

Stalham

Unlocking Your Place Potential – Report and Feedback



Table of Contents

About the visit and this report.....	2
Stalham – Strengths	3
4Rs Framework and our method	4
Applying the 4Rs to Stalham.....	5
Fishbone Analysis	6
Diagnosis of main barrier to transformation	6
Recommendations	8
High Streets Task Force Product Prescription	9
Appendix 1 – List of town attendees.....	11

About the visit and this report

The High Streets Task Force visited North Norfolk on 3rd March 2023 to undertake an *Unlocking Your Place Potential* diagnostic visit. Chris Wade was the High Streets Task Force Expert undertaking the visit.

The attendees representing Stalham can be found in Appendix 1.

The purpose of the visit was to diagnose the main barrier to your transformation. In other words, what problem, if not resolved now, will make it difficult for the town to change. To do this the Expert wanted to understand more about the challenges facing the town, your plans for transformation, meet key stakeholders, ask questions and tour the town.

As a result of the diagnostic process, the Expert has identified local capacity, leadership and partnerships, as the current barrier to transformation in Stalham.

The rest of this report identifies the strengths of the town, the main barrier to transformation the Expert found, as well as clear recommendations the Local Authority and partners can action now to accelerate the transformation process. The report ends with a list of High Streets Task Force Products that the Expert has prescribed.

On behalf of the High Streets Task Force, may I take this opportunity to thank attendees who gave up their time to attend the meeting, and who contributed to a frank and positive discussion. Thank you to Stewart Damonsing for organising the session and those that led, and contributed to, an informative and well-planned workshop and subsequent town tour.

From reading the feedback from the visit, and this report, I can see you have a lot going for you in Stalham – and many strengths both in the town and in your people. The High Streets Task Force is here to help you build on those strengths, and I hope you find it useful.



Matt Colledge

High Streets Task Force Project Director

Stalham – Strengths

- ✓ Manageable walking distance to amenities/services/clubs/independent shops recognised as top quality in the Neighbourhood Plan consultation
- ✓ Good array of independent retail and retail services for town of its size
- ✓ Town centre supermarket with parking attracts people from further afield
- ✓ Located on edge of the Broads National Park and close to Norwich and coast
- ✓ Events and festivals organised by Stalham Area Business Forum
- ✓ Community spirit as recognised in Neighbourhood Plan consultation
- ✓ Strong sense of community that helps ensure the town continues to thrive, through different working groups

Stalham is an attractive town, with a strong sense of community and magnificent countryside and coastal scenery right on its doorstep. It has a good local catchment within walking distance of the town centre and a central supermarket that attracts residents and visitors from a wider area.

There are a variety of imaginative, annual events hosted in the town including the Vintage and Collectors Market; Stalham Fringe Festival and the Yuletide Market. The Museum of the Broads and Richardson's Boatyard are important attractions in the wider Norfolk Broads. In summary, the town has many strengths and although it is facing challenges, these strengths provide great opportunities to build on in planning for a reinvigorated future.

4Rs Framework and our method

The aim of the Unlocking Your Place Potential workshop is for our High Streets Task Force Experts to identify the key barrier(s) to the improvement of your high street and recommend an appropriate strategic response. To enable our experts to do this in an evidence-based way, the High Streets Task Force uses the '4Rs Framework'.

Research has identified 237 factors that impact on the success of the high street. However, it is too overwhelming to think of all these at once, so we have developed the '4 Rs' framework to provide some structure to the incredibly complex practice of place transformation. Without a framework, it is easy to be drawn into so much detail that you cannot see the big picture.

When you simplify the process of renewal, the reasons why so many regeneration plans do not result in the changes people expect fall into 4 categories:

- The problems facing the centre were not accurately identified
- The plans were good but not enough changed
- The place changed but people's perceptions didn't
- There were fundamental issues with governance or the spatial layout of the place

We looked at these problems and identified 4 strategies to address them, *repositioning*, *reinventing*, *rebranding*, and *restructuring*. So, the framework distinguishes between the processes of analysis and decision making (repositioning), effecting change (reinventing), communication (rebranding) and governance/spatial planning (restructuring). More detail on each of the '4R's' is set out below.



Figure 1: the 4Rs Framework

Applying the 4Rs to Stalham

Although the town and its people have many strengths, we did identify a number of weaknesses. We have grouped these using the 4Rs framework – see below.

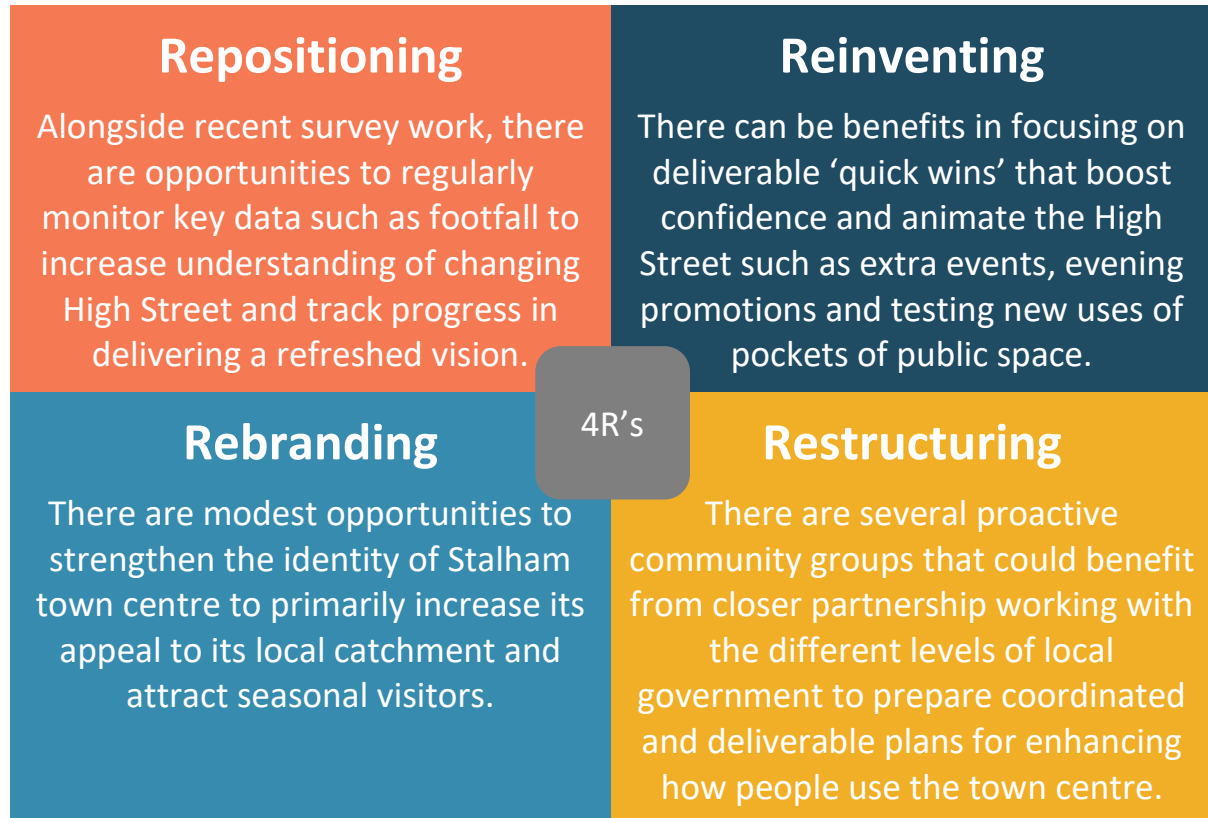


Figure 2: Applying the 4Rs Framework to Stalham

We used all the information we had to identify which of the descriptions above fitted the evidence we had collected. We collected this evidence from looking at your Expression of Interest to the Future High Streets Fund, our feedback to you (Transforming Your High Street Report), the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, including our meeting, discussions, exercises and the in-person town tour. We also included the information we found out about Stalham from our desk research.

We then grouped each piece of evidence under the 4R headings of Repositioning, Reinventing, Rebranding, and Restructuring. You can see our working on the Fishbone Sheet included in this report.

By classifying every clue, we could see how these are grouped and where Stalham is facing major barriers. This then allows us to recommend suitable strategies to overcome these. These strategies are *ways of working*, rather than ‘magic bullets’ relating to any particular intervention in your town. As mentioned at the start of the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, you are the experts in Stalham.

You can see the major barriers to your transformation in the next section.

Fishbone Analysis

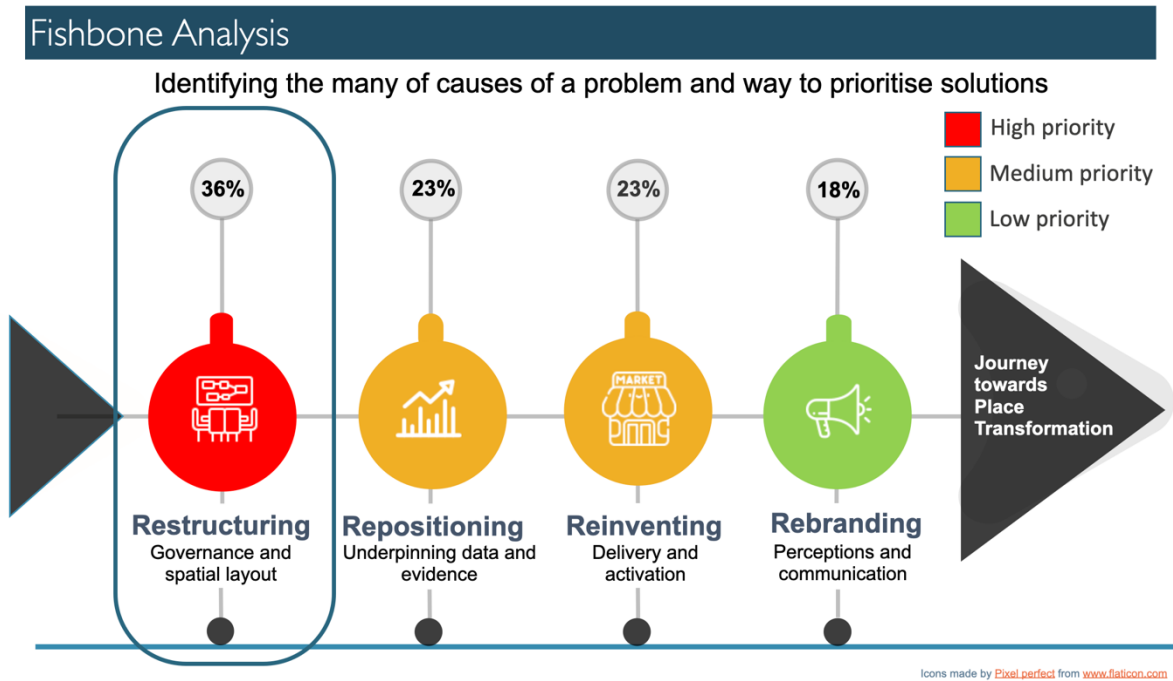


Figure 2: Fishbone Analysis for Stalham

Diagnosis of main barrier to transformation

As a result of the diagnostic process, the Experts have identified local capacity, leadership and partnerships as the main barrier to transformation in Stalham.

We believe North Norfolk District Council can assist in improving the local capacity, leadership, partnerships and plans through improved governance and place management partnership structures. Such well-organised partnerships can more effectively deliver change beginning with identifying local priorities for improving vitality and viability.

The momentum created by the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and its proposals for enhancing the town centre, the existing role of the Business Forum in organising events, Local Plan housing allocations and calls for improved access and waymarking to the supermarket and Staithe, suggest the need for a partnership approach to identify collective local priorities for improving the town centre and to agree the roles of individual partner organisations in delivery.

We recognise the need for support for partnership development to go hand-in-hand with understanding and addressing the issues faced by Stalham town centre. Discussions about

partnership development should involve an awareness of the issues faced and the potential roles of different partners in future delivery.

Stronger partnerships between the different layers of local government, businesses and the wider community will build more capacity for making change in the town. A more coordinated approach will ensure more impact from the investment and interventions, whether they are initially led by the public, private or voluntary sector.

It was very clear from our meeting that there is a huge amount of enthusiasm and support for the town from both the councils, community and business leaders. More frequent and open communication is needed, and we suggest structuring your partnership and governance systems to facilitate a team approach to transformation, with council, business and community participation.

Recommendations

To improve **local capacity, leadership and partnerships** we are recommending a strategy of first *restructuring* to refresh your approach to place leadership. We understand it is not always easy to change cultures, structures and behaviours to work in a more collaborative way, so we are giving you five recommendations that if you adopt, will lead to some quick improvements.

1. Share the final version of this report with everyone that attended the Unlocking Your Place Potential meeting.
2. Pull together a report containing all existing evidence of issues in Stalham including from Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan including the High Street business mix; appearance; community facilities; the evening economy; and parking provision. The report should also identify any gaps in knowledge and potential ways to plug them, e.g. variable footfall across town centre.
3. Arrange another meeting of local councils, (including suitable County Council officers), the Local Enterprise Partnership, business and community leaders to review the recommendations of this report and agree/achieve buy-in for next steps. This can also offer an opportunity to share the assessment of issues and provide updates from individual organisations.
4. Host a workshop in Stalham on improving local capacity, leadership and partnerships led by a High Streets Task Force Expert that will consider governance and place management partnership structures, with an awareness of identified needs and potential future responsibilities.
5. Act on the recommendations from the Expert-led workshop to establish a partnership with a timetable and cycle of meetings suitable to prepare a joined-up plan and coordinate future delivery.

A couple of additional recommendations which sit outside of the restructuring strategy:

6. Place analytics and dashboards (integrating and sharing sources of data).
7. Place Making Programme workshop.

We hope these recommendations are useful. As we explained in the Unlocking Your Place Potential visit, you are the experts in Stalham, not us. Nevertheless, we have experience of working with many towns around the country that face similar challenges – so when we undertake a diagnostic visit, we are well trained in looking for strengths and weaknesses in the town's offer, as well as the structures and processes that manage and change the town.

High Streets Task Force Product Prescription

Based on our recommendations, we would like to offer you the following products. This has been decided after considering your key barriers to transformation and what we have concluded as the best way to help you achieve your transformation goals.

High Streets Task Force Products Prescribed:

Product prescribed	Rationale
<p>Expert support</p>	<p>Expert support focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance, place management partnership structures • Identifying local priorities for improving vitality and viability <p>There are good examples of community-based initiatives in Stalham including the Business Forum’s events programme and the Neighbourhood Plan Community Consultation Survey. Such work, perhaps paired with short-term funding opportunities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and long-term strategy in the Local Plan, can provide the momentum for a more coordinated partnership and plan aimed at reviving the town centre. It’s important to get everyone rowing in the same direction!</p> <p>We recognise that such partnership development cannot happen in isolation from an understanding of the issues and the potential to address them. We therefore suggest some preliminary work pulling together current evidence of issues from the Neighbourhood Plan consultation and other sources.</p> <p>By also including a focus on identifying local priorities, the development of a town centre partnership can be structured around distinctive themes such as strategic changes through planning, transport, parking and public realm enhancements or ‘softer’ support for business diversification, events, marketing and digital development that can help bring the town to life.</p>

	<p>The rationale for this prescription of expert support is that a coordinated partnership can help achieve noticeable 'quick wins' that begin to boost local confidence and capacity. Organisations can work together to prepare a joined-up plan, while being able to play to the strengths through coordinated delivery.</p>
<p>Workshop</p>	<p>Stalham would also benefit from a Place Making Programme workshop. The workshop is open to a wide group of stakeholders and is centred around a 3-hour in-person session for up to 70 people.</p> <p>Taking the approach of broad consultation and engagement, the workshop allows for constructive discussion of challenges and future plans for the local area, ensuring that all voices are heard.</p> <p>This type of programme has been well established and used in over 50 locations nationally by the Task Force Lead Partner, the Institute of Place Management, as well as during significant research projects on high street transformation.</p>
<p>Online learning/resources</p>	<p>The High Streets Task Force offers a range of online resources and support that places can benefit from.</p> <p>The following workshop we believe would benefit the potential partnership members in Stalham as it introduces achievable actions for improving town centre performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online learning – Improving High Street Vitality and Viability

Next steps:

Please liaise with your Operations contact to make arrangements for the delivery of the next stage of your support. The operation's team are available to assist with any queries relating to the delivery of the above support, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if any aspect is unclear.

More information about all of these products can be found on the HSTF website [here](#).

Appendix 1 – List of town attendees

Full Name	Job Title	Organisation Name
Matthew Taylor	District Councillor	North Norfolk District Council
Pauline Grove-Jones	District Councillor	North Norfolk District Council
Tim Adams	Leader	North Norfolk District Council
Steve Blatch	Chief Executive	North Norfolk District Council
Stewart Damonsing	Business Development Officer	North Norfolk District Council
Nigel Dixon	County Councillor	Norfolk County Council
Kevin Bayes	Mayor	Stalham Town Council
Maggie Green	Deputy Mayor	Stalham Town Council
Catherine Scrivner	Town Councillor	Stalham Town Council
Rachel Hood	Town Councillor	Stalham Town Council
Daniel Trett	Chairman	Stalham Area Business Forum
Chris Foster	Chair	Stalham Neighbourhood Development Committee
Nicola Hems	Curator	Museum of the Broads
Jason Middleton	Programme Manager	New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership