



Developing ideas for St Ives

2/9/19

Metro — Dynamics

Key aims of today's session

- Agree a shared view of the strengths and challenges facing the town
- Discuss emerging ideas and develop new ones – being **ambitious** and **creative**.
- Get contacts for those who can help us take this further.

Process and Progress

Completed:

- Data analysis across the towns
- First engagements with town stakeholders
- Development of initial ideas
- Sessions with HDC and Combined Authority officers

Ongoing:

- Further engagement with stakeholders, especially business
- Refinement of ideas, and testing with town teams

Still to come:

- Production of reports to Combined Authority

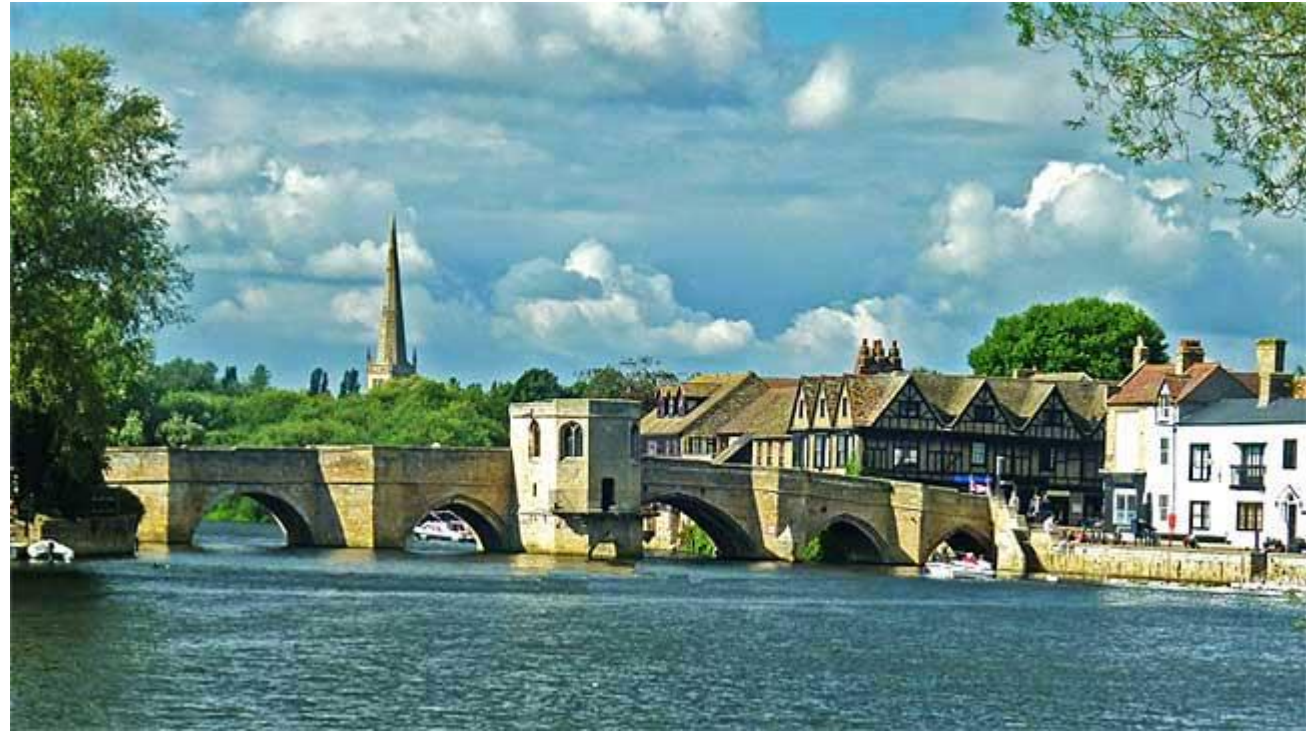


Portrait of the town

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A town defined by the river

- The iconic view of the town – St Ives bridge etc.
- Helps support more of a vibrant night time economy, and a pleasant environment for residents and tourists.
- River also at the centre of strong leisure offer in St Ives
- But the river also creates an odd development pattern – with a centre which isn't in the centre at all
- And the challenge of crossing the river restricts development. This leads to climbing house prices and inhibits growth.

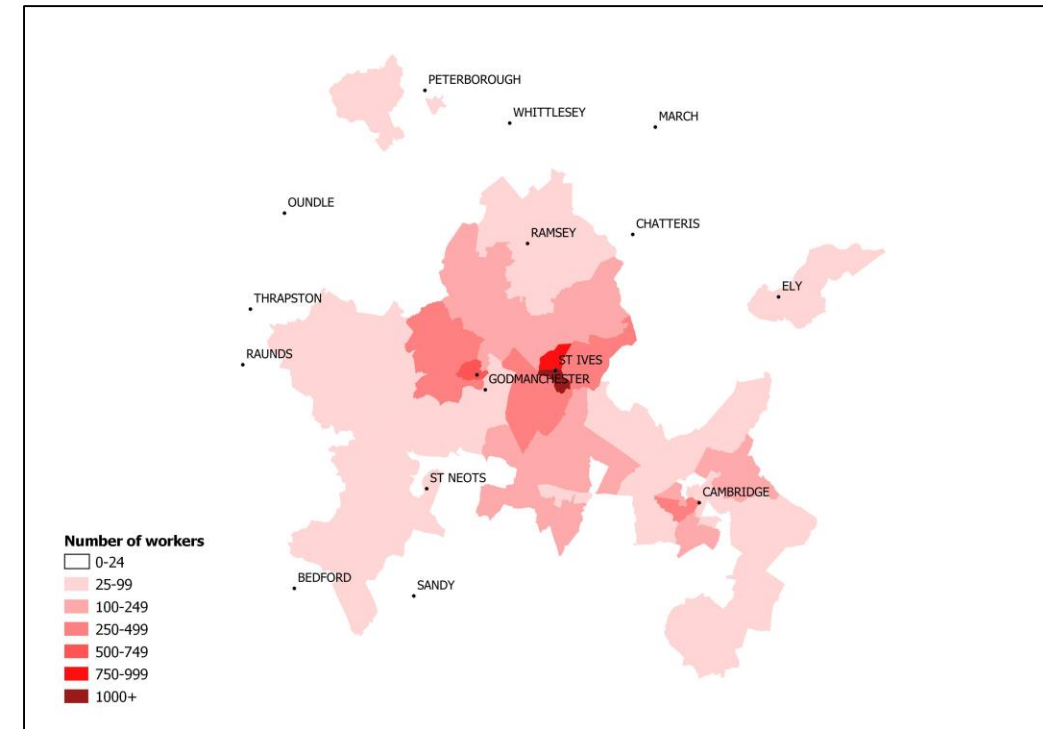


Key opportunities to benefit from Cambridge – but underleveraged

- Generally fairly prosperous – benefitting from being part of wider Cambridge ecosystem
- Co-working space (the Desk Club). Huntingdonshire's digital offer could be centred around St Ives (currently, not well enough recognised for the digital sector).
- Lack of cycle infrastructure to guided busway
- Development opportunity here... but A1096 is the barrier



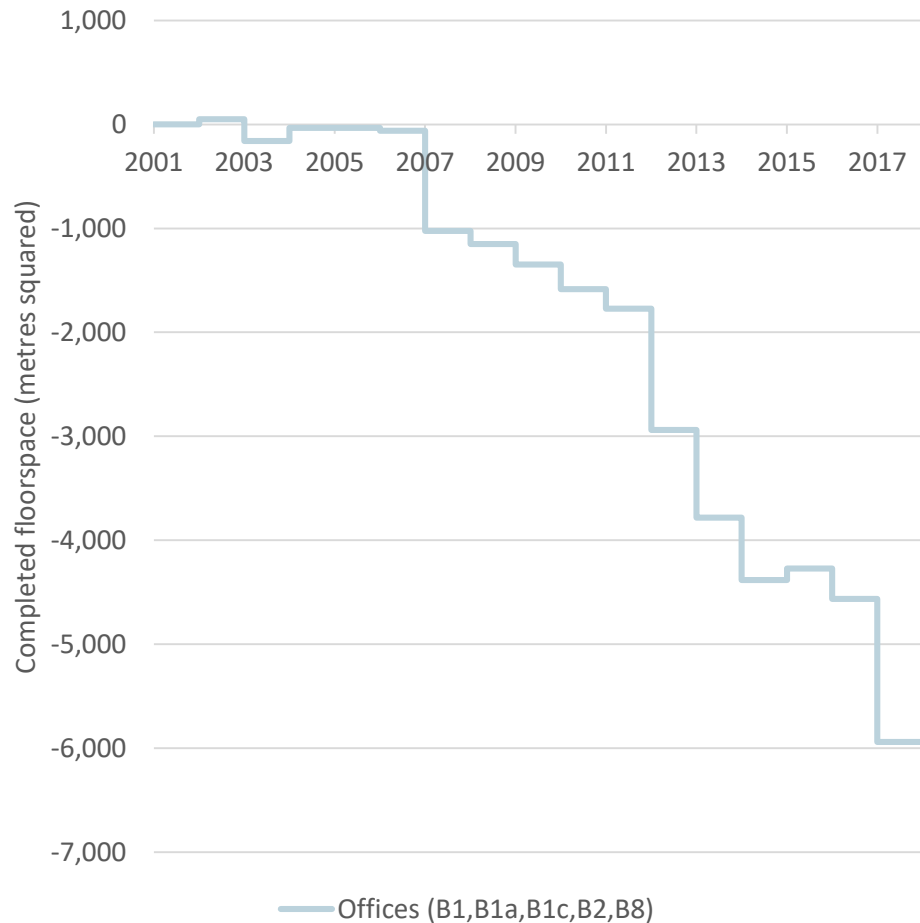
Out commuters from St Ives (2011)



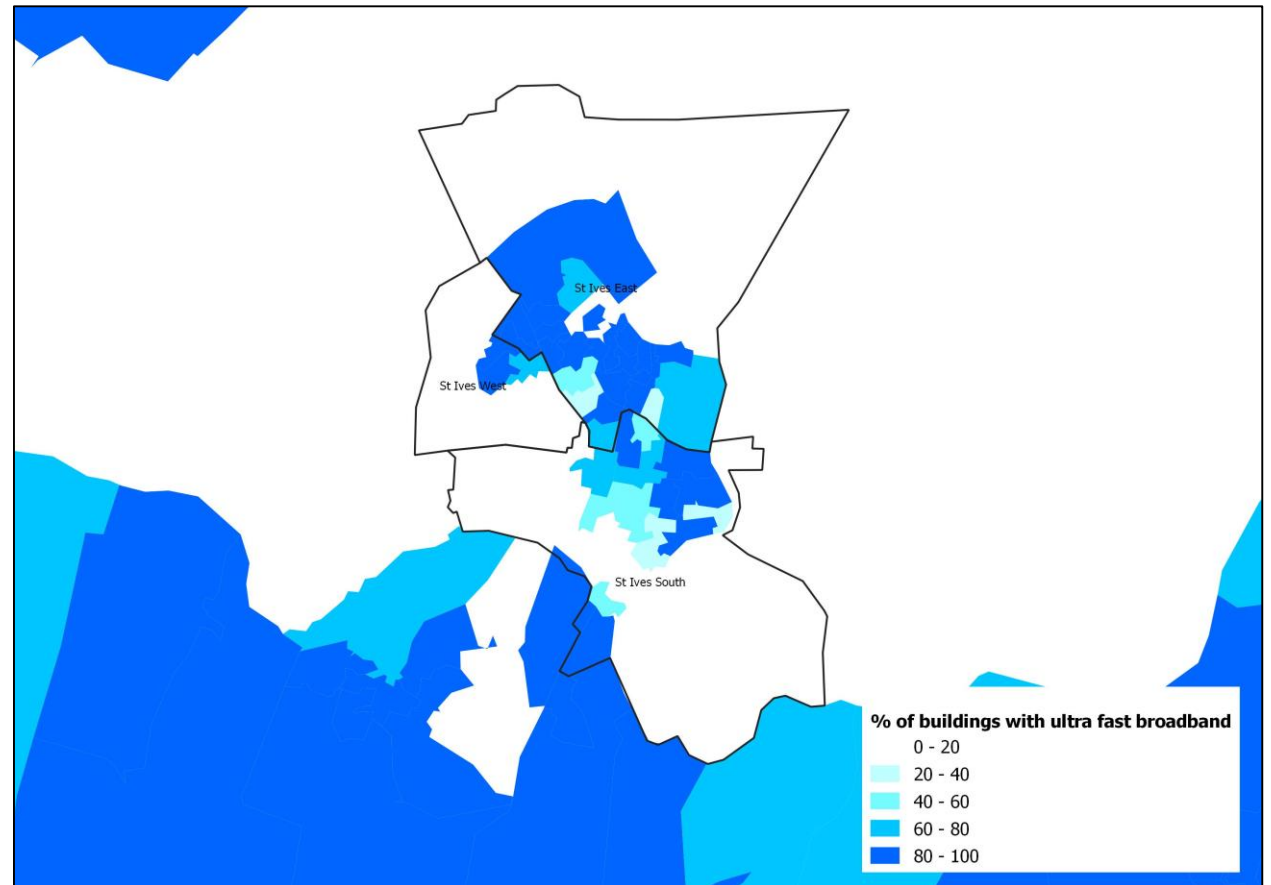
Source: Metro Dynamics Analysis of Census Data

Business conditions variable

Declining office space...



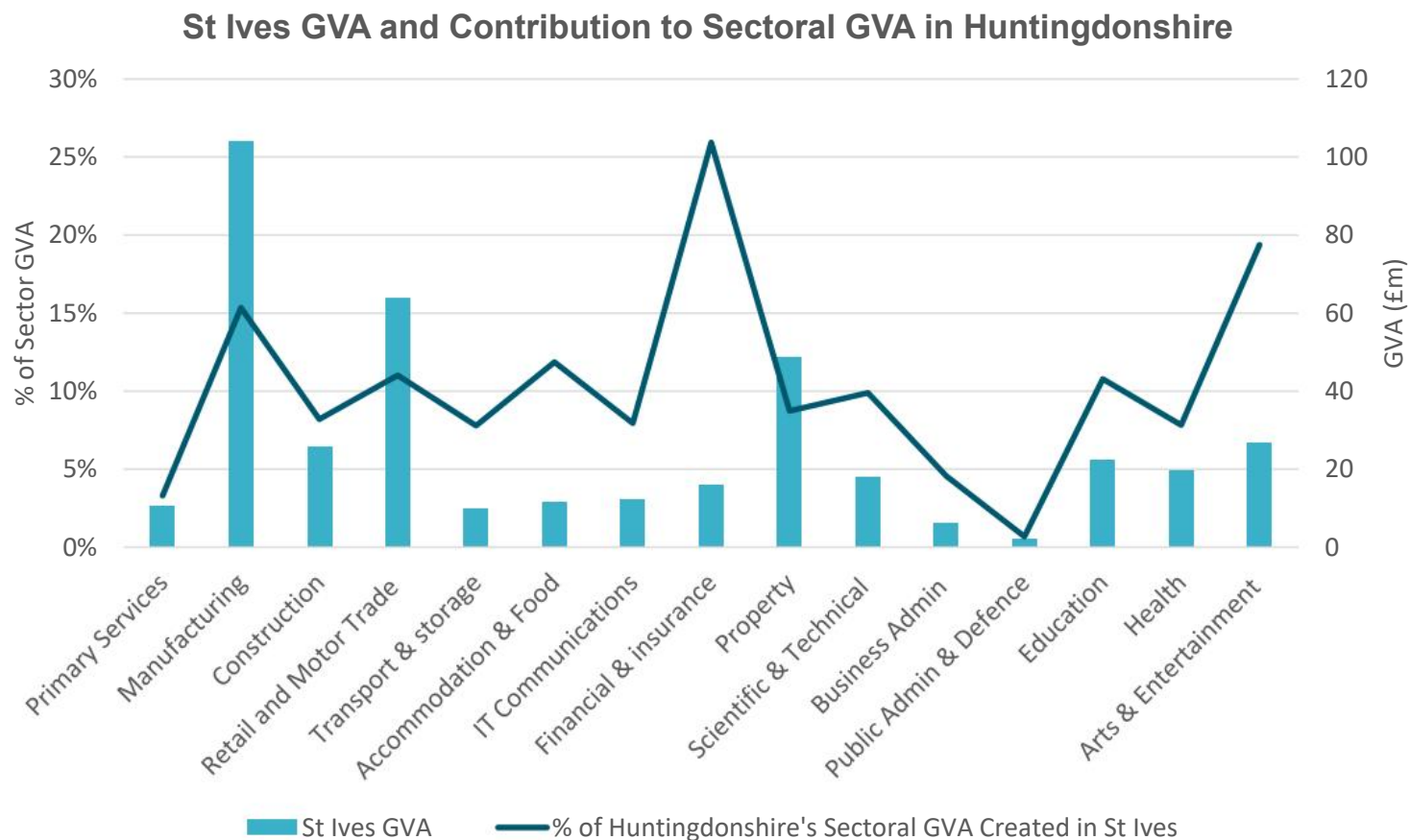
... but some good provision of ultra fast broadband in the centre



Source: Metro Dynamics analysis of Cambridgeshire County Council change of use data

Source: Metro Dynamics analysis of Ofcom Connected Nations 2018 report

Manufacturing the largest sector



- Manufacturing and retail generate most GVA. Top five subsector specialisms are all within manufacturing (including paper, wood, computer products)
- Over a quarter of Huntingdonshire's income from Financial and Insurance comes from St Ives

Source: Metro Dynamics shift-share analysis, based on ONS GVA figures and Business Register and Employment Survey

An attractive town centre with room for improvement

- Market is the most popular of the market towns, and the high street boasts a bigger offer. Night-time economy is also in a better place.
- Footfall has generally grown over the last ten years.
- But a sense that St Ives “**lacks a proper civic central space**”. One resident noted that “**the high street seems to be missing something**” and many comment on there being too many lower value shops.
- Parking is also fairly chaotic in places, creating a cluttered feel

St Ives growth in weekly footfall (2006-2015)



Source: Metro Dynamics analysis of HDC footfall data

Challenges in mobilising the community

- Lack of school engagement – everyone goes to St Ivo for high school, so there is no competition.
- Social media – not always conducive to a good discussion, can be quite a lot of negativity here.
- Those living in the North of the town feel disinterest in the centre and a lack of connection.
- Also a keen community, but not co-ordinated, with people protective of their events and a lack of co-operation:
 - One St Ives
 - St Ives Town Team
 - St Ives Town Initiative (SITI)
 - St Ives Retail Group
 - Town Council...

Questions

- Does this feel like the right picture?
- What's missing? What needs to be sharper?



Key components of a vision

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Key components of a vision for St Ives

- Becoming more deeply integrated with the Cambridge ecosystem – creating a relationship that flows in both directions
- A digital hub which attracts entrepreneurs with its characterful environment
- Maximise existing development sites within town in the short term, while longer-term, tackle transport constraints
- Improved access to, and use of, the river – St Ives' principle asset



Developing ideas

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The challenge: Developing links to Cambridge Further



Idea 1: Express Guided Bus

- Guided busway a clear strength – but scope to **allow quicker services which stop in fewer places**. No services are less than 35 minutes from St Ives P&R, they stop at multiple points along the way
- Cheaper fares coming out of Cambridge?
- Combined Authority's bus review recommends “**enhanced partnership**” with bus operators – this would give more power for this type of intervention (full franchising would make this even more feasible)
- Combine with **improved cycle infrastructure** at GBW
- Longer term – Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM)



Idea 2: The town as a “digital hub”

To be a serious proposition, would probably require:

- Some semi-formal Governance around a digital cluster
- Meet ups and networking events
- Opening up discussions with Cambridge Computer Laboratory about available facilities, offering to host meetings etc.
- Economic development to resource
- Is there someone to lead this?



The challenge: Development limitations



Idea 1: Push forward with possible available sites within the town

- RAF Wyton – interest here from Marshalls as they relocate away from Cambridge
- Area in front of Waitrose a potential? (current guided busway area)
- Giffords Farm
- Transport tied in with all of these

Idea 2: Improved transport connectivity

- Need for a clear St Ives view on access south of the river
 - Third river crossing – how does this play in?
 - A14 – will people head West more?
 - Difficult to assess at this stage – **requires more detailed conversations with transport modellers**

The challenge: Maximise attractive townscape



Idea 1: Increased pedestrianisation

- Area along quay could become fully pedestrianised in combination with encouragement of restaurants and cafes to use the space.
- More barriers to prevent driving in nominally pedestrian areas:
 - Regulation
 - Physical barriers, bollards etc.

Idea 2: Make more use of yards

- Yards of the high street an attractive but underused asset
- Opportunity to create a mini “creative quarter” with crafts, independent bookshops, etc?
- Business rate/rent relief or some such mechanism to kick start
- Identify creative leadership of the project
- “Quirky” feel – attractive for young digital workers
- Requires land assembly, etc.

Cobden Chambers, Nottingham



Idea 3 – Totem signage

- Can improve legibility/navigability, highlight heritage and cultural assets.
- Could link into online platform
- A quick and easy way to lift the “feel” of the town centre

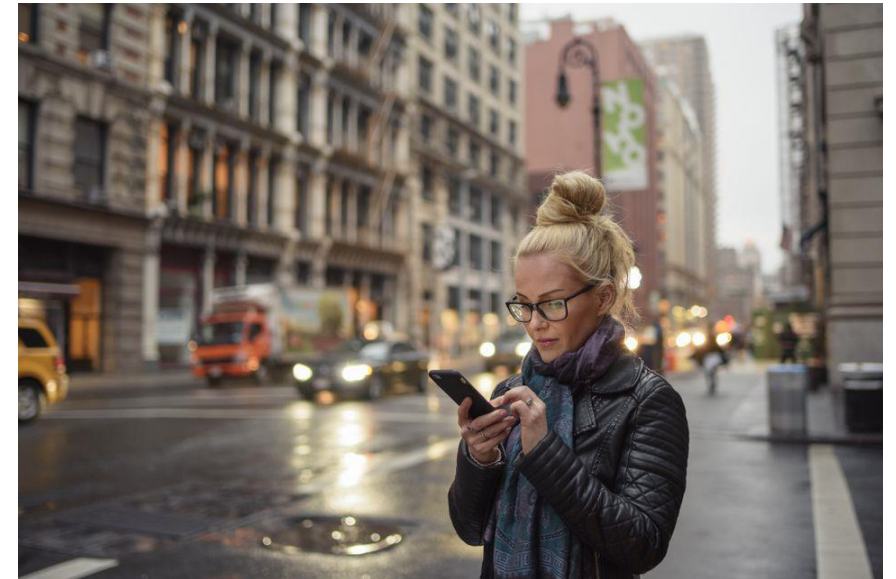
Next steps: Proceed to engage designers



Idea 4 – On-street Wi-Fi

- Can support market traders to accept contactless payments (has significantly increased earnings of market traders in Ely)
- Allows for promotion of brand to visitors, along with links to shops, cafes and restaurants
- Can also provide detail of footfall and usage of the space to inform approaches and monitor success

Next steps: Speak to Connecting Cambridgeshire



Challenge: Raising awareness of what the town has to offer



Idea 1: Well-designed Online Platform

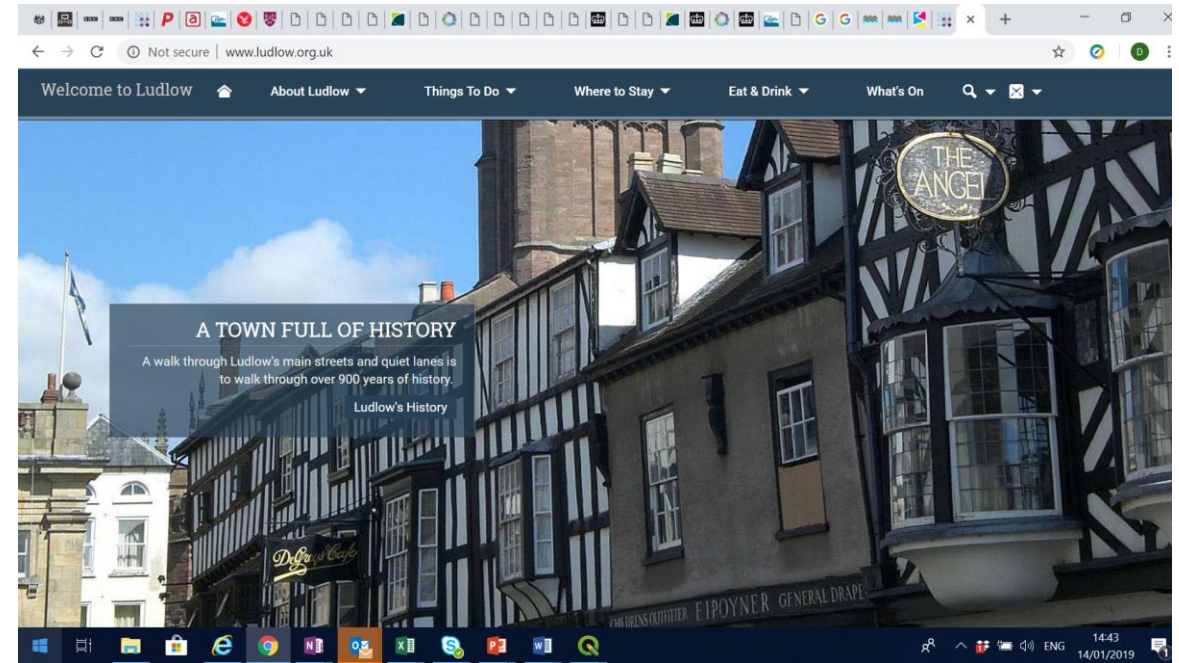
Dual purpose

1. Marketing of the town to outsiders

Helps present the town as attractive to visitors – brings money into the town, and points people to key assets and events

2. Co-ordination of events within the town

Two market towns commented that a lot of voluntary activity happens – but it's not well shared. Website can provide directory of all that's going on.



Idea 2: More high profile tie up with “the other St Ives”?

- Artistic collaboration with Tate St Ives?
- Joint festival? Etc?





People to speak to next

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Businesses identified

- Linx Printing
- Beamglow
- Acushnet Europe

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