

# High Streets Task Force

## A Guide to Experts, Mentors and Facilitators

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 Rochester

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## Executive summary

### High Streets Task Force Experts/Mentors/Facilitators

- The High Streets Task Force, led by the Institute of Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University, is seeking to work with a group of experts, mentors and facilitators to provide expertise and capacity to local authorities and people involved in high street transformation, across England.
- Successful applicants will be added to the High Streets Task Force register of Experts/Mentors/Facilitators.
- High Streets Task Force Experts will advise local authorities on a range of areas, including planning, urban design, placemaking, landscape, green and blue infrastructure, architecture, resilience, transport, valuation, asset management, investment, governance, data and analytics, place management and leadership. A maximum of three days of Task Force Expert time will be allocated to provide this specialist advice.
- High Street Task Force Experts will also undertake one-day diagnostics, involving place visits ('Unlocking your Place Potential') and lead two HSTF trainings (Visioning Workshop and Placemaking Programme)
- High Streets Task Force Mentors will inspire and support better partnership
- High Streets Task Force Facilitators will assist with two HSTF trainings (Visioning Workshop and Placemaking Programme) and support the one-day diagnostic visit.

### Terms and scheduling

- The High Streets Task Force will contract with Experts/Mentors/Facilitators on a day rate basis
  - The day rate for Experts will be £800.00 (+VAT if applicable, expenses and any other miscellaneous costs will not be paid)
  - The day rate for Mentors & Facilitators will be £400.00 (+VAT if applicable, expenses and any other miscellaneous costs will not be paid)
- Individuals will be allocated to Local Authorities based on the HSTF product being provided, specialism required, location/proximity of individual to Local Authority or High Street in need of support, and availability. A project management office will liaise with registered Experts/Mentors/Facilitators to schedule work. Experts/Mentors/Facilitators are not obliged to deliver either any specific work or a total number of hours.

- Assuming a suitable level of service is provided, and compliance with the HSTF Charter, individuals will be contracted to provide support to the High Streets Task Force for a period of 4 years (1st July 2020 to 30th June 2024)
- Allocation of individuals is dependent on need of Local Authorities (assessed by High Streets Task Force). As such, we cannot guarantee number/frequency of individual allocations

## Application process

- Experts/Mentors/Facilitators will be recruited through four professional bodies (Institute of Place Management, The Landscape Institute, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and the Royal Town Planning Institute) and the Design Council.
- Each of the four professional bodies has identified ten areas of expertise which it wishes to recruit Experts from, in order to support the needs of places engaged by the High Streets Task Force. Experts will nominate their relevant expertise on application.
- Individuals for the four professional bodies can also apply to be Mentors and/or Facilitators if they have the consummate skills/experience.
- Assessment of applications will be completed by the applicant's respective professional body and recommend individuals for training and second-stage assessment.
- The High Streets Task Force will undertake a mandatory, second-stage assessment of candidates, undertaken during the training day. This will involve an assessment of all candidates, to ensure they have understood and have the skills, knowledge and experience to commit to the HSTF Charter (See Appendix). Individuals applying to be mentors will have their mentoring skills assessed. Individuals applying to be Facilitators or Experts that wish to lead training, will also have their presentation and communication skills assessed.

## Experts Charter and training

- High Streets Task Force Experts, Mentors or Facilitators will be expected to commit to the HSTF Charter to ensure high standards of professional conduct. The Charter lays down standards of conduct and ways of working.
- Task Force Experts will receive training and support from the Task Force, including:
  - Training on interdisciplinary working and the latest thinking on the challenges facing high streets and town centres.

- (Where relevant) Pre-visit place research and analytics
- Training materials, diagnostics, audit sheets
- Reporting and feedback templates
- Guidance from a senior member of the High Streets Task Force

## About the High Streets Task Force

The High Streets Task Force was set up to help high streets, towns and city centres to thrive. As a consortium of 13 partners, we work to build local capacity and expertise, collaborating with local authorities and a range of stakeholders and supporting their regeneration efforts.

The Task Force was commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), in response to the recommendations of the High Streets Expert Panel, chaired by Sir John Timpson, who argue that successful change is created by local communities that have a vision for their high streets. (Link: [The High Street Report](#))

### What we do

We have a vision for town centres and high streets that are at the heart of their communities, with a unique sense of place and a strong identity. We will deliver a range of services aligned to four objectives, which will provide practical support to people and places. These objectives are:

- **Boost Local Authority Capacity**  
by providing expert knowledge and support to Local Authorities and others, to solve the problems that are holding places back.
- **Build place making skills**  
by building the skills of organisations and groups to deliver effective strategies that make a difference to their local area.
- **Coordination**  
by connecting local and national decision makers and those that can influence high streets, as well as promoting positive messages about towns and cities.
- **Information and data sharing**  
by vetting, integrating and providing data and evidence to people making important decisions about the future of their high streets, towns and city centres.

Our services focus on helping a range of place leaders to make a positive difference to their local communities. While this complements government investment available via a number of funds, the Task Force itself does not offer funding to local authorities.

### Pilot

To ensure that the Task Force meets the needs of towns and high streets, we are currently piloting many of the products and services that the Task Force will deliver around the country. In July 2020, we will progress from pilot to a national roll out of services to towns and cities, calling on the register of Experts to support during this programme to 2024.

More information can be found throughout this guide and by visiting the Task Force website: <http://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk>

## Who are Task Force Experts?

High streets, and city and town centres have been the dynamic heart of our communities since the Middle Ages. They have been places of commercial and social interaction, of entertainment, employment, education, access to transport modes and all sorts of other aspects that are important to everyday life. However, over the last fifty years or so, the nature of our town centres has changed dramatically, with an increasing focus on retail, and a decreasing emphasis on community. Now, we are currently experiencing a rapid and unprecedented decline in the fortunes of UK high street retail.

The combined impact of out of town and online retailing coupled with issues within the retail industry itself have left a legacy of far too much retail floor space in some of our district centres, towns and cities (as indicated by long-term vacancy rates that are above the national average). In addition, there are other structural, technological and societal changes that make the management and development of high streets and city and town centres a very complex business. This comes at a time when local authorities have had to make significant budget savings and staff reductions, therefore it is not surprising that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) identified a requirement to boost local authority capacity to manage town and city centres, so that they better serve their communities.

In the first instance, the High Streets Task Force will support a range of towns and cities that are looking to develop applications for funding through the Future High Streets Fund. From an initial assessment of interest in this Fund, many local authorities are trying to transform their high streets by investing in a range of regeneration projects, incorporating:

- transport
- housing
- resilience and sustainability
- greenspace and public realm
- blue infrastructure
- commercial space
- digital infrastructure
- repurposing of retail space
- arts and culture
- places and spaces for community uses.

## Register of Experts, Mentors and Facilitators

There are 9721 towns in England and many more high streets, with just over 600 in London alone. Every high street or town/city centre is the responsibility of one of the 300 plus local government bodies in England. Nevertheless, the Institute of Place Management's existing research demonstrates that, on their own, many local authorities will struggle to identify the capacity and expertise needed to bring about sustainable, high-street regeneration.

**A register of High Streets Task Force Experts, Mentors and Facilitators is being recruited to provide specialised knowledge of the changing high street and its needs.**

**Experts will be *prescribed* in situations where additional expertise or capacity is needed to unlock the potential of a high street, or town or city centre.**

High Street Task Force Experts/Mentors/Facilitators will be prescribed in situations where additional expertise or capacity is needed to unlock the strategic potential of a high street, town or city centre. In other words, if the problem the Local Authority is facing is complex and the solution is not able to be provided 'in house' or through existing consultancy services that could be procured in the normal way.

As high streets, town and city centres move from mono-functional spaces to multifunctional places, wide-ranging expertise is needed to support this change, including planning, data, design and people skills. At present, expertise is often contained within consultancies and agencies that are associated with a particular profession, therefore we have proposed a novel solution to find interdisciplinary, place-based solutions to complex high street, town and city centre problems.

Together, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Landscape Institute (LI), Design Council, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and Institute of Place Management will oversee a register of Task Force Experts in planning, urban design, placemaking, landscape architecture, transport, valuation, asset management, investment, governance, data and analytics, place management and leadership.

Each professional body has identified a list of ten areas of expertise which are represented by its membership, and which can support places engaged with the High Streets Task Force. These can be found below in the person specification section. This approach ensures that towns and cities are supported by those with specific expertise that are best placed to advise on their issues. The approach also reduces duplication across respective professional bodies and simplifies the advisory landscape for places engaged with the Task Force.



## Requirements for Experts

### Person specification – Experts

- Will be drawn from the membership of the four professional bodies identified above, plus the Design Council;
- Will be respected professionals, at Member or Fellow level of their respective professional body, or, in the case of the Design Council, Task Force Experts will be Built Environment Experts;
- Will demonstrate significant and successful experience of working on high street, town or city centre, and place issues;
- Will nominate area(s) of expertise, in line with the areas identified by their professional body; and
- Will have excellent presentation and communications skills, if they wish to lead HSTF trainings.

Dependent on the professional body the applicant belongs to, the following requirements apply to experts:

Professional body	Membership	Educational/ Professional	Experience	Other requirements
Institute of Place Management	Fellow	Masters qualification (or higher)	6 + years	A significant impact upon place management practice, policy or research
Landscape Institute	Member & Registered Practice	Chartership	5 years	Expert in relevant landscape specialisms linked to planning, design &/or management of public realm.
RTPI	Member	Chartership	5 years	Expert in relevant planning specialisms
RICS	Member	Chartership	5 years	Expert in relevant property/asset/investment specialisms
Design Council	Built Environment Experts	BEE status	5 years	Expert in relevant built environment specialisms

### Design Council – specialist areas

- Civic activity, engagement and participation
- Diversity and inclusive design (for equality and social resilience)
- Healthy placemaking & social sustainability
- Sustainable building design for climate change adaptation
- Urban design and streets (when public realm/green and blue infrastructure are not a major focus)

- Heritage and historic buildings (not environments)
- Architecture
- Repurposing buildings
- Future trends insight
- Future proofing town centre environments (e.g. social and environmental sustainability, emerging technologies and digital transformation)
- Pedestrian movement and flow including service design and user research

## **Institute of Place Management – specialist areas**

- Place leadership and visioning
- Place marketing and branding
- Stakeholder engagement, communication and management
- Governance, place management partnership structures (inc. BIDs)
- Place activation (events, festivals, arts and culture, markets, pop-ups)
- Consensus building and conflict resolution across councils, community and business
- Place analytics and dashboards (integrating and sharing sources of data)
- Place-based approaches to societal changes (e.g. homelessness)
- Identifying local priorities for improving vitality and viability
- Identifying and communicating complex trends and factors affecting town centres and high streets

## **Landscape Institute – specialist areas**

- Design – public realm
- Masterplanning (including visioning)
- Visualisation and photography
- Sustainability, climate change and resilience
- Community engagement (including co-design)
- Inclusive design
- Landscape construction (& implementation)
- Landscape engineering
- Management of landscapes or parks management, or people/visitor management
- Procurement and tendering
- Water Management (including Water Sensitive Urban Design and SuDS)

## **Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – specialist areas**

- Shopping patterns and changing town centre uses
- Accessibility and parking
- Restructuring town centres through land assembly and CPOs (including compensation)
- Investment
- Property/asset approaches to town centre regeneration
- Rating and modelling future rateable income
- Building surveying

- Place data, information and interpretation inc. health checks
- Asset transfers
- Urban economics

## Royal Town Planning Institute – specialist areas

- Town centre/high street planning – general - all uses and mixes (including retail, commercial and residential, leisure, tourism, art and culture)
- Town centre/high street assessments including town centre and primary shopping area designations, boundaries review, range of uses, sequential approach, PDRS and application of policy
- Planning for heritage and conservation/historic environment in a town centre/high street context
- Urban regeneration, urban design and place making (when public realm/greenspace is not a major focus)
- Development and regeneration frameworks including masterplanning (when not anchored by public realm/greenspace)
- Transport and infrastructure planning and management
- Participatory planning (including community and stakeholder engagement)
- Assessments and modelling, including modelling/visualisation of visions/plans (via data insight and analytics)
- Environmental planning, sustainability and climate change resilience
- Health and well-being planning

## Person specification – Mentors and Facilitators

As well High Streets Task Force Experts, experienced Mentors or Facilitators may be provided to boost the capacity of local authorities, when capacity issues have been identified, through the diagnostic Task Force Visit.

### Mentors:

- Will be successful place managers/leaders from another location, who can inspire and support better partnership working;
- Will broker up to three meetings with the local authority and key stakeholders, to develop a partnership agreement for joint working; and
- Will be members of one of the High Streets Task Force consortium’s professional bodies and will have an aptitude for coaching and mentoring (training will also be provided).

Dependent on the professional body the applicant belongs to, the following requirements apply to **Mentors AND Facilitators**:

Professional body	Professional membership	Educational/Professional	Experience
Institute of Place Management	Member	First degree (or graduate level competencies)	3 or more years

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Landscape Institute	Member	Chartership	3 or more years
RTPI	Member	Chartership	2 or more years
RICS	Member	Chartership	2 or more years

## Facilitators:

- Will be experienced in assisting training and other similar delivery involving collaborative development which the High Streets Task Force delivers:
  - visioning workshops
  - placemaking programme
- Will be members of one of the High Street Task Force consortium's professional bodies and will have excellent communication and presentation skills, although we will provide training; and
- Will be professionally qualified and, dependent on their professional body, meet the requirements detailed in the table above.



## What will Task Force Experts, Mentors and Facilitators do?

The gateway to the High Streets Task Force is, in the first instance, through the Future High Street Fund. Any English Local Authority that submits an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Fund, in either Round 1 or Round 2 will be invited by MHCLG to 'opt in' to receive one or more bespoke, expert advice products and services from the High Streets Task Force.

A number of these products and services will be provided by High Streets Task Force Experts, Mentors and Facilitators.

The Task Force will use desk-based research, place visits and consultation with stakeholders to diagnose any major barriers to high street transformation. The barriers identified may relate to data and evidence (repositioning); action or inaction (reinventing); perceptions and communication (rebranding) or people and planning (restructuring).

The products and services delivered by High Streets Task Force Experts/Facilitators and Mentors are listed below.

### **'Unlocking your Place Potential' Visit**

This visit from a Task Force Expert is designed as a diagnostic process that allows those responsible for a specific high street, town or city centre to identify the important key issue(s) that are hampering successful transformation and how to address these.

The support provided through the 'Unlocking your Place Potential' visit will assist the local authority to develop Expressions of Interest for later rounds of the Future High Street Fund, if appropriate. The visit also recommends additional products and services from the High Streets Task Force, where relevant.

Task Force Experts will do the following as part of the 'Unlocking your Place Potential' visit::

- pre-visit study of high street background information and research prepared by the Task Force, and the HSTF Facilitator, including analysis of the expression of interest to the Future High Streets Fund.
- undertake a town/city centre tour, to conduct a snapshot analysis of the place, based on a framework provided by the Task Force, in order to complement the output of the workshop discussion
- lead a two-hour workshop, following a framework and instructions provided by the Task Force, with local stakeholders and designed to draw out the main barriers to transformation
- Compile a visit report and presentation pack, to a pre-defined format, which will be shared with the place leadership by the Task Force

A High Street Task Force 'Unlocking your Place Potential' visit will be led by an Expert and supported by a Facilitator.

## **Expert consultation**

Technical and professional experts may be provided by the Task Force to local authorities to help solve complex, interdisciplinary problems. Experts will not replace services that are available in the market; their role is to bring capacity and expertise to entrenched problems that the local authority has, so far, been unable to solve.

Task Force Experts will – working in multidisciplinary teams in complex cases - advise on a range of specific issues which are highlighted by the 'Unlocking your Place Potential' visit and surrounding research and discovery work. The areas that Experts will advise on include: planning, urban design, placemaking, landscape architecture, resilience, transport, valuation, asset management, investment, governance, data and analytics, place management and leadership.

Task Force Experts will be assigned to work with a place on the basis of their skills and expertise, in order to unpack specific issues and explore potential solutions, through one or more of:

- desk-based research
- remote consultation with relevant place leadership
- a place visit, including meeting with stakeholders
- producing a solutions report, setting out requirements and practical steps
- producing a road map for progress, signposting additional support if needed.

Experts will provide this services either in-situ, in 4 hour blocks, or remotely in 8-hour blocks. Experts may be required to provide expert guidance either independently or in a team. When working in teams, a coordinator will be appointed. The coordinator is likely to be the Expert that undertook the initial diagnostic visit.

## **'Developing a Shared Vision' Workshop**

This three-hour workshop will be led by a High Streets Task Force Expert and supported by a Facilitator. It develops the ground work for a collaborative and transformative vision for a town, city centre or high street with the local authority and stakeholders.

Facilitated workshop discussion will gathers views and ideas from local stakeholders that address:

- key challenges and achievements and what they mean for place stakeholders
- the future high street
- the need for change

Pre-event input will be provided by the Task Force, drawing on a Transforming Your High Street Report (Future High Street Fund EOI) and an 'Unlocking your Place Potential diagnostic Visit. The workshop will follow a prescribed format, with materials provided by the Task Force.

## **Place Making Programme**

There are often disparate views about why a town or city is facing challenges and this can prevent constructive engagement. In other places people have ideas but don't know how to go forward or whether the ideas are valid. There is no forum for discussion and agreement and some voices can go unheard.

This three-hour programme delivered by an Expert and a Facilitator brings diverse stakeholders together, agrees a broad understanding of a common position about the current performance of the town, and identifies priorities for action and processes for future development.

Modelled on a workshop run by the Institute of Place Management in more than 20 locations nationally, the Place Making Programme can involve elected members, council officers, business leaders, BID managers, civic leaders, young people, property owners, retailers, and other stakeholders.

## **Brokering engagement of key strategic stakeholders**

In places where local stakeholders have less experience of partnership working or are facing specific challenges and/or differences of opinion, a Mentor may be provided by the Task Force, in order to facilitate constructive discussion on specific plans and the future of the high street. This will typically be in blocks of three hours of time, in-situ, working to facilitate meeting(s) with stakeholders. A maximum of 3 mentor sessions are available per local authority.

## Working with the High Streets Task Force

### Onboarding and pay

All Experts, Mentors and Facilitators will be contracted by Manchester Metropolitan University, as the host of the Institute of Place Management – the lead Partner of the High Streets Task Force.

This contact for services will run for a period of four years (1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024)

The High Streets Task Force will allocate individuals on the register to support Local Authorities in England on a day rate basis

- The day rate for Experts will be £800.00 (+VAT if applicable, expenses will not be paid)
- The day rate for Mentors & Facilitators will be £400.00 (+VAT if applicable, expenses will not be paid)

Allocation of individuals is dependent on need of Local Authorities (assessed by High Streets Task Force). As such, we cannot guarantee number/frequency of individual allocations. Experts are not obliged to deliver either any specific work or a total number of hours.

Prior to starting work on behalf of the High Streets Task Force, Experts will be required to attend a half-day training session.

### Experts register and work allocation

Individuals appointed as a High Streets Task Force Expert, Mentor or Facilitator will be added to the Task Force Experts register, which will be administered by the Task Force project management office. (For data protection statement see the application form)

Individuals will be allocated to Local Authorities based on specialism required, location/proximity of individual to Local Authority in need of support, and availability.

The project management office will liaise with registered Experts, Mentors and Facilitators to schedule work as required. There is no obligation for experts to deliver any specific work or a total number of hours.

### Evaluation

All Experts, Mentors and Facilitators will be required to complete an evaluation and feedback form following each engagement with the High Streets Task Force, and to return this to the Task Force within the requested timeframe.



## Terms and conditions

Whenever the Institute of Place Management, as part of the Manchester Metropolitan University, engages an individual we are legally obliged to determine the employment status for tax purposes.

This requirement has always applied to individuals and also applies to individuals who offer their services through a limited company which they own and control. These companies are known as “personal service companies”.

Please note that an employment status check will be carried out before any new contract is issued.

All individuals appointed will be required to accept the employment terms of the Manchester Metropolitan University, host to the Institute of Place Management, the lead Partner of the High Streets Task Force.

All individuals appointed will be required to attend a half-day training session prior to starting work on behalf of the High Streets Task Force.

## Appendix A – Experts Charter