pace with population growth. Community feedback highlights a shortage of public leisure and meeting spaces—especially for youth—alongside concerns about safety, cleanliness, and connectivity across the town centre. The promise of the Old Vinyl Factory regeneration remains only partially realised with most of the new commercial space remaining empty and the associated new jobs yet to materialise, contributing to resident frustration. Despite these issues, there is strong local pride, especially in Hayes' cultural diversity, faith-based networks, and community organisations. Feedback emphasises that community-driven planning and investment are essential to ensure Hayes's growth is inclusive, cohesive, and responsive to residents' everyday realities.

Work Programmes

Uxbridge

The focus of work in Uxbridge has been the development of a new town centre vision working in partnership with Brunel University and a consortium of design and economic consultants led by Allies and Morrison.

A draft Vision document was published for consultation in February 2025. The key issues and themes set out in the draft vision are summarised below:

i. **Economic Resilience:** While not declining, the town centre's economy is vulnerable with high vacancy rates. The vision emphasises diversifying the economic offer, repurposing spaces to meet changing demands, and better serving residents' needs.

Principles: Diversify the offer, repurpose to meet demands, and better serve residents.

Strategic Moves: Create a leisure and culture focus, support the office market, establish the Civic Centre as a community hub, improve public transport, and introduce residential spaces.

ii. **Serving Local Communities:** The town centre needs to better cater to its local population, addressing the demand for leisure and cultural activities.

Principles: Enhance community engagement, provide diverse activities.

Strategic Moves: Engage local educational institutions, support community-oriented spaces and services.

iii. **Enhancing the Environment:** The town's public realm and built environment have potential but are currently underutilised. Improvements in transport infrastructure, green spaces, and overall town character are essential.

Principles: Restore connections, enhance public spaces.

Strategic Moves: Improve cycling and bus connections, introduce green spaces, and revitalise key areas like the High Street and Windsor Street.

The Vision is also supported by a delivery strategy that outlines short-term and long-term actions to realise the vision. Short-term actions include physical and non-physical interventions to attract more people and create a stronger identity for the town centre. Continuous community engagement and coordinated efforts across various domains will be crucial for successful implementation.

The next steps for the Uxbridge Vision are as follows:

- Ongoing – review of consultation feedback and finalisation of the Vision document
- July 2025 – Cabinet Report for the Adoption of the Uxbridge Vision
- July 2025 to March 2026 – Utilisation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding to progress the delivery of key actions concerning public realm enhancements. The most significant of these is a detailed proposal to reshape the St Andrews Roundabout adjacent to the civic centre, which could see it removed and replaced with a new junction and at-grade pedestrian crossings. This would have significant benefits for connecting the high street with the redevelopment of St Andrews Park (the former RAF Uxbridge site).

Hayes

The work undertaken in relation to Hayes Town Centre spans several strategic interventions aimed at revitalising the area. The Council, supported by the GLA's Good Growth Fund, commissioned multiple specialist consultants to deliver a programme of activities aimed at better understanding the issues and challenges in Hayes and developing a response to these challenges.

Brunel University were engaged to provide a detailed baseline of community sentiment and needs through diverse research methods, including surveys, ethnographic studies, and focus groups. This work focused on identifying gaps in social infrastructure, perceptions of safety, and desired public amenities, especially for young people. These findings informed recommendations for short-term, medium-term, and long-term improvements to the town centre, including enhanced cleanliness, improved lighting, the creation of public forums, better social infrastructure, and more inclusive and accessible green and leisure spaces.

Muf architecture was appointed to develop a design-led approach for key public spaces connecting Hayes & Harlington Station to the high street and the Grand Union Canal. Their work, guided by co-design principles, included site analysis, stakeholder engagement, and coordination across Council departments. They are producing a 'project bank' of interventions, which range from immediate, practical improvements to larger capital projects. These are being aligned with funding opportunities, including S106 contributions and national grants.

Efforts have been made to activate and promote Hayes town centre. This includes civic events like the Old Vinyl Factory Festival, coordinated by Intrepid Collective, which aimed to foster community engagement and assess the commercial potential of vacant spaces through activities that celebrate local heritage.

Other workstreams focused on commercial viability and landowner engagement. Augarde & Partners assessed market conditions and proposed strategic uses for commercial spaces in the Old Vinyl Factory, highlighting the need for flexible, smaller units and a stronger activation strategy. Officers have also been facilitating the interim use of a key community space ("Powerhouse Unit") and building landowner relationships. The Council is also progressing its involvement in the government's High Street Rental Auction pilot, aiming to reduce commercial vacancy and improve affordability for small businesses. These initiatives are coalescing into a broader Hayes Regeneration Framework to guide future development and policy integration.

In terms of next steps, the Council is in the process of submitting a further bid to the GLA for grant funding to support the development of the Hayes Regeneration Framework. Officers are also examining the utilisation of UKSPF grant funding and S106 contributions to deliver improvements to the public realm, such as enhanced tow path lighting.

Other High Streets and Town Centres

The resources of the Regeneration and Economic Development Service have been focused on Hayes and Uxbridge town centres during 2024/25. The Transport Planning and Projects team have carried out improvement works to Mulberry Parade in West Drayton, including a mural and repainting of the shop shutters. Some minor public realm improvements funded by S106 were also made to Ruislip High Street between Ickenham Road and Pembroke Road. This included new benches, additional cycle parking stands and bollards to protect pedestrians.

Promoting Inward Investment

A key aspect of efforts to enhance the Borough's town centres has been crafting an investment narrative that shows Hillingdon is 'open for business'. This new initiative, aimed at spurring

economic growth, was launched during the 'Hillingdon Takes Off' event at the Battle of Britain Bunker in February 2025. The event attracted over 100 businesses and investors, emphasising the benefits of investing in Hillingdon, recognised as one of the UK's best-connected areas, while also showcasing the emerging growth prospects in Uxbridge and Hayes. Additionally, the Council participated in the recent UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF), the leading national event for the property and regeneration sectors. This event provided further opportunity to highlight the Borough's goals for economic growth and development, while fostering the necessary strategic relationships to achieve these aims. Further work to promote growth in the Borough will be developed in support of the emerging Local Plan.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

The proposals for Uxbridge and Hayes town centres are in the early stages of development. Still, as outlined in the report, a significant programme of support is underway, which will benefit residents both living in and using the town centres to access shops and services.

Officers are now seeking to develop a programme of interventions in both town centres, which will include quick wins (such as the tow path lighting) alongside larger, long-term improvements, such as the potential redesign of areas of Uxbridge High Street to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists. These proposals will be subject to further review and will require consideration through the appropriate decision-making processes.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Draft Uxbridge Vision: [Uxbridge vision - Hillingdon Council](#)

Past Town Centre Improvement Projects: [Past town centre improvement projects - Hillingdon Council](#)