Detective Ellie’s Local History Investigation

Learning objective: To investigate and interpret changes in our local area over time using evidence and historical enquiry.

Ellie the elephant has been searching through the archives to find out how our local area has changed. She has found several 'Then and Now' clues. Your task is to act as a historical detective. For each question, compare the past and present, explain the changes, and justify why these shifts might have occurred in our community.

Word bank: industry · transport · architecture · population · technology · agriculture · amenities · trade

1. Ellie found a photo of a muddy track where a busy high street now stands. Explain why a town might choose to pave over a track to build shops. How does this change affect the local people? (3 marks)

2. Compare a local building from 100 years ago with a modern building nearby. Describe two differences in the materials or style. Why do you think architects have changed their designs over time? (3 marks)

3. Many years ago, a local farmer sold his produce for £2. Today, a similar basket of goods costs £15. Justify why the value of money and the cost of goods have changed so significantly. (3 marks)

4. What might happen to a local village if a new railway station was built nearby? Explain the impact on the local community using the word 'transport'. (2 marks)

5. If you were to interview an elderly resident about the history of your street, what specific questions would you ask to find out what life was like 50 years ago? (2 marks)

6. Compare the ways people travelled to work in the past versus today. Why have these methods evolved, and what are the benefits of modern technology? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'split-screen' image of your local high street. On the left, draw it as it might have looked 100 years ago (think cobbles, horses, and small carts). On the right, draw it exactly as it appears today (think cars, glass-fronted shops, and street lights).

Extension challenge: Design a 'Time Capsule' for your local area. List five items you would include to help people 100 years in the future understand what life is like in your town today. Justify why each item is a significant piece of evidence for future historians.