

North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone

Historic High Street - Conservation Area Grant Scheme (PSiCA)

Delivery Plan

**April 2019 – April
2022**



Heritage Action Zones
Historic England

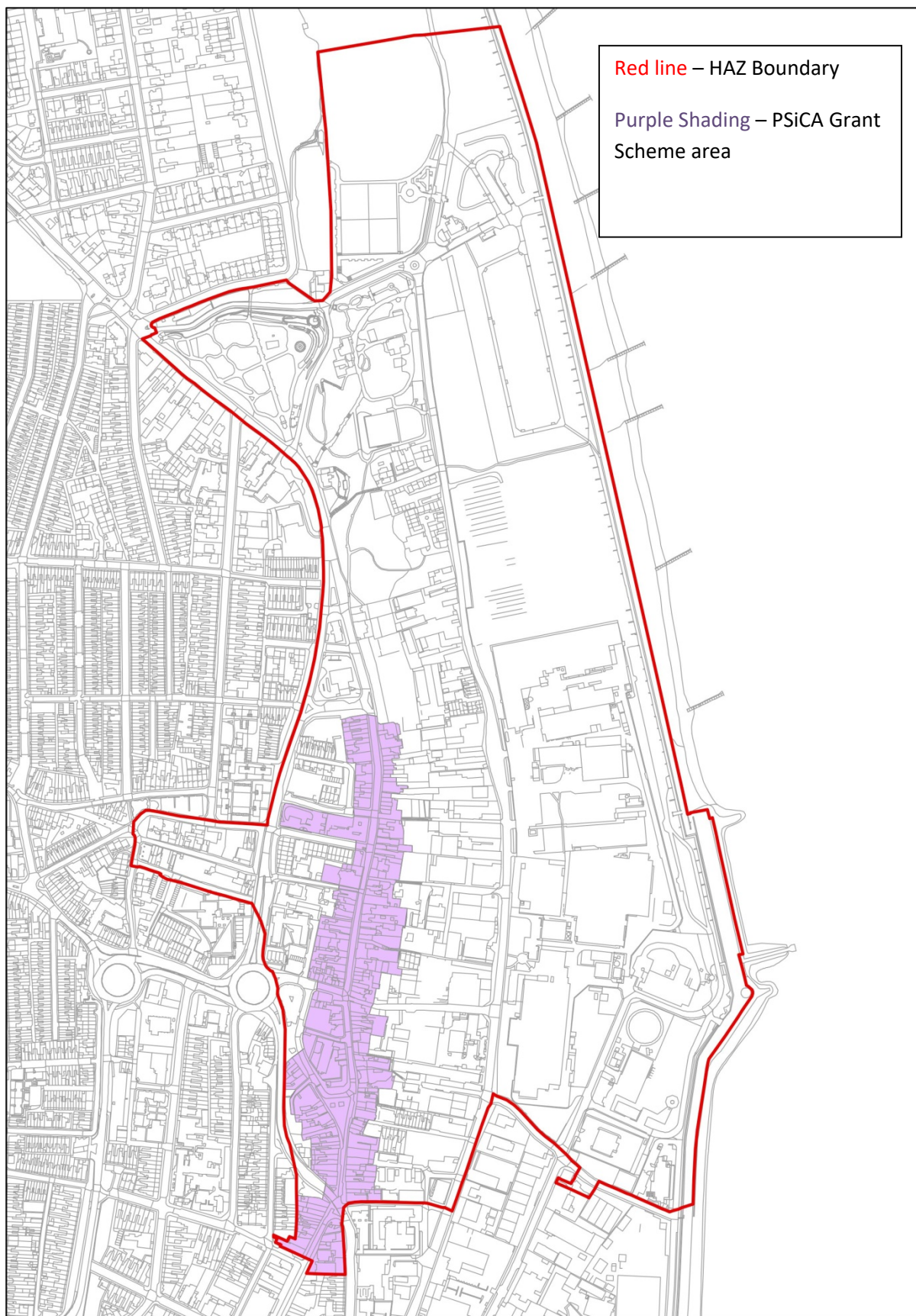


East Suffolk Building
Preservation Trust

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Map of the HAZ Boundary and the PSiCA Conservation Grant Scheme Area



1.0 PSiCA Grant Scheme Vision and its role in the HAZ

The North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is a 5 year programme using heritage assets to regenerate the area. It is a partnership scheme between Historic England, East Suffolk Council, Lowestoft Town Council and the East Suffolk Buildings Preservation Trust. The programme has a range of projects that include capital works to improve the area and projects that involve the community in their local heritage to raise awareness of the value of the heritage to the environment in which they live. Full details of the programme are available in the “North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone Delivery Plan 2018”.

1.1 Project Need

The Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) focuses on the North Lowestoft Conservation Area with its medieval High Street, Scores (steep narrow paths in the cliff), historic smokehouses and net stores, and once fine Victorian parks. It also includes areas closely bordering the conservation area; including those earmarked for new residential development to the west, and the industrial setting of the Power Park and the open space of the Ness Park on the lower levels to the east, which once accommodated Britain’s most easterly community in the area known as the Beach Village.

This part of Lowestoft was originally the main medieval settlement, grown around a thriving fishing industry, including merchants’ housing and commercial premises on the cliff top, and workers cottages and net stores below. However, over time industry declined, the Beach Village was repeatedly flooded, and the economic heart of Lowestoft moved southwards. This has led to the High Street now being on the periphery of the town centre, and the area has become in need of a new vision and regeneration.

In more recent years the decline has been exacerbated by the economic down turn and national changes in retail, which have had a negative impact on the whole town centre. In particular they have left the historic High Street with significantly reduced footfall and a lack of purpose. This coupled with high numbers of vacant premises and heritage assets at risk, poor quality alterations to buildings, inappropriate modern development, and lack of investment in public areas, has led to the North Lowestoft Conservation Area being included on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register.

The creation of the Heritage Action Zone is therefore timely. The scheme will help revive the town’s historic heart by maximising the potential of historic assets and kick start regeneration. It will bring buildings back into use as housing or retail spaces, and enhance the quality and connections of the historic streets and public spaces. It will improve the overall natural, historic and built environmental quality, making the area more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors.

1.2 PSiCA Conservation Grant Scheme

The Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA) grant scheme focuses upon the Historic High Street of north Lowestoft, which is the main commercial area of the HAZ. The aim is to repair and refurbish historic buildings along the High Street, which are suffering from:

- Physical degradation such as loss of architectural features, poor quality shop fronts and unsympathetic repairs or alterations;
- The effects of economic or social deprivation characterised by vacant or neglected properties and high turnover of small businesses;
- Inappropriate, unauthorised use of ground floor commercial properties causing “dead” shopping frontages;

Regeneration will be achieved by directing grant funds into the repair or renewal of the areas’ physical fabric, focusing on the issues described above, in order to boost the local economy and to engender civic pride.

The scheme will aim to attract additional funds from private and public sources to bring wider improvements to the areas. This will also act as a catalyst to develop and integrate further initiatives to meet the needs and aspirations of the local communities.

1.3 The scheme will fund:

Building repairs: repairs to the structure and external fabric of buildings contributing to the historic interest of the area, such as reroofing, window repairs, pointing or structural stabilisation.

Reinstatement of architectural features: the repair and/or authentic reinstatement of decorative features (including shop fronts and signage) that have been lost from historic buildings, where this will benefit the appearance of the conservation area.

1.4 Exclusions

PSiCA conservation grant schemes **cannot** fund the following:

- demolitions;
- conversion and alterations;
- modernisation;
- building services (except in exceptional circumstances where the state of repair of current building services threaten the historic significance of a building);
- substitute materials;
- conjectural reinstatement;
- maintenance and minor repairs;
- work eligible under other Historic England grant schemes;
- existing local authority staffing costs and any staffing or running costs already in place, for example, legal or other support costs;
- works started without prior consent and before a written offer of grant has been made by the local planning authority and accepted by the individual building owner.

1.5 Allocation of funds: Priority Buildings

Within the HAZ programme there is a work package that will focus on a strategy and action plan for Buildings At Risk. This will focus upon key Buildings At Risk within the area that require a significant amount of investment or present complex issues (See HAZ Delivery Plan work package 7 BAR Action Plan). The PSiCA conservation grant scheme will prioritise those buildings that can be repaired or restored within the limits of the PSiCA grant amounts available, these buildings alongside the criteria listed in 4.0 below will be prioritised, particularly in the event where the grant scheme is over-subscribed. The table below identifies these buildings:

Property Number/Name	Listed/grade	Comments and Issues to be addressed
No 27 Royal Falcon Hotel	Grade II	Grade II listed but not on HAZ BAR list as not "AT RISK". Improvement to frontage and brickwork under PSiCA Conservation Grant
No 55	Grade II	Grade II listed but not on HAZ BAR list as not "AT RISK". Improvements to Windows under PSiCA Conservation Grant
No 56/57	Not Listed	Not listed but next door to no, 55 Grade II listed. Frontage - eligible work under PSiCA Conservation Grant would need to be assessed.
No 59 (Former Pharmacy)	Locally listed currently under review for national listing	In fair to good condition as this property has recently been purchased and owners have already started to restore the building, having repaired/replaced original windows. PSiCA Grant Scheme for future works including redecoration of shop frontage
No 64/66	Not Listed	Improvements to frontage (64), reinstatement of shop frontage (66)
No 70/71	Locally listed	Locally listed but not on HAZ BAR list as assessed as "fair". Non original shop fronts, panels and metal grilles in situ. PSiCA Conservation grant for improvements to shop frontage.
No 72	Locally listed	Locally listed but not on HAZ BAR list. Non original shop front and, UPVC windows on upper floors PSiCA Conservation Grant scheme could for shop frontage and window replacement.
No 73 (Kebab shop)	Locally listed	Locally listed PSiCA Conservation Grant scheme for shop frontage as in poor condition.
No.88 Royston's Curios 'Former Jolly Maltster's Public House' High Street (adjacent to Maltsters Score)	Proposed Local List	Significant as located on Triangle Market on High Street and in very poor condition. In need of restoration, PSiCA Conservation Grant for shop frontage, eligibility for other works would need to be assessed.
No 91 (Betfred)	Not listed	Not listed but being considered. Poor quality modern signage. Crack on façade – improvements to signage could make a significant positive impact to the High Street.
No 99 High Street	Not listed	Shop frontage reinstatement
Globe (Former PH) 131 High Street	Locally listed	Locally listed. Currently cake decoration shop stained windows potentially at risk.

No 137/138	Not listed	Not listed but in row, next door to locally listed 139. PSiCA Conservation Grant for reinstatement of original features.
No 139 High Street	Locally Listed	PSiCA Conservation Grant improvements to frontage and window repair/replacement.
No 145 High Street	Not Listed	Reinstatement of shop frontage
No 159 Bayfield's Hotel	Proposed Local List	Proposed local list as a statement building on High Street. Eligible work under PSiCA Conservation Grant would need to be assessed, including repairs to brickwork.

2.0 Planning Policies to Support the PSiCA Scheme

East Suffolk Council will ensure investment through grant aid in the PSiCA area is sustainable through the planning powers that it has available to it. The Waveney Local Development Plan (2014 to 2036) sets out the planning policies used to determine planning applications. This will be used within the scheme area, supporting the aims of the HAZ programme. East Suffolk Council increase control with the North Lowestoft Conservation Area Appraisal (reviewed and due for adoption 2019) and also through the application of an **Article 4(2) direction**. This provides further restrictions on permitted development rights to residential properties. There are a range of supplementary planning documents that support the local plan and would apply to the PSiCA grant scheme area, **see Appendix I**, for further details.

Otherwise within the HAZ programme there is additional work planned to support planning policies within the HAZ areas. This includes a project to create **two new Design Guides**. One will be a Design Guide that focuses upon new development with the HAZ. The second Design Guide will focus upon the shop frontages in the HAZ and uses the extensive research carried out in the early stages of the HAZ programme, on shop frontages (See HAZ Delivery Plan Work Package 5 Design Guides).

The HAZ programme also includes a project to review the current **strategy on Buildings At Risk** in the HAZ area. This work will review current process and procedures that incentivise or enforce action on Buildings At Risk, and create a new strategy and Action Plan to improve how this is carried out.

An existing internal process is in operation currently that improves policies that support the HAZ. This process involves the HAZ Programme Manager and Conservation Officer working closely with the Local Planning Policy Area Officer. They are consulted upon all related planning related applications within the HAZ area including the High Street (the PSiCA scheme area). This includes planning, advertisement, conservation area and listed building consent applications.

3.0 Supporting Initiatives : Enforcement, Partnership working and Involvement of Stakeholders

The role of enforcement, partnership working and stakeholder engagement is vital to ensuring the success of the PSiCA grant scheme.

3.1 Planning Enforcement

The Council understands that effective planning enforcement within the scheme areas will be key to its success. A process for enforcement exists as part of the day to day duties of the planning team. This will be reviewed as part of the HAZ Programme's project on Buildings At Risk Strategy and Action Plan. There will be a number of proactive and reactive measures that will be taken during the scheme's duration by the council's planning enforcement team. They are as follows:

- i. Unauthorised Changes of Use: Where a commercial property changes (without planning permission) to a use that would harm the economic vitality of the PSiCA area, the original or complementary use will be imposed by the Council; and by formal enforcement action if necessary.
- ii. Unauthorised alterations: The Council has a full photographic record of the street frontages within the area. This will allow council officers to track any unauthorised and harmful alterations to facades (e.g. inappropriate new shop fronts, uPVC windows, solid shop front shutters). Photographic evidence and regular monitoring will allow these alterations to be quickly dealt with and rectified.
- iii. Dilapidated Properties: Where rundown properties in the grant area are causing harm to visual amenity, the Council will take the appropriate enforcement action in order to bring the property up to an acceptable standard of appearance and/or repair.

3.2 Local Partnership Working and Stakeholder Involvement

The PSiCA grant scheme is set within the North Lowestoft HAZ Programme. The HAZ is a 5 year funded programme and has a governance structure that includes a Partnership Board and Delivery Team and has a strong focus on community engagement, working in partnership with the community to regenerate the area. The HAZ links into other projects working in the area such as the "Making Waves Together", HLF Project and the Big Lottery, "Community Enablers project". The HAZ partnership consists of East Suffolk Council, Lowestoft Town Council, East Suffolk Buildings Preservation Trust and Historic England. The HAZ partnership works with key stakeholders in the area such as Lowestoft Vision (Business Improvement District), Lowestoft Rising (strategic community partnership) and Access Community Trust (main community charity) to ensure that all target groups within the community are involved. The PSiCA scheme will report to the HAZ Partnership Board.

The HAZ programme manager will work with the local community including local businesses and residents to help them address the main issues of concern for them in the scheme areas, acting as a conduit to other council departments, councillors or other public bodies to ensure that their issues are recognised and steps are taken to address them.

3.3 Housing Grant Schemes

The East Suffolk Council Housing Team are a key partner of the Heritage Action Zone as it aims to improve housing, including creating new housing and bringing buildings back into use for housing where appropriate. Alongside the PSiCA conservation grant scheme, the East Suffolk Council Housing Team is managing a "**Housing Renovation Grants**" Scheme. This is another source of funding for properties that can be applied for in the HAZ area. This scheme provides discretionary grants for the repair, adaptation or improvement of private homes. Grants are means tested and are for the cost of eligible works to bring homes up to the decent homes standard. There will be the opportunity to

work with housing colleagues to promote both of the grant schemes and support the schemes ensuring that opportunities are maximised and that both schemes run efficiently. The Housing Renovation Grant will also be able to work alongside the PSiCA Conservation Grant Scheme. For example, in a property with heritage value, where windows are being replaced as part of the Housing Renovation Grant scheme which would pay for a basic UPVC frame, the PSiCA Grant Scheme can provide the balance to enable a window to be put back to the original quality wooden frame.

4.0 Scheme Criteria

Within the HAZ area an appraisal of Buildings At Risk has been carried out. There are some significant buildings such as the Town Hall and the Crown Hotel, the enhancement of which are too large for the money available within this PSiCA conservation grant scheme. These Buildings At Risk will **NOT** be dealt with under this scheme. They are however being looked at under the Buildings At Risk Action Plan (HAZ Delivery Plan Work Package 7). This PSiCA grant scheme will proactively focus upon those smaller priority properties that have been identified in the process of the HAZ (see 1.3 above). Priority will be given to listed buildings in poor condition, following this it will include buildings with historic/architectural interest. Alongside this all PSiCA grant applications will be considered on the following criteria:

- i. Architectural quality or historical importance of the building: Priority would be given where project proposals aim to restore and / or repair the special qualities of an historic building, particularly those that are listed and those frontages on the High Street. Modern buildings will not be eligible. Many of the shops in the scheme area are suffering from cheap, low quality modern frontages and signage. Proposals to replace these with a reinstated traditional shop front will be encouraged where appropriate. Where architectural features are to be reinstated, historic photographs and research (HE Research Report and other sources where necessary) will be used to ensure authentic reproduction.
- ii. Buildings At Risk: Strong consideration will be given to those historic properties which are physically decaying, appear neglected or face potential demolition or harmful alteration.
- iii. Existing or proposed use for the property: Grant monies will not be offered for commercial properties with a proposed use which would be harmful to the existing local economy or would harm the vitality or vibrancy of the street scene. This policy will apply even if the existing commercial unit is currently vacant.
- iv. Job creation: Where the grant will help create or bolster a business located at the property which would result in the creation of new local employment opportunities.
- v. Willingness of property owner: Grant offers will only be made if it is felt that the property owners are keen to contribute their partnership funding to the project and wish to commence the grant aided works quickly.
- vi. Cluster projects: Where adjoining property owners wish to work in partnership, priority funding will be given to a group of 2, 3 or 4 properties in a terrace which will bring simultaneous and cohesive visual improvements to the historic streetscape.
- vii. Residential units: Grant aid would be considered where this would act as leverage to encourage or intensify residential uses above shops.

- viii. Internal repairs are only eligible where they are directly related to external repairs or are essential to the preservation of the building, for example, the eradication of dry rot. In exceptional circumstances, redecoration can be included if it is considered necessary as a result of an eligible repair. **Extensions, alterations, face-lifts and day to day maintenance are not eligible. Eligible and non-eligible work may well form part of the same programme, but the costs should always be kept separate.**

5.0 Delivering the PSICA Conservation Grant Scheme

The PSiCA Scheme will be managed by the HAZ Programme Manager with support from the Senior Conservation and Design Officer and the Local Area Planning and Enforcement Officer from East Suffolk Council. They will be key to delivery of the scheme, proactively contacting property owners and providing technical advice and support. The grant administration process and monitoring will be managed by the East Suffolk Council Funding Team. The HAZ Partnership Board will oversee and review the grant scheme throughout the three year period.

The council will promote and market the PSICA scheme, which will include both postal leafleting and pro-actively contacting property owners in the PSICA area. Awareness of a grant scheme has been raised through the work done to date in the HAZ, this should help uptake of the scheme. The grant money available will be split over the three years, as follows:

Year	Historic England	East Suffolk Council	Total
Year 1 (April 2019 to March 2020)	60 000	30 000	£90 000
Year 2 (April 2020 to March 2021)	45 000	60 000	£105 000
Year 3 (April 2021 to March 2022)	45 000	60 000	£105 000
		Total	£300 000

5.1 Grant Intervention rate

Grant amounts – Grants will be set at a minimum of £500 per application. Grants at a maximum of £50 000 will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Grants for repair works the intervention rate will normally be set at 65%.

Grants for reinstatement of lost architectural detail will normally be at a level of higher rate 80%.

The HAZ Partnership Board will periodically review the scheme including annual budget amounts and grant intervention rates.

5.2 Use of architect

For those more complex projects and for repair works costing £20,000 or more in total, an accredited conservation architect will be required. As part of the scheme an accredited conservation architect will be contracted by the Council, to support the project delivery team working on the scheme. The architect will be retained for “up to 2 days per month”. The fee for the work would be paid directly through the grant scheme by the Council, with Historic England providing the 50% balance on receipt of quarterly returns.

5.3 Use of Contractors

Contractors used in repair or restoration work must be able to prove that they can work to the appropriate quality and have the appropriate experience and expertise. This will be set out in the terms and conditions provided in the grant offer letter.

5.4 Process and Administration

Please see Appendix II, for a diagram of the grant process. Appendix III provides the written internal procedure of the grant process, which includes the detail as to how the grant management controls will operate to ensure a high standard of work is delivered.

5.5 Reporting

Reporting will be carried out according to Historic England PSiCA grant scheme terms and conditions. This includes quarterly reporting to Historic England with regards to offers made and claims requested; economic evaluation per project; annual review to Historic England to consider progress of the scheme and agree any changes required. There will be a final evaluation at the end of the scheme in 2022. Further reporting on the scheme will take place as part of the Heritage Action Programme monitoring. There is an annual review of baseline data in the HAZ for reporting on changes in the area, as well as a final evaluation of the HAZ at the end of the programme in 2023.

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

The PSiCA grant scheme will be monitored as per the reporting requirements above, as well as having a final evaluation at the end of the scheme in March 2022. The HAZ programme will continue to evaluate impacts within the area until the end of the HAZ programme in March 2023. Monitoring and measurement of the scheme will be carried out by officers working on the HAZ programme and within the Council’s Conservation Team, supported by the Funding Team. A number of tools, indicators and management methods will be used:

- Comprehensive “before” and “after” photographs of all PSiCA funded projects.
- Survey inspection, as part of the HAZ, of PSiCA areas to track and monitor changes to buildings and spaces, authorised and unauthorised; including changes of use.
- Regular meetings through HAZ Partnership Board, HAZ Delivery Team and contact with local stakeholder groups to review PSiCA scheme progress and agree future direction.
- Monthly meetings with Council’s Funding Team to track annual spend profile targets.
- Formal annual review with Historic England to consider progress of the scheme and agree any changes needed to grant rates, target buildings or other projects
- Production of formal reports to the HAZ Programme Board to update HAZ Partners and to the Council’s Strategic Planning Committee to update councillors on PSiCA scheme progress.

- Regular target date setting with grant applicants and architects to ensure projects are completed on time.
- Monitoring of qualitative and quantitative benefits, including recording of quantitative outputs and questionnaire/informal interviews with each grant applicant on completion of works for qualitative measurement.

6.1 Benefits of the scheme

The PSICA scheme will bring both quantitative and qualitative benefits to the areas.

Quantitative:

- Creation of new jobs in formally vacant retail units.
- Jobs secured in existing retail units as a result of frontage improvements.
- Historic buildings repaired.
- Homes above retail units improved as a result of façade, roof and window repairs.
- Leverage of private investment into historic building repairs.
- Creation of temporary construction jobs to carry out the works.

Qualitative:

- Raised local awareness of the importance of historic building conservation, engendering a sense of custodianship and pride for their historic area.
- Increased community integration through involvement of local stakeholder groups in the grant scheme
- Boosted local business and community confidence as a result of the physical, visual improvements to buildings and spaces.

Appendix I – Information on supplementary planning guidance that supports the aims of the PSiCA Scheme.

The Council has a number of supplementary publications which underpin planning policies and the aims of the PSiCA scheme. These are as follows:

SHOPFRONTS

District Guidance (East Suffolk)

East Suffolk currently has three documents which have information which relate directly to shop fronts.

Waveney have general guidance on shop fronts within the adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) **Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas**. Shop fronts are addressed in **Section 10**.

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Waveney-Local-Plan/Supplementary-Planning-Documents/Historic-Buildings-and-Conservation-Areas/01-Adopted-Built-Heritage-and-Design-SPD-.pdf>

Suffolk Coastal has stand-alone design guidance on **Shop fronts - SPG 14**. This goes into more detail than section 10 of WDC's Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas document.

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/Supplementary-Planning-Guidance/SPG14-Shopfronts-Signs-and-Advertisements.pdf>

As a quick reference guide to SPG 14 there is also a simplified general **Shop fronts Leaflet** produced for use by the general public;

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/Supplementary-Planning-Guidance/SPG14-Shopfronts-Advisory-Leaflet.pdf>

National Guidance - Historic England's information/guidance on shops;

There are a number of HE documents which contain specific information on shop fronts which feeds into local shop front guidance;

DESIGN GUIDANCE - FOR DEVELOPMENT SITES WITHIN THE HAZ

District Guidance - Waveney

Waveney have the following documents which relate to development across the district in connection with Affordable Housing and Sustainable design;

Affordable Housing

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Waveney-Local-Plan/Supplementary-Planning-Documents/Affordable-Housing/01-Adopted-Affordable-Housing-SPD.pdf>

Sustainable design

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Waveney-Local-Plan/Supplementary-Planning-Documents/Renewable-and-Sustainable/Adopted-Renewable-Energy-and-Sustainable-Construction-SPD.pdf#>

District Guidance - Suffolk Coastal

The Location and design of small residential development SPG 7

This guidance is for small developments in predominately in more rural settlements.

[SPG 7 - The location and design of small residential development](#)

County Wide Design Guidance

Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas

The [Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas](#) was adopted as supplementary planning guidance by all the Suffolk local planning authorities in 1993 and was revised in 2000 to acknowledge changes in planning policy guidance. This document is currently being updated with guidance “product” planned to be on line in early **May 2019**. This revised document is likely to be a valuable underpinning resource in producing the specific design guidance for the HAZ area.

The Suffolk Manual

The [Suffolk Manual](#) was produced jointly by the Suffolk local authorities and is a good practice guide for highway works and other public spaces in sensitive areas. This comprises of four sections published in 2000;

[Suffolk Conservation Manual](#)

[The Suffolk Surface Dressing Manual](#)

[The Suffolk Materials Manual](#)

[Suffolk Countryside Manual](#)

Suffolk Advisory Parking Standards

In November 2014 Suffolk County Council adopted the Suffolk Guidance for Parking which sets out the necessary provision for developments, this was revised in 2015.

['Suffolk Guidance for Parking'](#)

National Guidance

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government provides advice on the key points to take into account on design via the following web link;

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design>