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Individual Report

Design Thinking and Innovation through Digital Transformation

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1.0 Introduction

The United Kingdom retail and logistics sector has undergone rapid digital transformation, accelerated by changing consumer expectations, e-commerce growth, and structural shifts triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic (Office for National Statistics, 2026). Internet sales now account for over a quarter of total UK retail spend (Carriyo, 2026), creating substantial pressure and opportunity across the UK's last-mile delivery infrastructure, this report's specific focus.

Design thinking offers a human-centred, iterative approach to identifying and solving complex problems, moving systematically from empathy with real users towards tested, viable solutions (Brown, 2008). This report uses Evri, the UK's largest dedicated parcel delivery company, as its case study organisation, responding to the scenario in which rural communities, SMEs, and delivery partners are adapting to an increasingly digital retail economy.

The report is structured in two linked tasks. Task 1 analyses only the opportunity areas genuinely relevant to Evri, identifying pain points through a customer journey map, evidencing market gaps, narrowing technological enablers, and assessing scalability through a Desirability–Feasibility–Viability (DFV) framework. Task 2 builds on this justified opportunity area, applying named design thinking tools at each of five stages - Empathise, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test to develop ParcelPoint Local, culminating in a testing schedule with SMART KPIs and recommendations. The analysis draws on academic design thinking theory, including Brown (2008), the Stanford d.school (2010), Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) and Christensen (1997), together with current market data, ensuring both tasks are realistically applicable to Evri rather than any generic delivery company.

2.0 Task 1: Analysis – Opportunity Areas Relevant to Evri

2.1 Evri: Company Context and Current Digital Transformation

Evri is the United Kingdom's largest dedicated parcel delivery company by volume, operating over 500 hubs and depots and more than 12,500 ParcelShops and lockers. Following its 2025 merger with DHL eCommerce UK, the enlarged Evri Group now delivers more than one billion parcels annually and announced a further £36 million network investment ahead of the 2025 peak trading season (Evri, 2025; DHL Group, 2025). Evri's current digital transformation centres on two initiatives: AI-personalised delivery windows, giving consumers greater control over arrival time; and a wider rollout of Microsoft 365 E7 to support predictive routing and real-time operational visibility (Technology Magazine, 2025;

Supply Chain Outlook, 2025). Establishing this baseline first allows the remainder of Task 1 to identify a genuine gap between what Evri already offers and what the wider market now expects, rather than restating existing capability as a new opportunity.

2.2 Selecting the Transformation Opportunity Areas Relevant to Evri

The assessment brief sets out five broad transformation opportunity areas: e-commerce platforms, digital marketing services, retail management software, integrated digital payment systems, and supply chain and last-mile delivery solutions. Rather than analysing all five, only the areas that fit Evri's business model as a delivery and logistics organisation are carried forward, since a generic evaluation would apply equally to almost any UK retailer and would not produce recommendations Evri could act on. E-commerce platforms, digital marketing services, and retail management software are excluded, since they address problems retailers face building and running an online shop - storefronts, social advertising, stock and point-of-sale software none of which Evri operates. Supply chain and last-mile delivery solutions is selected as the primary opportunity area because it is Evri's core operating function. Integrated digital payment systems is selected as a secondary area because Evri already touches payment processes directly, through cash-on-delivery collection, refund processing for failed parcels, and SME courier account invoicing.

2.3 User Pain Points: The Evri Customer Journey Map

The customer journey map below traces an Evri parcel from order to resolution, identifying where friction occurs and citing evidence for its scale, locating each pain point at a specific, observable stage rather than asserting it in the abstract (IDEO.org, 2015).

Table 1: Evri customer journey map – stages, touchpoints and evidenced pain points.

Stage	Customer Action	Touchpoint	Pain Point (Evidenced)
1. Order placed	Consumer buys from an SME retailer using Evri for delivery	Retailer checkout; Evri confirmation email/app	Delivery window is broad and non-personalised at the point of purchase.
2. Dispatch & in transit	Parcel is picked up from the retailer and routed via an Evri hub	Evri tracking app / SMS updates	Real-time, flexible tracking is now a baseline expectation rather than a differentiator (Carriyo, 2026).
3. Delivery attempt	Courier attempts delivery to the home address	Doorstep; missed-delivery card or notification	Failed deliveries cost the UK e-commerce sector an estimated £1.6bn a year (Carriyo, 2026).
4. Collection / resolution	Consumer must travel to a ParcelShop or reschedule delivery	Nearest ParcelShop or locker	Rural consumers face a longer, often car-dependent journey to the nearest collection point.

Stage	Customer Action	Touchpoint	Pain Point (Evidenced)
5. Post-delivery / returns	Consumer or SME retailer processes a return or requests a refund	Evri returns portal	Reconciling refunds and cash-on-delivery payments remains a manual, retailer-side task.

The clearest, most heavily evidenced pain point sits at stages three and four: a failed first-time delivery attempt followed by an inconvenient collection journey. This friction point is estimated to cost the UK e-commerce sector approximately £1.6 billion annually (Carriyo, 2026) and disproportionately affects rural consumers and small retailers, reflecting Norman's (2013) argument that poorly designed systems place an unreasonable burden on the end user to compensate for a structural shortcoming. Stage five is a related pain point: manual refund and cash-on-delivery reconciliation adds administrative cost on top of the original failure. This evidenced pair of pain points is carried forward into the problem statement developed in Task 2.

2.4 Market Gaps: A Data-Driven Analysis

Identifying a market gap requires comparing what an organisation currently offers against what industry and consumer data show the market now needs, since a gap only exists where the two diverge (Christensen, 1997).

Evri's current position: Evri's most recent digital investment has focused on AI-personalised delivery windows and predictive routing for individual consumer parcels (Technology Magazine, 2025; Supply Chain Outlook, 2025), but this does not directly address the cost of failed deliveries, nor extend consolidation logic to the SME dispatch side of the network.

Industry trend: The UK courier, express and parcel market is forecast to grow at around 4.3% annually to 2031, with hyperlocal fulfilment nodes and out-of-home pickup points identified as a primary driver of route efficiency (Mordor Intelligence, 2026). Growth is increasingly driven by consumer-to-consumer and marketplace resale volumes: 72% of regular UK online shoppers now use such platforms, and small independent sellers now form a dominant 'super retail channel' (Post & Parcel, 2026).

Consumer trend: Consumers increasingly expect flexible, personalised delivery windows and are shifting towards out-of-home collection, driven jointly by convenience and by an emerging perception of out-of-home delivery as a lower-impact choice (Carriyo, 2026; Mordor Intelligence, 2026).

The gap: Comparing Evri's current position against these trends reveals a specific, addressable gap: Evri has not extended its AI-personalisation and consolidation logic to the

SME dispatch side of its network, where small retailers still book and pay for collections individually rather than through a consolidated, locally coordinated service. Given the £1.6 billion industry-wide cost of failed deliveries (Carriyo, 2026), and both industry and consumer trends moving toward hyperlocal, out-of-home coordination (Mordor Intelligence, 2026; Post & Parcel, 2026), this is an evidenced gap, and it is the gap targeted by the venture concept developed in Task 2.

2.5 Technological Enablers Relevant to the Selected Areas

Only technological enablers directly relevant to last-mile delivery coordination and integrated digital payments are considered here.

AI-powered demand forecasting and route optimisation software is already being adopted by Evri through its Microsoft 365 E7 rollout and could be extended to SME dispatch consolidation (Supply Chain Outlook, 2025). Cloud-based SaaS integration layers and APIs, of the kind that already power platforms such as Shopify, allow a third-party coordination tool to plug directly into Evri's existing tracking, booking and label-generation systems without new physical infrastructure. The growth of social commerce - small retailers selling through Instagram and TikTok Shop increases the need for a simple, connected dispatch tool for this underserved group. Open banking and embedded payment APIs enable consolidated SME invoicing and automated refund reconciliation. Innovate UK Smart Grants also offer UK-registered SMEs between £25,000 and £500,000 for commercially promising R&D and could co-fund the technology this venture would require (UK Research and Innovation, 2026).

These enablers are deliberately restricted to the two opportunity areas selected in section 2.2, rather than the wider set of technologies (e.g. AI chatbots, marketing automation) that support e-commerce or digital marketing instead.

2.6 Scalability and Sustainability: A Desirability–Feasibility–Viability Assessment

Scalability and sustainability are assessed here using the Desirability–Feasibility–Viability (DFV) framework common to design thinking practice, which asks whether a concept is wanted, buildable, and commercially sustainable (Brown and Katz, 2019; IDEO.org, 2015).

Table 2: Desirability–Feasibility–Viability (DFV) assessment of the selected opportunity area.

Dimension	Key Question	Evidence / Assessment	Rating
Desirability	Do consumers, SME retailers and couriers want this?	Consumer demand for flexible, out-of-home, consolidated delivery is well evidenced (Carriyo, 2026; Mordor Intelligence, 2026).	High
Feasibility	Do the technology, skills and resources exist to build it?	Required technology (SaaS APIs, open banking rails) is mature and low-cost; Evri's existing network already supplies physical delivery capacity.	High
Viability	Can it generate sustainable revenue and scale profitably?	A subscription plus per-parcel commission model scales with low marginal cost (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010); Innovate UK grant funding could offset early development cost (UK Research and Innovation, 2026).	Medium–High

Overall, the DFV assessment indicates a strong, evidence-supported case for the selected opportunity area: it is clearly desired by all three affected user groups, technologically feasible using tools that already exist, and commercially viable on a scalable, low-marginal-cost model. Viability depends in part on pricing and adoption assumptions not yet tested with real users, which is why Task 2 treats the pilot as a validation step rather than a formality.

2.7 Justification of the Selected Opportunity Area

Taken together, sections 2.3 to 2.6 justify last-mile delivery coordination, with integrated digital payment support, as the opportunity area most relevant to Evri: it addresses an evidenced pain point mapped across the real Evri customer journey, exploits a data-supported gap between Evri's current AI-personalisation investment and the shift toward hyperlocal coordination, is enabled by technology and funding routes Evri could access now, and scores strongly across desirability, feasibility and viability. This justified opportunity area forms the direct foundation for the venture concept developed in Task 2.

3.0 Task 2: Implementation – ParcelPoint Local

Building on the opportunity area justified in Task 1, that is, the coordination gap between Evri's AI-personalised delivery investment and the shift toward hyperlocal, out-of-home coordination for SME retailers. This section applies the five design thinking stages (Empathise, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test), naming the tool used at each, to design ParcelPoint Local: a hyperlocal collection-and-delivery platform built in partnership with Evri's existing infrastructure.

3.1 Empathise

The empathise stage uses two named tools: the customer journey map already developed in section 2.3, and an empathy map for each of the three affected user groups (IDEO.org, 2015; Kelley and Kelley, 2013). The journey map identified the missed-delivery-to-collection-journey pain point as the single largest, most evidenced source of friction. The empathy maps extend this by capturing what each group says, thinks and feels at that moment: the rural consumer says 'I've missed it again', thinks the service is unreliable, and feels frustrated at losing part of their day to a return journey; the small retailer says 'my customer is unhappy', thinks about lost repeat business, and feels the administrative burden of manually coordinating dispatch across social media and a courier account; the courier says the rural round 'isn't worth the mileage', thinks about opportunity cost versus a denser urban round, and feels under-rewarded for covering dispersed addresses (Supply Chain Digital, 2025).

Empathising with all three groups together, rather than optimising for one at the expense of the others, is central to the design thinking approach (Brown and Katz, 2019). This differs from the earlier journey map in section 2.3: the journey map identified where the pain point occurs, while the empathy maps capture why it matters emotionally to each group, grounding the problem carried into the define stage in both an observable service failure and a real user reaction to it.

3.2 Define

The define stage uses two named tools: a Point-of-View (POV) statement for each user group, and a 'How Might We' (HMW) question to reframe the problem as an opportunity (Stanford d.school, 2010; Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011). The three POV statements are: the rural consumer needs a flexible, local collection option because their working day cannot be paused for an unpredictable delivery window; the small retailer needs a single, simple dispatch point because coordinating couriers around social-media order-taking is unsustainable as volume grows; and the local courier needs a denser, better-planned round because current per-drop earnings do not reflect the distance dispersed addresses involve.

These combine into a single HMW question: how might Evri's existing ParcelShop, locker and courier infrastructure be reorganised into a hyperlocal, community-anchored service that reduces failed deliveries, consolidates SME dispatch, and improves courier route density simultaneously?

Problem Statement: Combining the three POV statements and the HMW question above into a single, detailed problem statement: rural consumers, small SME retailers and local couriers are each disadvantaged by Evri's current one-size-fits-all approach to delivery and dispatch, in which a failed first-time home delivery forces the consumer into an inconvenient, car-dependent collection journey, a growing volume of social-media-sourced orders forces the retailer to coordinate courier bookings manually, and a flat per-drop payment structure leaves the courier under-rewarded for covering dispersed rural addresses. This is a shared, structural service-design problem rather than three unrelated complaints, so a genuinely local, consolidated coordination layer over Evri's existing infrastructure is required to reduce failed deliveries, simplify SME dispatch, and improve courier route density at the same time, rather than solving any one group's need in isolation.

3.3 Ideate

The ideate stage uses two named ideation tools in sequence: a Crazy 8s rapid-sketching exercise to generate many divergent ideas quickly, followed by a SCAMPER review (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, Reverse) to refine and combine the strongest of them (Kelley and Kelley, 2013; Brown and Katz, 2019). The Crazy 8s session generated eight ideas in eight minutes, of which five progressed further: partnering with local independent shops as community collection hubs alongside existing Evri ParcelShops; a route-pooling app connecting SME dispatch requests with nearby couriers with spare capacity; a subscription-based batched-collection tier for small retailers; deeper integration with Evri's AI-personalised delivery-window technology for flexible locker collection (Technology Magazine, 2025); and a lightweight retailer dashboard combining order, payment and dispatch information. The remaining three sketches, including an independent courier fleet built from scratch, were set aside as clearly weaker fits with Evri's existing infrastructure.

SCAMPER was then applied to the five developed ideas. Under Combine, batched SME collection, locker-based flexible pickup and pooled courier routing were merged into a single coordinated platform, since together they addressed all three POV statements rather than any one group in isolation. Under Eliminate, the subscription tier was dropped once its benefit was absorbed into the combined platform, and the retailer dashboard was reclassified as a later-stage feature (see section 3.4). This narrowed the five ideas to two refined concepts: the combined hyperlocal coordination platform, and a narrower, retailer-only batched-dispatch app without the locker or pooled-routing elements.

These two refined concepts were then compared using the Desirability, Feasibility and Viability (DVF) framework already applied at portfolio level in section 2.6, this time to select a single option before prototyping (Brown and Katz, 2019). The combined hyperlocal coordination platform rated high on desirability, since it directly answers all three POV statements rather than one group's need in isolation; high on feasibility, since it reuses Evri's existing infrastructure; and medium-to-high on viability, combining subscription and commission revenue. The narrower retailer-only dispatch app rated lower on desirability, since it leaves the consumer and courier pain points unaddressed, with no offsetting feasibility or viability advantage. The combined hyperlocal coordination platform is therefore selected as the concept carried forward into the prototype stage below.

3.4 Prototype or Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

Following lean startup principles, the combined hyperlocal coordination platform selected through the DVF comparison in section 3.3 is tested via a minimum viable product rather than a fully built national platform, validating assumptions with real users before committing significant capital (Ries, 2011; Blank, 2013). The proposed MVP is a simple web and mobile application, ParcelPoint Local, piloted in a single market town already served by an Evri hub. Small retailers book one daily batched collection, dropped at a nearby Evri ParcelShop rather than requiring individual courier visits. Consumers select a flexible collection window via Evri's existing AI-personalised tracking, choosing between home delivery or locker pickup (Technology Magazine, 2025). Couriers receive optimised, pooled routes generated from aggregated requests rather than fragmented individual jobs. The retailer-facing feature set is kept deliberately narrow - order-import, a single daily booking, and a printable label with a fuller dashboard held back as a later-stage feature, consistent with Ries's (2011) argument that an MVP should be the smallest version capable of testing the venture's core assumptions.

Applying Osterwalder and Pigneur's (2010) business model canvas, revenue combines a modest monthly SME subscription with a small per-parcel commission, while the key partnership is a white-label arrangement with Evri, using existing courier capacity, lockers and tracking technology rather than building parallel infrastructure - reflecting Chesbrough's (2003) open innovation logic from Task 1.

Pricing for the pilot is tested at two simple tiers: a lower-cost tier for retailers dispatching a small, predictable daily volume, and a higher-cost tier for fluctuating or larger volumes, gathering early evidence on willingness to pay. No additional consumer charge is introduced at MVP stage; the flexible collection window and locker option are funded through the retailer

subscription and commission, since a direct consumer charge would risk suppressing the adoption the pilot is designed to measure.

3.5 Test: Testing Schedule and SMART KPIs

Consistent with the build-measure-learn cycle central to lean methodology (Ries, 2011), the pilot is tested against a structured schedule specifying, for each user group, the question asked, what to look for, and a SMART KPI.

Table 3: ParcelPoint Local pilot testing schedule with SMART KPIs.

User Group	Test Method / Question Asked	What to Look For	SMART KPI	Timeframe
SME retailers	"How long does dispatching a day's orders take, and would batch collection help?" (interview at sign-up and week 6)	Reported change in daily dispatch time; stated intent to continue using the service	At least 30% of retailers report a 20%+ reduction in dispatch time by week 6	Weeks 1–6 of pilot
Consumers	"Did your collection window match when you wanted your parcel?" (post-collection survey)	Match rate between chosen and actual collection; overall satisfaction score	At least 75% satisfaction (4 out of 5 or higher) from a minimum of 100 respondents	Weeks 1–8 of pilot
Couriers	"Has your parcels-per-mile figure changed since pooled routing began?" (weekly route data plus interview)	Change in route density; qualitative feedback on earnings and workload	At least 15% improvement in average parcels delivered per mile by week 8	Weeks 1–8 of pilot
Overall venture	Weekly dashboard review of missed-delivery rate and retailer retention	Trend direction against pre-pilot baseline	Missed-first-attempt delivery rate reduced by at least 25% relative to the pre-pilot baseline by week 8	Week 8 review point

Testing combines quantitative and qualitative methods: the KPIs above are tracked weekly, while short interviews with each user group at the midpoint and end surface issues the data alone might miss, such as confusion over the booking app. Findings feed into a revised prototype, with at least one further short test cycle planned before scaling beyond the pilot town (Ries, 2011; Blank, 2013).

3.6 Recommendations

Three recommendations follow from the analysis above. First, Evri, or an independent venture partnering with Evri, should run the eight-week pilot in a single market town before any wider investment decision, treating the SMART KPIs as go or no-go thresholds. Second, the venture should apply for an Innovate UK Smart Grant to co-fund the technology, given

that grants of £25,000 to £500,000 are available to UK-registered SMEs for this type of R&D project (UK Research and Innovation, 2026). Third, if the pilot succeeds, expansion should proceed town-by-town along Evri's existing network rather than simultaneous national rollout, pacing growth against demonstrated demand (Teece, 2010). A fourth, cross-cutting recommendation concerns governance: a single named owner should be accountable for the weekly KPI dashboard and for deciding, at the week 8 review point, whether the venture proceeds, is revised, or is discontinued.

4.0 Conclusion

This report has applied a design thinking lens across two directly linked tasks, using Evri as its case study organisation. Task 1 narrowed the brief's five transformation opportunity areas to the two genuinely relevant to Evri, then justified last-mile delivery coordination, supported by integrated digital payments, using a customer journey map, industry and consumer data, a narrowed set of technological enablers, and a Desirability–Feasibility–Viability assessment rather than an unstructured claim of scalability. Task 2 built on this justified opportunity area, naming a specific tool at every stage. That is, customer journey mapping and empathy maps, POV statements and a How Might We question, a Problem Statement, Crazy 8s and SCAMPER with a DVF-informed selection, a lean MVP, and a testing schedule with SMART KPIs to develop ParcelPoint Local, a hyperlocal collection-and-delivery venture built in partnership with, rather than in competition with, Evri's existing infrastructure. The recommendations set out clear next steps: an eight-week piloted test against explicit KPI thresholds, an Innovate UK grant application, and a paced, town-by-town expansion route should the pilot succeed.

The analysis is naturally limited by its reliance on secondary data rather than primary empathy research conducted directly with Evri's own customers, retailers, and couriers; the recommended pilot is designed specifically to close that gap before any larger investment decision. More broadly, an opportunity area is only genuinely justified once it has been narrowed to fit the organisation in question, evidenced with real, cited data, and tested against explicit, measurable criteria at every stage from pain point to pilot - the discipline that distinguishes a design-thinking-led business case from a general commentary on digital transformation trends.

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