

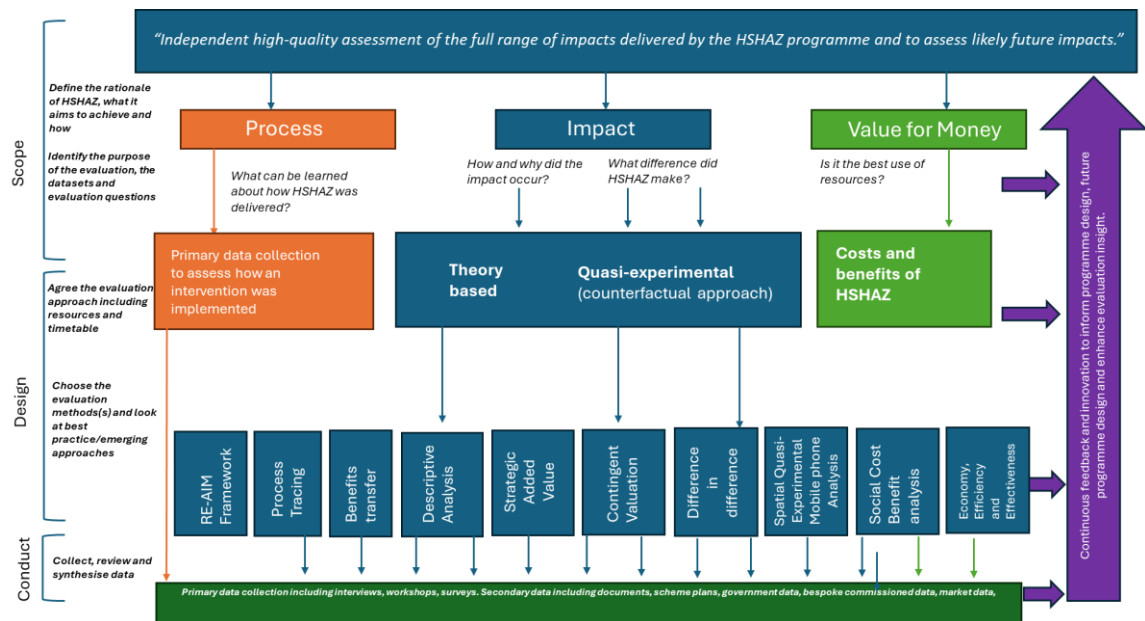
Wider Methodological Approach

This appendix outlines the range of approaches undertaken for the comprehensive evaluation of Historic England's (HE's) High Street Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ) Programme (2020-2024).

Methodological Summary

The evaluation encompasses distinct but interlinked workstreams; the process and the impact evaluation as set out in Figure D1 below.

Figure D1: Key elements of the evaluation



Source: AMION 2024

The methodology aligns with HM Treasury Magenta Book best practice, ensuring that the evaluation is grounded in recognised standards for robust and transparent analysis. By adhering to these guidelines, we have prioritised a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation, which promotes consistency, reliability, and validity in the evaluation findings. The Magenta Book's emphasis on clarity and objectivity has guided the structure of the evaluation framework, enabling it to deliver evidence-based insights that are both actionable and credible. This alignment reinforces the credibility of the evaluation process and supports the overarching aim of delivering a comprehensive assessment of the HSHAZ programme's effectiveness and impact.

Primary Research

The evaluation was underpinned by a comprehensive suite of primary research methods designed to gather diverse insights and ensure the findings were robust and reflective of the full scope of the study.

Central to this was document analysis, which provided a foundational understanding of existing policies, strategies, and reports that shaped the context of the evaluation. In addition to reviewing these documents, interviews with Historic England staff allowed for deeper, qualitative insights into the perspectives and experiences of those directly involved in the institution's operations, enhancing the evaluative process with first-hand accounts.

To complement these approaches, a series of online and in-person workshops were conducted (including one illustrated workshop) with Historic England staff. These sessions facilitated collaborative discussions and allowed stakeholders to engage directly with the evaluation, providing valuable insights.

Site visits were also an integral part of the research, offering an opportunity for the evaluation team to observe the environments and practices being assessed in real time. Guided tours further enriched these visits, providing context and allowing for focused discussions around specific areas of interest. Together, these primary research methods provided a well-rounded approach that ensured comprehensive data collection and analysis.

Strategic Added Value (SAV)

The strategic added value of the HSHAZ programme was assessed by considering the extent to which the programme has achieved its objectives. This was approached by reviewing the programme's objectives, its outputs, outcomes and impacts, in particular, those which will often influence the longer-term legacy impacts, which are identifiable but are not easily monetised or even measured quantifiably.

The SAV concept was originally devised by BEIS (predecessor to Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)) to better capture the impact and reach of the Regional Development Agencies compared with a cost per unit of output metric.

The concept has had somewhat of a renaissance in evaluation as organisations seek to formalise and categorise wider benefits. It is now widely used across departments and their agencies where a policy, programme or project is expected to support and strengthen the growth of partnerships needed to deliver longer and stronger legacy impacts than would occur without intervention.

Table D1: Strategic Added Value Testing

SAV Test	Summary explanation
Leadership & Catalyst	Articulating and communicating high street needs, opportunities and solutions to partners and stakeholders
Influencing	Generating commitment and activity towards shared objectives
Leverage	Mobilise resources of partners (equipment, people, funding)
Synergy	Improving information exchange and co-ordination between partners
Engagement	Engaging stakeholder in delivery
Innovation	Stimulating and demonstrating innovation

The innovation element is new and demonstrates how the programme's Strategic Added Value (SAV) needs to develop in the current context. The analysis of innovation is a critical component of understanding how the programme can continue to drive, forward-thinking, changes in high street regeneration efforts.

3Es: Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

The role of the evaluator is to analyse the allocation and utilisation of resources, identify areas for improvement and provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance future decision-making and resource allocation. This is often done using the 3Es framework as follows:

- **Economy:** Economy refers to the efficient and prudent use of resources to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** Efficiency refers to the extent to which a project or programme accomplishes its intended outcomes using the least possible amount of resources. This is often measured in cost per unit of output metrics and forms part of the impact assessment
- **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness refers to the extent to which a project or programme achieves its intended outcomes and objectives

The 3 E's framework is used throughout the RE-AIM and Value for Money assessment. The 3 Es are used as a guiding focus to examine the effectiveness of the management practices, including the strategic planning, decision-making processes and resource allocation. It will also scrutinise the delivery mechanisms by assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities, workflows and coordination among stakeholders.

Process tracing

Process Tracing is a methodological approach recommended by the Magenta Book for evaluating programmes, particularly those with complex delivery mechanisms and contexts. This approach involves identifying hypotheses about change and assessing evidence about likely contribution and impact.

Process tracing draws on an extensive range of available data, detailed further in the Methodological Appendix (Appendix A). The substantial data collected for the HSHAZ evaluation underpins the process tracing approach, with key data supporting core conclusions summarised in the accompanying tables.

RE-AIM

The RE-Aim framework (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance)¹ is often used in health sector evaluations as a systematic approach for assessing the impact of healthcare interventions and their future re-use or translation elsewhere.

The framework helps to assess the impact of existing schemes to support better understanding of how future HSHAZ schemes could be designed and delivered and enable best practice to be articulated and disseminated. AMION has adapted the framework to fit the context of HSHAZ:

- **Reach:** In the context of HSHAZ, the "Reach" component has involved assessing the extent to which the programme has engaged the target community and reached its intended beneficiaries.
- **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness is picked up in the 3E's analysis. The RE-AIM framework particularly highlights understanding the temporal nature of the impacts. Capturing the short, medium and longer term impacts of existing schemes has been critical to the evaluation assessment. This is also true with regard to assessing the impact existing

¹ <https://re-aim.org/>

partnerships and schemes is likely to leverage for future projects. Including all impacts has ensures a comprehensive and accurate capture of all benefits over time.

- **Adoption:** “Adoption” refers to the extent to which stakeholders and organisations have committed to and participated in the project. This is picked up in the SAV analysis of engagement and leadership. The RE-AIM framework allows an assessment of the level of commitment and buy-in from stakeholders as well as documenting any challenges or barriers faced in getting stakeholders on board and strategies used to overcome them.
- **Implementation:** Implementation assesses the fit between the original implementation plan and the resources utilised but also considers the extent to which there were any necessary adaptations or modifications to ensure successful implementation. It also considers barriers and challenges that emerged.
- **Maintenance:** Examines HSHAZ’s programme and cultural strand’s sustainability and the capacity and commitment to maintain the initiative's benefits over time, the strategies employed for ensuring the ongoing support and resources needed to sustain the initiative and how future related activity could have greater impact over time.

Twenty Activity Summaries and Ten Case Studies

This aspect of the evaluation explores the programme from the bottom up, providing insight into the process and impacts of HSHAZ in more detail. A series of 20 activity summaries were developed from which 10 HSHAZ areas were selected to produce in depth case studies. The deep dives are desk-based exploration of the local schemes, the projects within them and what was delivered. The case studies go beyond this description of activity to examine in more detail the impacts of the schemes compared to what they originally planned and the stakeholders’ reflections on the design and delivery of the schemes and the partnership processes. Taken in aggregate the case studies provide valuable lessons learned and recommendations for delivery of hyper local heritage led regeneration.

The case studies and activity summaries were developed through the collection of data via site visits, interviews with project stakeholders, analysis of project documents, and surveys.

Case study selection methodology

While case study selection is often inherently subjective, efforts were made to ensure an objective approach in choosing cases for this evaluation. Criteria such as diversity in geographical location, programme context, and scope of intervention were systematically applied to ensure a balanced and representative selection that reflects the full spectrum of the programme’s activity and therefore impact. The evaluation used the approach set out below to select HSHAZ scheme’s to be the subject of deep dive activity summary reviews and case studies.

Stage 1: Define the goal and identify an approach:

There are several types of case studies and goals. The first step was therefore to determine the rationale that the selection is to satisfy for example, is the case study goal to have a spread of diverse schemes for investigation? Is it to pick up extremes? Is it to understand particularly influential methods/examples? Drawing upon work by [Seawright and Gerring \(2008\)](#) which highlights the different methods and approaches in the selection of cases, a ‘diverse’ selection method was the choice as this aligned with the goal of identifying and understanding the different features of the full range of HSHAZ schemes across England. The diverse selection method means cases ‘are likely to be representative in the minimal sense of representing the full variation of the population’ - achieving maximum variance and enhancing representation across the programme.

Stage 2: Determine and utilise criteria to select longlist:

To ensure a representative selection of schemes, a wide range of scheme variables was assembled. These included metrics related to; the scale of the urban area, the density of that urban area, the number of listed buildings, deprivation and the funding allocated to each scheme. It also included data for each scheme such as; forecast expenditure, listed buildings per address base, retail place (worker density per sqKM) and average disposable income. The assessment looked at the balance of spend on capital vs cultural (and community) and sought to ensure a geographic spread, representative of all the schemes awarded funding.

The proportions of government office regions for the 20 selected activity summaries dives have been compared against the proportion of the programme nationally, as shown below in Table D2.

Table D2: Regional spread of all schemes and selected schemes for deep dive activity review

Gov Office Region	All Schemes	Proportion	Deep Dive Activity Review	Proportion
North West	14	21%	3	15%
North East	3	5%	1	5%
South West	10	15%	3	15%
South East	7	11%	3	15%
Eastern	6	9%	2	10%
Yorkshire and the Humber	9	14%	3	15%
London	5	8%	1	5%
East Midlands	7	11%	2	10%
West Midlands	5	8%	2	10%
Total	66	100%	20	100%

A final review was undertaken with the HSHAZ Project Team to flag any issues with the proposed list of schemes to be included in the deep dive activity review.

Stage 3: Case Study selection

From the 20 deep dive activity scheme selection it was agreed that 10 in depth case studies would be undertaken. The selection criteria for the 10 case study schemes included a focus on the 'size of the economy vs funding' to ensure that case studies reflected a range of economic contexts relative to the resources allocated. Qualitative/purposive oversight was maintained throughout the process to ensure that the selected cases were diverse, relevant, and provided valuable insights into the programme's impact across different settings.

Data Summary

Recognising the importance of a comprehensive evaluation, Historic England, gathered an extensive array of data related to the HSHAZ programme, its schemes, and the broader context. These datasets encompass both primary and secondary information, designed to establish programme baselines, monitor output delivery, and assess post-completion impacts. The datasets provided insight into this evaluation in a range of areas.

The data reviewed includes:

- Source documents: Historic England provided AMION with original business cases, scheme plans, internal guidance, reviews, monitoring, issue and communication documents.

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- **Business Case Information:** The original and revised submissions to HMT detailing the programme's goals, scope, funding, outputs and delivery mechanisms.
 - **Scheme Monitoring:** Reports of project outputs, delivery data, and financial positions with quarterly updates from scheme partners.
 - **Landmark/Points of Interest:** GIS-based data showing business counts and open-source points of interest for HSHAZ areas, providing detailed business counts over time.
 - **Attitudinal/Public Perception Survey:** Survey data commissioned by Historic England and delivered by Verian assessing public sentiment, satisfaction, and character before and after HSHAZ interventions.
 - **GIS Commission:** Geospatial analysis profiling HSHAZ areas by demographics, commercial environment, and infrastructure to benchmark changes.
 - **Government data and official statistics:** Publicly available socio-economic data from government sources, though limited at the HSHAZ level.
 - **Scheme applications:** Original local authority applications detailing the strategic rationale, expected outputs, and baseline data for HSHAZ participation.
 - **DCMS Evidence bank:** A repository of studies assessing the monetary value of cultural and heritage assets, useful for economic impact analysis.
 - **Cultural programme data:** Data on cultural activities, including project reach and audience surveys.
 - **Communications and social media data:** Data from social media providing insights into public perception, engagement, and geographic trends related to HSHAZ initiatives.
 - **Community engagement survey:** Survey capturing feedback from participants in community activities to understand their effects on individuals and local areas.
 - **Cultural survey (for deliverers and audience):** Qualitative data from surveys of cultural programme deliverers and audiences, exploring impacts on transport modes and high street revitalization.
 - **Privately held data:** Additional property and market data was explored using AMION's subscription to Costar.
 - **GIS Asset Register:** A register of geographic assets for HSHAZ schemes, detailing property characteristics with unique identifiers.
 - **Closure Reports:** Reports assessing objectives, lessons learned, and outcomes at the end of the HSHAZ programme, with local evaluations.
 - **Additional Scheme Data:** Additional data on outcomes and impacts of HSHAZ interventions from scheme level evaluations or bespoke information around visitors and community engagement metrics.
 - **Images and Pictures:** Visual documentation of HSHAZ schemes, showcasing changes and interactions over time for aesthetic and cultural assessment.
 - **Mobile phone data:** Historic England commissioned mobile phone data provided by HUQ to explore footfall and visitor patterns in HSHAZ areas, with considerations for data quality and comparability.

The evaluation placed a strong emphasis on data, reflecting its central role in assessing the programme's outputs, outcomes and impacts achieved to date and likely to be achieved in the medium and longer term. However, not all available data could be effectively utilised. This was primarily due to challenges regarding its robustness and completeness. For instance, the Landmark/Points of Interest data was identified as a potentially valuable resource for assessing vacancy rates but posed significant issues concerning its availability as a time series. Despite this limitation, it remains a promising source of information that could be leveraged in future evaluations with better data continuity.

Surveys conducted by the HSHAZ programme team offered valuable insights into stakeholders' perspectives on the scheme. However, their utility was somewhat constrained due to the absence of comparator data or an established baseline, which limited the ability to contextualise findings and measure changes over time effectively.

In addition to 'direct' programme data sources, additional avenues were explored, including data linked to local planning activities. Unfortunately, the high costs and substantial resources required to analyse this data meant that it was possible to use for this evaluation. Nevertheless, it is recognised that local planning data holds significant potential for future evaluations. Collaborations with a PhD student focusing on the HSHAZ programme has shown that this dataset could prove particularly insightful.

Furthermore, the application of GIS based data and survey data collected for the evaluation provide potential avenues for future evaluation and to shape future programmes. For example, two surveys collated feedback from audiences and delivery partners and these collected views on enjoyment and engagement with the high street. However, they did not establish a baseline position to assess change. This information could instead be used to shape future programme design.

Methodological reflections

The evaluation benefitted from a wide range of data sources, which provided a solid foundation for a comprehensive analysis of the programme's impact and effectiveness. The evaluation provided a thorough and objective assessment of the programme's impacts, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The evaluation team have applied a series of methodologies designed to account for spatial differentials and scheme-specific nuances. Innovative techniques were employed to enhance the credibility of our findings, ensuring that we achieved the most robust evaluation possible within the project's parameters. By adhering to recognised best practices such as the HM Treasury Magenta Book, the evaluation ensured robust, transparent, and credible analysis. The incorporation of frameworks such as Strategic Added Value (SAV), the 3Es, RE-AIM, and Process Tracing enabled a comprehensive understanding of the programme's outcomes, offering insights into both immediate and long-term impacts. Through the careful selection of case studies, extensive data collection, and a focus on diverse methodologies, this evaluation delivered actionable findings that will inform future heritage regeneration efforts.

A key aspect of our approach was the recognition of potential data limitations within the evaluation process. To address these, we proactively implemented measures to mitigate any challenges. These included issues related to spatial concentration, varying scheme contexts, multi-year programme dynamics, and the availability of complete time-series datasets. These factors were carefully considered, as they inevitably influenced the ability to achieve a technically rigorous quasi-experimental design.

Despite challenges in data availability and robustness, particularly with time-series and baseline data, the evaluation nonetheless succeeded in providing valuable insights. Future evaluations may benefit from deeper engagement with local planning data and the continuation of the innovative approaches used in this study.

In conclusion, the evaluation demonstrated the value of applying a comprehensive and multi-faceted methodology to assess the effectiveness of public policy interventions, particularly in the context of regeneration and economic development. While specific approaches were employed to analyse the HSHAZ Programme, the findings highlight the potential for these methodologies to be more broadly utilised in future evaluations of similar public policy initiatives. By refining data collection, strengthening baseline measures, and enhancing stakeholder engagement, these approaches can provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of regeneration and policy-driven economic development.