Future High Streets Fund - Historic High Street Review of Centres

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

June 2019
In light of the EU Referendum and the ensuing political and economic uncertainty, sentiment towards and requirements for, property across occupiers, lenders, investors and developers is likely to be affected in the short term at least. At this time organisations involved in the industry are reflecting on the potential implications of the UK leaving the EU. Evidence of the impact on rental and capital values, along with other elements affecting property appraisal is at this time, scarce and largely anecdotal. Cushman & Wakefield continue to closely monitor market developments and trends in order that we can provide clients with the most up to date advice. The views contained in this document are provided in the context of this market uncertainty and as such our estimates and opinions are susceptible to short term change. Accordingly we advise that clients have regard to this risk and seek updated advice before acting on the opinions expressed.
1.0 Introduction

1.1 This briefing concerns the call for proposals for applications for funding from Historic England as part of the Future High Streets Fund. The paper has been prepared to support the Council to determine which centre(s) a strong bid could be made to the High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).

1.2 It has been prepared by Cushman & Wakefield using publicly available data used to support the determination of which of the centres a Future High Street Bid\(^1\) and discussions with officers from within Cheshire East.

2.0 The High Street Fund

2.1 On 26th December 2018 the MHCLG issued a call for proposals from local authorities wishing to apply for funding from a new Future High Streets Fund. The £675 million fund is intended to help local areas make their high streets and town centres ‘fit for the future’ by ‘supporting places by co-funding transformative, structural changes to overcome challenges in their areas.”

2.2 The funding is to be split into a main fund and smaller funds designed to support ‘Heritage High Streets’ as identified below.

2.3 Local Authorities were invited to submit Expressions of Interest for the main fund by March 22\(^{\text{nd}}\) 2019. Expressions of Interest were subsequently submitted for funding to support the revitalisation of Crewe and Macclesfield town centres.

2.4 On 18\(^{\text{th}}\) May the £44m High Street Heritage Action Zone fund was launched, to be administered by Historic England. Expressions of Interest for this fund are required by 12\(^{\text{th}}\) July 2019. A call for applications to the smaller £15m ‘Transforming Places Through Heritage’ fund to be administered by AHF, is anticipated to be made in June. No details of the £3m National Lottery Heritage Fund component have been released to date.

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\(^1\) See Future High Street Fund Cushman & Wakefield February 2019
3.0 The Criteria

Advice on how to apply for the fund is provided in the High Street Heritage Action Zone Historic England (June 2019).

3.1 It states that, in order to be considered for funding, an Expression of Interest (EoI) application must meet the following four Essential Criteria:

- A HSHAZ must be in a Conservation Area
- A HSHAZ must be delivered through a partnership, and include the local authority as a partner (the local authority does not need to be the lead partner, but there needs to be evidence of their commitment to the initiative)
- A HSHAZ must be delivered with demonstrable support of the local community
- A HSHAZ must be capable of delivery (scheme completion) in four years (April 2020 to March 2024)

3.2 It also notes that the assessment process is competitive and it is expected that demand will exceed the available funding. Therefore the EoIs which meet the essential criteria and score highest again the evidence provided in the supporting information will be selected to develop a full application.

3.3 The EOI comprises 17 questions with requirements for evidence to be provided in terms of the following:

- The proposed area
- The proposed scheme including costs
- The need for intervention in the HSHAZ
- Partnerships which support the bid and will be involved in delivery
- How it aligns with development plan policies or other regeneration initiatives
- Potential partners contribution to the scheme and other non-financial commitments
- Engagement with community in design and deliver of the scheme
- Potential to support cultural viability (identified as very important through information discussions with Historic England)

4.0 The Centres

4.1 As with the Future High Street Fund the following centres were considered:

- Alsager
- Congleton
- Crewe
- Handforth
- Knutsford
- Macclesfield
5.0 The Criteria Reviewed

5.1 Given that the HSHAZ forms part of the Future High Street Fund it was considered important that the criteria that was used to determine which centres could make a strong case for that fund was still of relevance. These review set the context for the further review to determine which centres could make a strong case against the HSHAZ criteria namely

- In a conservation area
- Town Centre which needs reviving
- Potential partnership capable of delivering a HSHAZ
- Community support
- Conservation Area Appraisal
- Heritage assets significant and/or at risk
- Supporting by policy or regeneration initiative
- Potential projects that could be identified in the timescale (by 12 July 2019)
- Ability to identify potential sources of match funding
- Potential links to cultural programmes

6.0 The Assessment

6.1 Table 2 sets out the result for each of the centres against the criteria. For ease of reviewing the table has been colour coded.

6.2 The first test was part of the essential criteria - whether the centre had a conservation area which had significant overlap with the town centres (see Appendix 1). This ruled out the following centres from further review:

- Crewe
- Alsager
- Handforth
- Poynton

6.3 The second criteria was whether the town centre was in need of reviving (see Table 1) and the heritage assets had potential for improvements that would support the town centre. These criterion ruled the following centres out from further assessment:
The remaining three centres were then scored against the other criteria to determine which centres could make a strong case in an Expression of Interest.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The requirements to prepare a HSHAZ Expression of Interest are quite extensive, as is the commitment needed by partners to support a four year programme. No guidance is provided on whether multiple bids can be submitted within a local authority area. However after careful consideration it has been concluded that, given the timescale (submission by 12 July 2019) it would be difficult for the Council to be able to prepare more than one bid to a strong submission standard. Therefore it was decided that only one bid could be prepared.

7.2 It is clear from the review that Macclesfield performs best against the criteria.

7.3 Importantly, given the current work undertaken as part of the preparation of the Macclesfield Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) it is considered that a strong case can be made in terms of key criteria;

- **Need** - as has already been demonstrated in the Future High Street Fund Bid there is a strong need for intervention in Macclesfield High Street to overcome a range of challenges that it is suffering from. Importantly in terms of the HSHAZ the challenges include underutilised or poor quality heritage buildings and a poor environment around them

- **Opportunity** - the SRF has identified a wider range of opportunities across the town centre, a number of these relate to targeting underutilised, vacant or poor quality heritage assets, improving the public realm and creating a programme of events that will celebrate the town and its heritage and culture

- **Strong partnership** - the Council has already demonstrated its commitment to supporting the transformation of the Macclesfield through the commissioning of the SRF. Its preparation has involved engagements with local organisations businesses and residents

- **Local community support** - feedback from the consultation on the SRF identified Chestergate & the Historic Heart of Macclesfield as the priority area for regeneration in the town centre. This demonstrates community support for action to enhance the heritage assets of the town

- **Cultural potential** - informal discussion between Brendan Flanagan and Historic England has identified that the ability to invest in heritage buildings that can support cultural vitality across a wide area of a town centre will be an important factor in reviewing bids. Macclesfield enjoys a strong cultural offer which can be further enhanced through a creation of a HSHAZ

- **Evidence** - the baseline to the SRF and engagement with partners has provided a variety of information that will be able to be drawn upon to prepare the HSHAZ over the next month
- **Potential Funding** - Macclesfield is the only centre (which meets the criteria) where the Council has already identified potential funding which could be used as match funding. Potential sources of funding for which a business case is required to unlock (which a successful bid could support) include the Butter Market, Silk Heritage and public realm improvements.

7.4 It is therefore recommended that consideration is given to some of the ideas that have emerged through the SRF process to determine how they can be presented to make a strong submission for a HSHAZ.

7.5 It is also suggested that contact is made with the Town Council’s in Middlewich and Congleton to ensure that they are aware of the opportunity to bid and that Cheshire East Council would be happy to support appropriate bids, but that CEC would not be able to prepare multiple bids for HSHAZ.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Hierarchy</th>
<th>Crewe</th>
<th>Macclesfield</th>
<th>Alsager</th>
<th>Congleton</th>
<th>Handforth</th>
<th>Knutsford</th>
<th>Middlewich</th>
<th>Nantwich</th>
<th>Poynton</th>
<th>Sandbach</th>
<th>Wilmslow</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1.1, 1.2</td>
<td>49,906</td>
<td>51,300</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>26,700</td>
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<td>11,700</td>
<td>18,200</td>
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<td>98,950</td>
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<td>7,697</td>
<td>26,264</td>
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<td>15,923</td>
<td>26,564</td>
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<td>225</td>
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<td>201</td>
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<td>74.6</td>
<td>61.5</td>
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<td>23.2</td>
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<td>15.7</td>
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<td>12.6</td>
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<td>38.8</td>
<td>41,930</td>
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<td>Other Nationals</td>
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<td>not counted - see above</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Vacant floorspace (national average 9.2%) (CRS 2016)</td>
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<td>10,950</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>15,310</td>
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<td>882</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>4,663</td>
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<td>Vacant (national average 11.2%) Town Centre Vacancy Levels 2015/16 to 2017/18 (AMR 2017/18)</td>
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<td>15,310</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>4,663</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1,617</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<td>Need for Intervention*</td>
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<td>Strategy Status</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Due for completion by time of Stage 2 bid</td>
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<td>Draft Neighbourhood Plan</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>CACI</td>
<td>CACI Retail Footprint Score</td>
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<td>597</td>
<td>566</td>
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<td>166</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>187</td>
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<td>CACI Retail Footprint Catchment Population</td>
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<td>630,643</td>
<td>528,959</td>
<td>174,758</td>
<td>129,760</td>
<td>39,450</td>
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<td>119,535</td>
<td>360,368</td>
<td>324,570</td>
<td>354,522</td>
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<td>Table 2 Review of Centres for High Street Heritage Action Zone Bid</td>
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<td><strong>HERITAGE ACTION ZONES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relevance to Question in HSHAZ Guidance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Crewe</strong></td>
<td><strong>Macclesfield</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alsager</strong></td>
<td><strong>Congleton</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hendford</strong></td>
<td><strong>Knutsford</strong></td>
<td><strong>Middlewich</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nantwich</strong></td>
<td><strong>Poynton</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sandbach</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation area with significant overlaps with town centre</td>
<td>A5.1</td>
<td>Rule out of further assessment as fails essential criteria - as not in Conservation Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Centre Needs Reviewing/need for investment</td>
<td>Case for funding B3.1A</td>
<td>See above table</td>
<td>See above table</td>
<td>See above table</td>
<td>Rule out of further assessment as fails essential criteria - as not in Conservation Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage with significant opportunity likely benefits</td>
<td>A6 B3.1A B3.1B</td>
<td>Significant number of voids in town centre conservation area</td>
<td>Significant number of voids in town centre conservation area</td>
<td>Last vacancy survey identifies significant number of voids in town centre conservation area</td>
<td>Significant number of voids in town centre conservation area</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>Ruled out of further assessment as strong case cannot be made on need or opportunity for HSHAZ</td>
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<td>Potential Partnership capable of delivering an HSHAZ</td>
<td>A5.2/B3.1C Q3.6</td>
<td>Macclesfield Town Council, Silk Heritage Trust, Cinemas, Barnaby Festival, Macclesfield Library, Silk Mission, Macclesfield Culture, Heritage and Arts Forum, Treacle Market, Macclesfield Renaissance (Heritage link to Charles Roe), WEAVE, Macclesfield Civic Society, Made in Macclesfield</td>
<td>Macclesfield Town Council, Silk Heritage Trust, Congleton Museum, Congleton Library, Daneide Theatre Electric Picture House, Congleton Creative, The Old Sake Mill</td>
<td>Congleton Town Council, Congleton Museum, Congleton Library, Daneide Theatre Electric Picture House, Congleton Creative, The Old Sake Mill</td>
<td>Macclesfield Town Council, Middlewich Heritage Trust (including Murgyemoy's Brine Pump and Herbert's Field), Macclesfield Library</td>
<td>Middlewich Town Council, Middlewich Heritage Trust, including Murgemoy's Brine Pump and Herbert's Field, Macclesfield Library</td>
<td>Middlewich Town Council, Middlewich Heritage Trust, including Murgemoy's Brine Pump and Herbert's Field, Macclesfield Library</td>
<td>Ruled out of further assessment as strong case cannot be made on need or opportunity for HSHAZ</td>
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<td>Demonstrable support from the Local community</td>
<td>A5.3/B3.1EB B3.1E/Q3.18</td>
<td>Heritage raised as an area of opportunity as part of most consultation in respect of the preparation of the SRF</td>
<td>Heritage raised as an area of opportunity as part of most consultation in respect of the preparation of the SRF</td>
<td>Heritage raised as an area of opportunity as part of most consultation in respect of the preparation of the SRF</td>
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<td>Ruled out of further assessment as strong case cannot be made on need or opportunity for HSHAZ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans or similar</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Conservation Area on all risk register</td>
<td>Conservation Area on all risk register</td>
<td>Conservation Area on all risk register</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage significance/heritage at risk</td>
<td>B3.1A</td>
<td>Conservation Area not on risk register but conservation team view is that some heritage at risk</td>
<td>Conservation Area on risk register</td>
<td>Conservation Area on risk register</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HAZ compliments Development Plan Policies and/or other regeneration initiatives</td>
<td>Q3.11 B3.1B</td>
<td>Macclesfield Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework/ Macclesfield Heritage and Culture Strategy</td>
<td>No current CEC regeneration initiative although public realm improvement scheme recently completed likely benefits</td>
<td>No current CEC regeneration initiative</td>
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<td>Ability to identify potential projects</td>
<td>B3.1B/B3.1D/Q3.3/Q3.12</td>
<td>Potentially</td>
<td>Potentially</td>
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<td>Ability to identify potential sources of match funding</td>
<td>Q3.14</td>
<td>Council allocations for Burton Market/Public Realm and Silk Heritage - needs to be unlocked by business case</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>Potential Links to Cultural Programmes</td>
<td>B3.1P/Q3.17</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Macclesfield Festival, Barnaby Festival, Potato Pick, Macclesfield Beer Festival, Macclesfield Food Festival, East Cheshire Hospice Art Fair, Existing cultural assets which could be harnessed</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Jazz and Blues Festival and Food and Drink Festival</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Jazz and Blues Festival and Food and Drink Festival</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Jazz and Blues Festival and Food and Drink Festival</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Jazz and Blues Festival and Food and Drink Festival, Middlewich FAB Festival (Fish and Chips), Macclesfield Beer Festival, Classic Car and Bike Show, Cider Festival, Rose Fair and Middlewich Annual Show</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Jazz and Blues Festival and Food and Drink Festival, Middlewich FAB Festival (Fish and Chips), Macclesfield Beer Festival, Classic Car and Bike Show, Cider Festival, Rose Fair and Middlewich Annual Show</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Jazz and Blues Festival and Food and Drink Festival, Middlewich FAB Festival (Fish and Chips), Macclesfield Beer Festival, Classic Car and Bike Show, Cider Festival, Rose Fair and Middlewich Annual Show</td>
<td>Existing programme of cultural events including Jazz and Blues Festival and Food and Drink Festival, Middlewich FAB Festival (Fish and Chips), Macclesfield Beer Festival, Classic Car and Bike Show, Cider Festival, Rose Fair and Middlewich Annual Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance to Question in PSSP App Form and Sections of HSHAZ Guidance</td>
<td>Crewe</td>
<td>Macclesfield</td>
<td>Alsager</td>
<td>Congleton</td>
<td>Handforth</td>
<td>Knutsford</td>
<td>Middlewich</td>
<td>Nantwich</td>
<td>Poynton</td>
<td>Sandbach</td>
<td>Wilmslow</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Park, West Park Museum, Heritage buildings, Silk Museum, Paradise Mill, Old Sunday School (heritage centre), Christ Church, Heritage trails, Independent galleries and studios, Town Hall, Visitor Information centre and Pop-up festival and event venues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Congleton Paddling Pool, Biddulph Valley Way, several listed buildings, including timber-framed houses, Georgian Townhouses, mills, the Victorian Town Hall and three conservation areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waterways, Roman ruins, Two conservation areas and several listed buildings and designated/scheduled ancient monuments</td>
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</table>
Appendix A

Centre Plans: Town Centre Boundary, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings
Appendix B

Heritage and Cultural Organisations, Events and Assets for Short Listed Centres
Macclesfield

Dubbed a ‘cultural desert’ and the ‘least cultured’ place in the UK in 2005, Maxonians decided to take matters into their own hands and cultural organisations have blossomed ever since, now one of NESTA’s creative clusters mainly based around the gaming industry. Cheshire east Council and the MaccCHAF developed and implemented a heritage and culture strategy: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/hcstrategy-execsummary.pdf

This has facilitated and supported the development of several arts organisations and festivals and has facilitated a diverse range of organisations with strong partnerships and working relationships. The bi-annual Barnaby Festival programmes work of national importance alongside a strong participatory programme, popping up in venues across the town including churches and heritage sites. Macc Arts Space and the Print Mill provide studio spaces for local artists as well as exhibitions and workshops. Silk Heritage Trust operates the independent accredited museums with collections rooted in the history of Macclesfield, its notable residents and the silk industry. It also hosts the independent cinema, Cinemac, at the Old Sunday school in the centre of town, as well as concerts by the Northern Chamber Orchestra. Macclesfield Roenaissance runs a programme at Christchurch and also the TEDx programme in buildings of historic interest. WEAVE is a collective of those working in the creative and digital industries, which organises talks and events related to creative media. The library is a cultural hub with regular events and exhibitions, and staff trained as digital arts ambassadors. Just outside of the town centre, the UNESCO World Heritage Site Jodrell Bank has a visitor centre as well as hosting the science-meets-art BlueDot Festival. The monthly artisan Treacle Market (linked to a notorious incident in the town’s history) brings crafters, makers and artists into the town centre to sell their products and run public workshops.

Organisations
- Silk Heritage Trust (including Old Sunday School, Silk Museum, Paradise Mill, West Park)
- Cinemac
- Barnaby Festival
- Macc Arts Space
- Print Mill
- Macclesfield Library
- Macclesfield Culture, Heritage and Arts Forum - MaccCHAF
- Macclesfield Town Council
- Treacle Market
- Macclesfield Roenaissance (Heritage link to Charles Roe)
- WEAVE

Events:
- Macclesfield Festival
- Barnaby Festival
- Potato Riot
- Macclesfield Beer Festival
- Macclesfield Food Festival
- East Cheshire Hospice art fair

Outside the town centre:

- Rewind Festival
- Classic Ibiza
- Bluedot

Assets

- West Park
- West Park museum
- Heritage buildings
- Silk museum
- Paradise Mill
- Old Sunday School (heritage centre)
- Christ Church
- Heritage trails
- Independent galleries and studios
- Town hall
- Visitor Information centre
- Pop-up festival and event venues

Outside of the town centre:

- Jodrell Bank (including BlueDot Festival)
- Hare Hill National Trust
- Tegg’s Nose and Macclesfield Forest
- Capelsthorne Hall
- Gawsworth Hall
- Tatton Park
Congleton (known as ‘Beartown’)

Congleton take pride in its identity as ‘Beartown’. The independent, accredited museum specialises in Roman hoards, including two of national significance. They also have an active ‘talks and walks’ programme. Electric Picture House is an artist collective which resides in an old mill with studio, exhibition and performance space. They are a host venue for the Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation Cheshire Rural Touring Arts. Daneside Theatre has a full programme of performances from touring artists, local players and dance schools, as well as film screenings. The Jazz and Blues Festival takes over 18 venues within the town centre each August Bank Holiday, with international performers. Outside of the town centre itself lies a strong infrastructure of arts and cultural organisations, including National Trust and independent cultural organisations.

Organisations

- Congleton Museum
- Congleton Library
- Daneside Theatre
- Electric Picture House
- Congleton Creative (see community partnership website)
- The Old Saw Mill (see community partnership website)
- Congleton Town Council
  Outside of Congleton town centre:
  - Wild Rumpus
  - Clonter Opera

Events

- Jazz and Blues Festival
- Food and Drink Festival

Assets

- Congleton Park (of significant historic and biological importance)
- Congleton Paddling Pool
- Biddulph Valley Way
- Several listed buildings, including timber-framed houses, Georgian Townhouses, mills, the Victorian Town Hall, and three conservation areas
- Visitor information centre

Outside of the town:

- Astbury Mere Country Park
- Canals
- Little Moreton Hall (National Trust)
- Mow Cop
Middlewich

Middlewich is a town which truly celebrates its rich heritage, including Roman, Norman, Military, Canals and the Salt Industry. MHT has had sustained success with external funders to restore Murgatroyd’s Brine Pumps and open them to visitors, restore the Norman St Michaels and All Angels Church, as well as develop several self-guided historic trails around the town centre. A lively events programme runs throughout the year and is also centred on heritage, including the sporadic Roman Festival, Civil War re-enactments and well-attended annual FAB Festival. The waterways bring a high number of visitors to the town.

Organisations

- Middlewich Heritage Trust (including Murgatroyd’s Brine Pump and Harbutt’s Field)
- Middlewich Library
- Middlewich Town Council

Events

- Middlewich FAB Festival (Folk and Boat)
- Mexon Market
- Beer Festival
- Classic Car and Bike Show
- Cider Festival
- Rose Fete
- Middlewich Annual Show

Assets

- Waterways
- Roman ruins
- Two conservation areas and several listed buildings and designated/scheduled ancient monuments in the town centre