

High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) Evaluation

Case Study Appendix: Poole




Historic England

HSHAZ Evaluation

Case Study Appendix: Poole

January 2025

Reviewed and approved by:	
Signature:	_____
Name:	<u>Graham Russell</u>
Job Title:	<u>Chief Executive</u>
Date:	<u>January 2025</u>

Purpose of the case study

This case study is not an evaluation of the Poole HSHAZ scheme. The purpose of the case studies as a whole is to provide insights to inform the overall HSHAZ programme evaluation.

This case study appendix reviews the outputs achieved through the HSHAZ scheme against its stated targets and assesses likely value for money using government compliant methodologies. The review is based on:

- the monitoring data collected by project teams within submitted scheme plans;
- a facilitated discussion with the local project team and HSHAZ Project Officers using an agreed consultation guide to review successes, challenges and lessons learned;
- a site visit; and
- the expression of interest submission.

1 Strategic context

1.1 Context and need for investment

The Poole HSHAZ scheme was allocated £860,000 of funding from Historic England for the capital strand and £80,000 of funding from Historic England for the cultural strand. The capital strand was expected to generate £650,000 of match funding from BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) Council. The cultural strand was expected to generate £30,000 of match-funding from other sources¹.

The **Poole HSHAZ is located along Poole High Street**, which forms the main link between the historic Quayside and the town centre, against the backdrop of Poole Harbour.

The town flourished as a port, building on the establishment of the Newfoundland salt-cod trade in the 16th century to realise its most prosperous period during the 18th century. The aesthetic mix of Poole's streets, buildings and harbour is vital to the town's offer as both a retail and tourist destination. However, this is increasingly under threat due to the poor condition of some historic buildings and the heavy traffic and congestion which has restricted the pedestrian usage of the high street.

High streets across the UK face similar challenges. Competition from online shopping and retail parks, rising vacancy rates, and the negative consequences of deprivation—such as homelessness and crime—are widely recognised as contributing factors to the difficulties experienced by high street communities and businesses.

In Poole, there had also been a perception that the area has undergone a general loss of local identity as the standardisation of retail options has weakened the connection between the high street and the town's historical identity and character. As such, the Poole HSHAZ focused on restoring the deteriorating quality of the retail environment, historical buildings, and public spaces to address the following trends which were evident prior to the HSHAZ programme².

Prior to HSHAZ funding, Poole did not have any funding allocated to the historic environment. There were 'pots' of funding that may have been considered 'historic' but originated from transportation allocations and mainly devoted to the West Quay rather than within the conservation area. The conservation area was determined as a heritage at risk area and was flagged as one of the first areas of concern for intervention

1.2 HSHAZ scheme objectives

The initial objective of the HSHAZ was that by completion, it would have delivered a **significant physical and socio-economic enhancement to the high street and quayside parts** of the town centre. It was envisaged that this heritage led regeneration would contribute to the removal of 'at risk' status.

¹ These allocations are from the first available scheme plans (Y2Q1 for the capital strand and Y4Q2 for the cultural strand)

² Poole HSHAZ Expression of Interest 2019

The HSHAZ scheme’s projects were expected to contribute to the reshaping and re-purposing of the high street to improve its economic performance by:

- attracting more people to experience the rich history of the area as a form of living museum;
- celebrating the many historic buildings and features as attractions with supporting events that animate Poole’s heritage;
- enhancing heritage assets to support the wider benefit of the appearance and economic operation of the area;
- repurposing heritage assets to re-use currently vacant units;
- reviewing pedestrian uses and vehicle access along the High Street alongside heritage lighting and public realm enhancements; and
- delivering an arts and heritage living trail together with a Conservation Area Management Plan to support future heritage led regeneration.

1.3 Strategic alignment

Poole’s HSHAZ interventions aimed to breathe new life into the high street and create a real hub of activity around Poole Museum as the gateway to the waterfront and a focus of the town’s heritage. The interventions look to build upon complementary policies and initiatives to make a lasting impact on the focal point of the town, as set out below:

Table 1-1: Poole HSHAZ – Alignment with strategic priorities		
Policy/Strategy	Objective/Description	Alignment
Poole Local Plan 2018	The Poole Local Plan details seven objectives to deliver the long-term vision for Poole. These objectives include the transformation and revitalisation of Poole town centre such that it will become the main focus for regeneration and growth over the plan period. Implementation of the Plan was to make a significant contribution to meeting Poole’s development needs, meeting all housing needs by delivery of a wide range and mix of homes in the most sustainable locations, growing the economy, enhance and better connect Poole’s network of strong, health and active communities, enhance access to key facilities and ability to choose healthy lifestyles, and enhancing the outstanding natural setting and built environment. Growth was expected to be accommodated sensitively to respect the natural and built environment, promoting sustainable, safe and convenient access to residents and visitors such that people can move around Poole using a range of transport and protecting Poole from the challenges of climate change.	The Poole HSHAZ is well aligned with the Poole Local Plan and its objectives of delivering economic development and better spaces for residents and communities and connection with the heritage of Poole.
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Futures – Economic	BCP Council created a Strategy to ensure high streets and district areas are fit for the future, becoming vibrant, thriving and enjoyable locations with intent to positively and proactively intervene where and if appropriate. It identified priorities that local place leaders should focus	The six strategic themes defined by the High Streets’ Strategy were closely aligned by the projects and initiatives expected to be delivered by the HSHAZ scheme.

Development Strategy 2021-2026 <i>Appendix: High Streets and District Centres Strategy</i>	on to; achieve vitality and viability, create sustainable high streets and meet the needs of their catchment communities.	
The Big Plan BCP, (2021)	<p>The Big Plan outlines regeneration proposals to transform Poole's town centre over the next five to ten years through high-quality public realm that enhances the distinctiveness of the town, respects its heritage and promotes creativity and wellbeing. Reshaping and repurposing the high street are seen as crucial in improving economic performance by attracting more people to experience the rich history of the area as a form of living museum, celebrating historic buildings and supporting events that animate Poole's heritage.</p> <p>The creative and cultural sectors are an important element in delivering the Big Plan and maximising the appeal of high streets.</p> <p>BCP Council launched FuturePlaces, a wholly owned urban regeneration company to spearhead the local authority's Big Plan ambitions to deliver significant investment across the city region. An initial 14 regeneration sites with a gross development value of more than £2.8bn were identified for investment including; Poole Old Town and Quay, Heart of Poole, Poole Civic Centre and the Port of Poole.</p>	<p>Launched after the development of the HSHAZ Scheme there are clearly many shared objectives between the Big Plan and HSHAZ and a shared view of how to achieve these objectives. Both schemes place focus on high streets as centre points for regeneration and promoting community engagement with heritage and cultural as key aspects of delivery.</p> <p>The HSHAZ scheme and the Big Plan both considered delivering new activity around the Museum and renovating historic buildings along this key gateway as important regeneration priorities.</p>
Complementary funding	<p><u>National Lottery Heritage Fund</u> In 2021, Poole Museum was awarded £2,240,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This funding comprises part of the museums' major redevelopment project designed to transform both the museum and its facilities. The aim is to expand the museum's exhibition spaces, improve accessibility and to better preserve and display its collections with particular focus on Poole's maritime history.</p> <p><u>Levelling Up Funding</u> In January 2023, Bournemouth and Poole received £18,200,000 from the government under the Levelling Up scheme. This funding aims to revitalise the seafront areas, improving amenities and infrastructure. This investment will help to attract more visitors and boost the local economy, particularly during the summer season.</p> <p><u>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)</u> In autumn 2022, £4,200,000 of UKSPF was allocated for investment in businesses, communities and people across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Of this £4,200,000, £2,500,000 is for local businesses, £1,000,000 for communities and places, and £700,000 for people and skills.</p>	<p>Awarded after the launch of the HSHAZ scheme the NLHF and MHCLG funding were designed to support Poole high street and the wider regeneration vision. Interventions are both geographically and thematically aligned with those of the Poole HSHAZ, with focus placed on Poole's maritime and trading history.</p>

1.4 Activities

1.4.1 Capital strand

Scaplen's Court is the largest project by spend for the Poole HSHAZ with restoration works to restore the heritage asset and facilitate a new café and community space. Alongside this, there was an ambitious plan to deliver 19 shopfront improvements along the high street to enhance the image of the area. Whilst initial plans for public realm improvements were fairly minor, these grew over the programme to complement the restoration of historic lampposts.

- **Project 1 Programme Management** -staff salary and on-costs
- **Project 2 Planning Policy Guidance** – including Conservation Area Management Plan, other planning guidance and community engagement. Two supplementary planning/ design guidance documents and five interpretation boards and digital displays.
- **Project 3 Delivery Repair and Restoration** – Grant aid to property owners and businesses to restore 16 shopfronts and delivery of restoration works on Scaplen's Court to restore the heritage asset and facilitate a new café and community space.
- **Project 4 Community engagement** – including a consultation event, engagement activity and public event.
- **Project 5 Additional Projects** – Delivery of Purbeck paving and street lamp restorations, (including upgrading to LED's and installation of bulkhead lights. Professional fees for Scaplen's Court were also included in this project line, which represented professional training.
- **Project 6 Statutory** -Historic England led

The forecast expenditure of the capital strand over the four-year programme is set out in table 1-2 below³. As noted above the total cost of the HSHAZ scheme increased to match these ambitions. Analysis on the cost outlay against outputs is presented in Section 3.

Table 1-2: Capital Strand Forecast Expenditure					
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Historic England grant	£142,744	£317,111	£327,645	£73,500	£861,000
Local authority funding	£0	£0	£383,762	£266,238	£650,000
Other matched funding	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total	£142,744	£317,111	£711,407	£339,238	£1,510,500

Note: Forecast expenditure is from the Y2Q1 scheme plan, which is the first record of the forecast costs.

1.4.2 Cultural strand

The cultural strand was managed by the Poole Cultural Consortium, led by Poole Museum. The focus for this strand was celebrating Poole and fulfilling the town's creative potential by bringing new activities and audiences to its streets. The project theme was the town's maritime and cod-

³ Tables may not sum due to rounding

trading history and its migration connection with Newfoundland, Canada. The cultural strand consisted of the following activities;

- **Project 1 Community Engagement – Sharing Stories:** workshop to explore people’s memories of and relationships with Poole High Street and its heritage. A series of drawings, photos, and representations of buildings as well as people’s response to them. These outcomes were curated and presented for legacy.
- **Project 2 Community Suite of Music** – workshops in schools and community settings leading to the creation of a new suite of music performed in the HAZ, captured on video and integrated into both the Community Play and Pool Audio Trail. Special community concert to premiere this music and perform at St James’ Church.
- **Project 3 School and Community Engagement/Artists Call-out:** workshops to engage people in the history of Poole by creating hand-crafted ships. Artistic material creates acts as inspiration for commissioned artists to create public art throughout the HAZ area. Exhibition of young people and community artwork in the local shopping centre. Distribution of new Discovery Trail map with Activity Sheet.
- **Project 4 SALT:** Community Play for Poole: project manager and playwright commissioned to facilitate workshops and collaborate with working research group. Funding also supporting the research and planning and initial writing of the play to be performed by the community outside of the scheme.
- **Project 5 Poole HAZ Audio Trail:** series of visual, audio and video content integrated into the Poole Trail web-app featuring QR codes to hear the songs and stories and access photos and film footage celebrating the heritage and people of Poole.
- **Project 6 Public Art & Facilitation of Cultural Programme:** public art and murals.

There was no forecast expenditure for the cultural strand prior to the delivery. The first scheme plan made available was in the second quarter of 2023/24. This forecast expenditure is presented in the below table.

Table 1-3: Cultural Strand Forecast Expenditure					
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Historic England grant	£0	£27,682	£46,900	£5,418	£80,000
Local authority funding	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other matched funding	£0	£0	£29,826	£0	£29,826
Total	£0	£27,682	£76,726	£5,418	£109,826

Note: Forecast expenditure is from the Y4Q2 scheme plan, which is the first record of the forecast costs.

2 Project delivery and management

The HSHAZ was delivered by BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) Council which was primarily a team comprising the following roles:

- Urban Design and Conservation Manager Head of Strategic Planning
- Senior Conservation Officer
- Senior Project Manager
- Project Officer and Coordinator of Poole High Street Cultural Programme

The Historic England team supporting the delivery of Poole HSHAZ included a Project Officer, a Project Lead and a Senior Responsible Officer.

The Cultural Strand of work was led by the Poole Cultural Consortium which was a group of multi-disciplinary leaders from civic, community and creative organisations. The priorities of Poole HSHAZ cultural delivery were well aligned with those of Consortium members. Cultural strand projects were delivered by the following partners:

- Poole Museum & City Insights
- SoundStorm Music Education Agency/ Wave Arts Education/ BCP Cultural Hub
- CoCreate
- Arts2Educate
- Lighthouse Poole and Angel Exit Theatre

The management team was fully established after the launch of the Scheme and this caused stagnation in the delivery of the programme at the early stages. Once the team was established, biweekly conversations between BCP and Historic England were set up and proved beneficial facilitating support, accountability and keeping the momentum of project delivery – attendance varied to reflect the matters for discussion. The meetings acted as a working group and helped to ensure a consistent line of communication and an open space for discussion that were essential in managing challenges and mitigating risks in a timely manner. These meetings also meant that the change request processes were completed efficiently and effectively.

In addition to the bi-weekly operational review meetings, Partner Board Meetings took place every six weeks. This was organised by BCP delivery team and was attended by representatives from; Poole BID, Poole Quays Forum, Local Ward Councillors, HE Project Office and Project Lead.

Programme Board meetings were also held for projects such as the Museum and Scaplen's Court Estate and proved useful for idea generation and spreading the word regarding planned activities and reflection on completed activities. These Board meetings also supported a close working relationship between the capital and cultural strands of the HSHAZ programme.

3 Project progress

3.1 Overview

This section assesses the Poole HSHAZ outputs, funding, spend and cost profiles achieved compared to agreed targets.

As set out in Section 1, the earliest capital scheme spending plan was in Y2Q1 and the earliest cultural scheme plan was in Y4Q2. The target costs and outputs have changed over time and approved through the process of change requests. The final scheme plans indicate that the programme has been delivered on budget for all projects and has delivered against the agreed level of target outputs.

To allow a comparison against the agreed targets our assessment focusses on the delivered outputs and outturn costs against the targets from the earliest available information. Given the baseline/original cultural scheme plan is Y4Q2 this analysis is less meaningful than for the capital element which has a Y2Q1 baseline. The need for forecast outputs and costs at the outset of a programme and project to enable good project management and governance has been picked up as part of the lessons learned phase of the HSHAZ evaluation.

3.2 Capital strand

The Poole HSHAZ Capital Strand invested £3,668,000 which was significantly more than the forecast spend of £1,511,000. As shown below in table 3-1, the HSHAZ team managed to secure £578,000 of match-funding from other sources which was not forecast at the outset. Additionally, the local authority increased its match-funding from £650,000 to £1,923,000.

The increased investment enabled the delivery of more extensive works for the Scaplen's Court and other projects with Historic England agreeing in 2021-2022 to invest an additional £307,000. The Scaplen's Court project was a major regeneration opportunity, linking with the ongoing redevelopment works at Poole Museum. The additional investment from the Council and other partners as well as HE enabled more ambitious projects to be delivered and can be viewed as a very positive commitment to heritage led regeneration by key local stakeholders.

Table 3-1: Poole HSHAZ Capital Strand – Forecast annual spend					
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Forecast expenditure					
Historic England grant	£142,744	£317,111	£327,645	£73,500	£861,000
Local authority funding	£0	£0	£323,407	£326,593	£650,000
Other matched funding	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total forecast spend	£142,744	£317,111	£651,052	£400,093	£1,511,000
Outturn expenditure					
Historic England grant	£142,744	£624,248	£228,000	£173,145	£1,168,137
Local authority funding	£0	£0	£174,966	£1,747,640	£1,922,606
Other matched funding	£0	£96,320	£20,482	£460,702	£577,504
Total outturn expenditure	£142,744	£720,568	£423,448	£2,381,487	£3,668,247

In terms of Historic England spend, whilst funding was increased to cover additional costs on projects identified as part of the programme including a larger public realm enhancement scheme, some HE funding was also redirected from Programme Management, Planning Policy Guidance and Community Engagement to cover this additional cost.

Table 3-2: Poole HSHAZ Capital Strand – Forecast and Outturn project spend				
	Outturn expenditure	Forecast as of Y2Q1	% of forecast target (RAG)	% of new target
Project 1 Programme Management	£76,473	£98,000	78	100
Project 2 Planning Policy Guidance	£26,000	£37,500	69	100
Project 3 Delivery Repair and Restoration and Scaplen's Court	£460,262	£459,500	100	100
Project 4 Community Engagement	£0	£5,000	0	100
Project 5 Additional Projects	£605,401	£261,000	232	100
Project 6 Statutory – Historic England Led	£0	£0	0	100
Project 7 Scaplen's Court*	£230,569	-	-	
HE Grant (sub-total)	£1,168,137	£861,000	136	100
LA Funding	£1,922,606	£650,000	296	100
Other match funding	£577,504	£0	0	100
Total	£3,668,247	£1,511,000	243	100

Note: Assessment status is green for <=100%, 100%<amber>=110% and red for >110%

*The original cost forecast for Project 3 included Scaplen's Court and the shopfront improvements. It was not possible to disaggregate the Scaplen's Court element. The project was managed as a separate project and the out-turn cost is shown above for information only.

Poole HSHAZ delivered on the vast majority of its output targets and exceeded on others, albeit with the support of additional funding from multiple sources. The scheme delivered 728 square metres of public realm improvements in key locations along the high street, compared to a target of 27 square metres. The scheme restored 81 historic lampposts, which extend along the entire high street, and installed energy efficiency measures through LED lighting. The scheme also delivered several interpretation boards, artworks, and engagement events above the agreed targets.

A major component of the scheme was the ambitious programme of historic shopfront improvements, Project 3. The achievement of these improvements faced challenges in the first two years of delivery particularly due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent uncertain business environment. Business owners were not confident of a sufficient return on their investment. However, the Poole HSHAZ engaged consistently with business owners to present the potential benefits of the scheme, managing by the end of the programme to **deliver 16 out of 19 shopfront improvements across the high street**. These shopfront improvements have enhanced the image of the area, particularly towards the waterfront end of the high street. Conversations with local businesses suggest other private-led improvements are likely to follow, as the benefits upgrades can bring have been demonstrated by the HSHAZ initiative.

As noted above a significant component of the HSHAZ scheme was the restoration of Scaplen's Court, a unique Grade I listed ancient building, adjacent to Poole Museum. This project attracted

substantial match-funding from BCP Council and other sources. Substantial progress has been made on Scaplen's Court which sits at a gateway location and provides an important setting for the high street. However, the works were not quite finished at the time of the final monitoring report and given monitoring regulations could not be noted as an output. Notwithstanding the monitoring position Scaplen's Court when complete is likely to support the regeneration of the high street in the future.

Table 3--3: Poole HSHAZ Cultural Strand – Output performance				
	Achieved outputs	Forecast as of Y2Q1	% of forecast target (RAG)	% of new target
Number of historic building or heritage asset repaired/conserved	81	82	99	100
Number of historic shopfronts restored or reinstated	16	19	84	100
Public realm area improved (sqm)	728	27	2696	99
Amended List Entry	30	0	-	100
Number of amended entries	2	0	-	100
Number of new list entries	1	0	-	100
Number of boards / displays	5	0	-	100
Number of artworks / installation	2	0	-	100
New or revised heritage statement or conservation management plan	1	0	296	100
Number of feasibility studies	1	0	-	33
Supplementary planning or design guidance	2	0	202	100
Number of consultation events/activities (including online)	1	1	100	100
Number of engagement events/activities (including online)	4	1	400	98
Number of public events/activities (e.g. open day)	1	1	100	100
Number of professional training activities	1	0	-	100

Note: Assessment status is green for <=100%, amber for 65-100%, and red for <65%

3.3 Cultural strand

The overall out-turn spend at £98,000 for the cultural strand was in line with the HE and match-funding allocation, with only a very marginal overspend on the school and community engagement as set out in table 3-4 below.

Table 3-4: Poole HSHAZ Cultural Strand – Spend performance			
	Outturn expenditure	Forecast as of Y4Q2	% of forecast target (RAG)
Cultural strand			
Project 1 Community Engagement – Sharing Stories	£12,000	£12,000	100
Project 2 Community Suite of Music	£10,000	£12,000	100
Project 3 School and Community Engagement / Artists Call-out	£4,650	£4,500	103
Project 4 SALT: Community Play for Poole	£42,000	£36,400	100
Project 5 Poole HAZ Audio Trail	£3,400	£3,418	100
Project 6 Public Art & Facilitation of Cultural Programme	£7,950	£11,682	100
HE Grant	£80,000	£80,000	100
<i>LA Funding</i>	<i>£0</i>	<i>£0</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Other match funding</i>	<i>£18,016</i>	<i>£29,826</i>	<i>60</i>
Total	£98,016	£109,826	89

Note: Assessment status is green for <=100%, 100%<amber>=110% and red for >110%

The majority of the output targets for the cultural strand were met or exceeded although only one artwork installation was delivered, 20% of the original target. Consultations suggest in particular, the town guides, engagement events and exhibition days were seen as a success. The consultations also indicated that the cultural events helped to promote the capital programme works, enhancing residents' perceptions of the works and pride in their town being revitalised. The overlapping objectives of the two strands to promote culture in the town, led by the Scaplen's Court and Poole Museum redevelopment was noted by stakeholders as leading to mutually beneficial outcomes. This aligned closely with the original intention of Historic England's design for the HSHAZ programme and the three interlinked strands.

Table 3-5: Poole HSHAZ Cultural Strand – Output performance			
	Achieved outputs	Forecast as of Y4Q2	% of forecast target (RAG)
Cultural Strand			
Number of artworks / installations	1	5	20
Number exhibition days open	9	9	100
Interpretation boards/digital displays	4	4	100
Number of town guides/heritage trail documents circulated	3000	2200	136
Number of consultation event/activity	8	6	133
Number of engagement event/activity (website hits) ⁴	9	9	100
Number of heritage/archaeological research study	43	60	72

⁴ The final scheme plan suggests that a total of 4,536 engagement events were delivered (against a target of 2,009 events), with only 198 attendees at these events. The prior scheme plan indicates that 9 events were delivered (against a target of 9) with 198 attendees. The final scheme plan appears unrealistic and therefore, the prior scheme plan to this has been used for the engagement event outputs.

Number of public events / activities	42	41	100
Number of school educational events/activities	18	12	100
Number of training sessions provided to volunteers	2	2	100

Note: Assessment status is green for <=100%, amber for 65-100%, and red for <65%

4 Value for money

A value for money assessment has been undertaken in line with HM Treasury Green Book, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Appraisal Guide, and relevant departmental guidance such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Capital and Heritage Framework. As set out within the MHCLG Appraisal Guide, projects should be appraised based on a **Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)**⁵.

Monetised costs and benefits from over the period of the HSHAZ programme have been converted to 2024/25 prices using Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflators. As all benefits and public costs have been inserted in Year 0 with appropriate 2024/25 values applied, there is no discounting required in the analysis. Zero optimism bias has been applied as the costs are known and have been expended. Additionally, no optimism bias has been applied to the benefits as the analysis is based on actual outputs. However, the uncertainty in any values is explained.

The following benefits have been monetised, with 71.5% additionality applied based on guidance for regeneration through capital projects and image/culture:

- **Amenity (capital strand):** Consistent with the MHCLG Appraisal Guide, new open spaces in an urban environment have an economic benefit of £128,658 per hectare per annum (2024/25 prices). It has been assumed that 10% of the public realm delivered as part of the programme are new open spaces. In line with recent appraisals, 50% of per hectare value (£64,329) has been applied to remainder of the public realm which relates to improvements of existing spaces.
- **Cultural use (capital and cultural strand):** As set out in the Culture and Heritage Capital Evidence Bank, which is cited in the Green Book Wellbeing Guidance, these benefits relate to the willingness to pay of local residents to attend cultural events and assets. This value has been applied to the attendees to engagement and cultural activities, as well as forecasted attendees to artworks/installations. Benefits have also been forecasted based on a cautious projection to Scaplen's Court over an appropriate appraisal period.
- **Heritage use and non-use – historic buildings conserved (capital strand):** Use and non-use benefits from the historic buildings or heritage assets repaired/conserved have been estimated using benefit transfer approaches from the DCMS Cultural and Heritage Capital Evidence Bank. 'The Economic Value of Heritage: A Benefit Transfer Study' considered use and non-use values from works to improve the maintenance and conservation of historic buildings in various cities, a similar initiative to the historic building conservation works in the HSHAZ programme. We have applied the use value to the estimated footfall in each HSHAZ from the mobile phone data and the non-use value to residents in the local authority (minus the users).
- **Heritage use and non-use – shopfront improvements (capital strand):** The restoration and improvement of historic high street shopfronts is a key component of the capital element of the HSHAZ programme. This aspect of the programme cannot be accurately valued using a benefits transfer approach in which the use and non-use economic benefit findings of an

⁵ The BCR can be interpreted as the estimated level of benefit per £1 of cost. It is used as the core element in the measure of Value for Money (VfM) when interventions involve a net cost to the public sector.

existing similar study, for example from the DCMS Evidence Bank, would be applied. For this reason, AMION has undertaken a bespoke contingent valuation and benefits transfer study as set out within the next section to assess the use and non-use economic benefits attributed to the restoration and improvement of historic high street shopfronts delivered across England through the HSHAZ programme. We have applied the use value to the estimated footfall in each HSHAZ from the mobile phone data and the non-use value to residents in the local authority (minus the users).

- **Wellbeing benefits from volunteering (capital and cultural strand):** As set out in the Green Book Supplementary Guidance for Wellbeing, volunteering is associated with enhanced wellbeing, with the value estimated using the subjective wellbeing valuation approach cited in this government guidance. The core from the Wellbeing guidance has been applied to the volunteer hours.
- **Wellbeing benefits from education and social programmes (capital and cultural strand):** The Green Book Supplementary Guidance for Wellbeing shows that life satisfaction improves based on participation in education and social development programmes. The core value from the Wellbeing guidance has been applied to attendees at education events and training sessions.
- **Wage premium benefits from education completions (capital strand):** The programme has led to apprenticeship opportunities throughout the construction phase and other construction training events. There is a wealth of existing evidence showing the positive impact of training and qualifications on employment and earnings. Wage premium effects from previous Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills research has been applied to the number of apprenticeship and training completions in the programme, with the benefit lasting for three years which is a cautious approach.

Active mode (capital strand)⁶: The interpretation boards and digital displays will deliver wayfinding benefits for residents and visitors which can be measured using Department for Transport guidance. The benefits arising from these improvements have been measured using the DfT Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit (AMAT) over a 30-year appraisal period. The visitors to the enhanced area have been calculated based on the mobile phone footfall data.

- **Strategy development (capital strand):** There has been substantial resource allocated to the wide range of feasibility, research, heritage and conservation management studies. Our assessment has assumed that the development studies are likely to at least deliver benefits in line with their costs, given that they have been led by local partners in line with need.

The monetised benefits from the capital and cultural strand are shown below. The capital strand benefits mainly arise from heritage benefits from historic assets conserved, the heritage benefits from the shopfront improvements, and the cultural use value from the forecasted attendees to Scaplen's Court. To err on the side of caution no land value uplift has been estimated for Scaplen's Court as the project was not complete by the closure of the programme. Undoubtedly however once complete a land value uplift will occur and a substantial part of this could reasonably be

⁶ The active mode benefits have been monetised for the capital strand based on the delivery of enhanced public realm and permanent installation boards/digital displays. The interpretation displays from the cultural strand are assumed to be temporary and therefore, has formed part of the non-monetised assessment

‘claimed’ by the HSHAZ programme which would increase the benefit cost ratio compared to that estimated below. The cultural strand benefits arise from attendees to events and heritage trails delivered during the HSHAZ programme.

Table 4-1: Poole HSHAZ – Evaluation Summary Table (£000s)			
	Capital strand	Cultural strand	Total Poole HSHAZ
Amenity	£59	-	£59
Heritage Use	£851	-	£851
Heritage Non-Use	£1,224	-	£1,224
Cultural use	£1,916	£124	£2,140
Education wage premium	-	-	-
Wellbeing from education	£1	£3	£4
Wellbeing from volunteering	-	£2	£2
Active mode	£194	-	£194
Strategy development	£194	-	£194
Total benefits	£4,438	£130	£4,568

Table 4-2 below demonstrates the results on the cost-benefit analysis. Poole HSHAZ is assessed to have an **overall BCR of 1.26:1**, considered ‘**acceptable**’ value for money ($1.0:1 < \text{BCR} < 1.5:1$). The cultural strand has a BCR of 1.42:1 and the capital strand has a BCR of 1.26:1.

Table 4-2: Poole HSHAZ – Evaluation Summary Table			
	Capital strand	Cultural strand	Total Poole HSHAZ
A. Present Value Benefits (£m)	£4.43	£0.13	£4.57
B. Present Value Costs (£m)	£3.53	£0.09	£3.62
C. Net Present Social Value (A-B)	£0.91	£0.04	£0.95
D. BCR (A)/B)	1.26:1	1.42:1	1.26:1
E. VfM category	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

We have also considered the following non-monetisable benefits using a seven-point scale from ‘large adverse to large significant’ within the MHCLG Appraisal Guide. These non-monetised benefits include:

- **Legacy impacts** – large beneficial (Large benefit likely to materially impact on VfM)
- **Image and community perceptions** – moderate beneficial (important benefit but will not on its own significantly impact on VfM)
- **Cultural sector development** – moderate beneficial (important benefit but will not on its own significantly impact on VfM)

The project represents ‘**acceptable**’ value for money based on the monetised BCR and the non-monetised benefit assessment, which could reach ‘medium’ value for money if the legacy benefits fully materialise..

5 Insights, lessons learned, and legacy impacts

As set out in the Purpose of the Case Study section, this document is not an evaluation of the Poole HSHAZ scheme. Its main purpose is to review achieved outputs, assess likely value for money, and identify successes and challenges arising from a facilitated workshop.

5.1 Key successes

The area surrounding the Poole Museum, Scaplen's Court and the lower high street has seen a **number of properties restored** as a result of HSHAZ funded works. The anchor of the scheme was the ability to **bring Scaplen's Court back into use⁷ and establish its position as part of the Poole Museum estate**. The complementary investment in the Poole Museum estate has amplified the beneficial impacts arising from the Scheme and evidences how HSHAZ funding can leverage significant match funding which otherwise would not have happened. The Scaplen's Court and associated projects are expected to double the number of visitors to the complex and provide a significant community space.

The shopfront improvement and the installation of LED lightings within historic lampposts along the length of the high street has changed perceptions of the area at night, including the safety of the area. These projects provided somewhat of a technical challenge but have had great rewards for the local authority. Combined with the expanded public realm improvements, consultees indicate there has been a **notable enhancement to the image of the high street** through HSHAZ funded works.

5.2 Challenges

Changes in administration (2019, 2021 and 2023) led to changes in councillors with different approaches and vision to Poole and the wider BCP needs. Restrictions on advertising and celebration of HSHAZ activities during pre-election periods (March and June 2024) also acted as a restraint.

Notably the BCP Council was formed in April 2019, requiring substantial transformation to consolidate three councils. Consultees noted that this led to a **lack of funding, new finance and HR systems, technology changes and other administration issues which proved difficult** to navigate. Additionally, Poole HSHAZ was without a project manager for nine months. Recognising these challenges to delivery a new team was formed and through good project management of contractors and partners enabled the Scheme to largely deliver against overall targets for spend and outputs.

As for many HSHAZ Schemes the high level of cost **inflation for labour and materials and general living costs was a challenge to delivery of capital and cultural projects**, for example Scaplen's Court saw 14.2% inflation on the tender price due to increased cost of timber and glazing. More widely business owners were worried about cost overruns, reduced outputs and displaced

⁷ It should be noted that works were still being finalised at the stage of the final monitoring report however, the team has managed to secure substantial match-funding which will deliver transformational change once fully complete. This is seen as a more beneficial outcome than finishing the scheme in isolation leading to reduced outcomes.

business during construction **of improved premises and this impacted take up for the shopfront improvement scheme.**

5.3 Legacy impacts

This main outcome of the Poole HSHAZ is that it has **enhanced pride of place and initiated conversations regarding the importance of heritage led regeneration and investment** – with the scheme seen as a success by stakeholders. Another main outcome from the programme is the leverage of additional funding, with HSHAZ funding increasing the confidence for others to invest in Poole by de-risking investments. Working with local partners, such as BID who were active advocates for the HSHAZ programme, presents the opportunity to further enhance the programme’s legacy.

The restoration of two heritage buildings at Scaplen’s Court, a Grade I listed asset, when complete **will undoubtedly enhance its long-term visitor capacity.** The physical space has been expanded alongside several improvements to maximise accessibility as well as attractiveness. The transformation will help this corner of the high street to become a ‘key cultural quarter’ with its own centre of gravity and reputation in the town. Importantly for leverage and legacy benefits to be realised these restoration works have helped key stakeholders to understand the value for money of heritage led regeneration.

The shopfronts have **increased consumer confidence and have acted as a catalyst for wider shop front revival** with other business owners inspired to undertake their own investment in surrounding properties – a key objective of the overarching HSHAZ programme.

The HSHAZ aimed to support the **transition of the traditional high street into a more vibrant and modern offer** for a variety of visitors with heritage and cultural activity in public spaces to increase high street footfall. During construction, the cultural programme was able to showcase the high street transformation to the community through engagement events, successfully making ongoing capital works tangible to residents and businesses. Post completion, the programme has led to a marked improvement in the high street albeit further investment is needed to complete the transformation.

The lasting impacts of the cultural strand centre around **enhanced collaboration between key groups, with several events supported as part of HSHAZ being considered for annual renewal.** The cultural programme brought together previously independent groups and this demonstrated the benefits of inclusion and partnership working. Additionally, residents have been inspired to become involved with creative activities, with over 100 individuals now acting, designing costumes and creating sets within the community plays. The project team were unanimous in the ability of a cultural programme to maximise the delivery of a capital programme.

5.4 Lessons learned

The delivery of the Poole HSHAZ scheme has demonstrated the importance of an adequately resourced and experienced project management being in place from the beginning of the programme. Complex capital projects need a settled project team, committed to successfully delivering the outcomes and engaging with key stakeholders. Once this was in place, the HSHAZ works were delivered against its stated outputs despite initial challenges.

The Poole HSHAZ and other schemes have demonstrated the benefit of **a sufficiently long lead in time in developing scheme plans and individual projects particularly where plans involve larger and more complex projects**. NLHF projects typically have a lead in time which is seen as beneficial for stakeholder collaboration and buy-in, although cost and resource implications are acknowledged.

Again as in other HSHAZ areas the benefits of **streamlining reporting through dashboards or a simplified spreadsheet was noted as an area for improvement. This was particularly challenging when multiple funders required different reporting formats and timelines for the same project**. Due to combining multiple funding sources, BCP Council had to align the reporting requirements of each funder by creating their own monitoring methods. These processes could have potentially been determined from the start through prior organisation readiness protocols between BCP, HE and other partners.

If implemented earlier, the cultural scheme could have further raised awareness of the Scheme and promoted the key themes. This awareness and **understanding of activities would have supported future engagement with business owners**. Once delivered, the cultural programme helped with the branding and relatability of the capital works.