

Open

Cabinet

Agenda

**To be held remotely
6pm
Wednesday, 19th May 2021**



Wyre Forest District Council



Cabinet

The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-

Membership and portfolios of Cabinet members to be announced by the Leader appointed on 12 May 2021

Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet

The Council has one Scrutiny Committee that has power to investigate policy issues and question members of the Cabinet who have special responsibility for a particular area of the Council's activities. The Cabinet also considers recommendations from this Committee.

In accordance with Section 10 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and Standing Order 2.4 of Section 7, any item on this agenda may be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee if it is "called in" by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and any other three non-Cabinet members.

The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on Tuesday 1st June 2021.

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Urgent Key Decisions

If the Cabinet needs to take an urgent key decision, the consent of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman must be obtained. If the Scrutiny Committee Chairman is unable to act the Chairman of the Council or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council, must give consent. Such decisions will not be the subject to the call in procedure.

Declaration of Interests by Members – interests of members in contracts and other matters

Declarations of Interest are a standard item on every Council and Committee agenda and each Member must provide a full record of their interests in the Public Register.

In addition, alongside the Register of Interest, the Members Code of Conduct ("the Code") requires the Declaration of Interests at meetings. Members have to decide first whether or not they have a disclosable interest in the matter under discussion.

Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's constitution for full details.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) / Other Disclosable Interest (ODI)

DPI's and ODI's are interests defined in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the District.

If you have a DPI (as defined in the Code) in a matter being considered at a meeting of the Council (as defined in the Code), the Council's Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held, for the duration of any discussion or voting on that matter.

If you have an ODI (as defined in the Code) you will need to consider whether you need to leave the room during the consideration of the matter.

1. The Cabinet meeting is open to the public except for any exempt/confidential items. These items are normally discussed at the end of the meeting. Where a meeting is held remotely, "open" means available for live or subsequent viewing.
2. Members of the public will be able to hear and see the meetings by a live stream on the Council's website:

<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/streaming.aspx>

3. This meeting is being held remotely online and will be recorded for play back. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. All streamed footage is the copyright of Wyre Forest District Council.

For further information

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Documents referred to in this agenda may be viewed on the Council's website - www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/council/meetings/main.htm

Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Wednesday, 19th May 2021

To be held remotely

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
3.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd March 2021.	7
4.	CALL INS a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
5.	Items Requiring Urgent Attention To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
6.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council/Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on Monday 10 th May 2021. (See front cover for contact details).	

7.		
7.1	Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to agree the refreshed strategy that the Council will use to support local enterprise and business growth. To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 1 st April 2021.	12 17
7.2	Strategic Asset Management Plan To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to agree the adoption of the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026 and associated Property Disposal Strategy. To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 1 st April 2021.	18 21
7.3	Facilities Asset Management Plan To consider a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to agree the adoption of the Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan 2021-2026. To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 1 st April 2021.	22 25
7.4	Kidderminster 2040 - A Town Centre Vision To consider a report from Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to agree the adoption of the vision for the future of Kidderminster town centre 2040. To also consider recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 13 th May 2021.	26 To follow

8. Recommendations from Committees		
8.1	Recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 13th May 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Action Plan 2021-2022 	To follow

9.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
10.	Exclusion of the Press and Public To consider passing the following resolution: “That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

11.		
11.1	Agenda Item 7.2 Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026 Appendix 2 – Property Disposal Strategy 2021	
12.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET
HELD REMOTELY
23RD MARCH 2021 (6PM)**

Present:

Councillors: G W Ballinger (Chairman), H E Dyke (Vice-Chairman), N Martin, M Rayner and J W R Thomas.

Observers:

Councillors: J F Byng, A Coleman, R H Coleman, N J Desmond, P Dyke, C Edginton-White, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, M J Hart, F M Oborski MBE, C Rogers, L Whitehouse and P W M Young.

CAB.61 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CAB.62 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.63 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9th February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.64 Call Ins

No decisions had been called in since the last Cabinet meeting.

CAB.65 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB.66 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C Edginton-White joined the meeting at 6.04pm.

CAB.67 Budget Monitoring Third Quarter 2020-21

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Resources on the Council's financial performance for Quarters 1 to 3 ending 31st December 2020 and presented the current projected outturn position for the 2020-21 financial year for both revenue and capital expenditure.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She said the report builds on the May, July and September 2020 Cabinet Reports on Budgetary Control including Financial Stress Testing regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic, and reports against the revised estimate approved by Council on 1st March.

She said it was good news that the revenue £175k underspend against the revised budget would make a modest contribution towards closing the funding gap. The Capital forecast spend, excluding the Capital Portfolio Fund and Development Loans fund, was £6.91m against a programme of £7.3m. She further explained that the outturn projections would undoubtedly change at final accounts, as is always the case. However this year in particular was very difficult to predict due to the on-going impact of COVID.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Portfolio outlined the key points from the report. She explained that due to the third unexpected lockdown there was potential for an overspend on the cashflow support (supplier relief) being provided to the leisure centre operators by the Council. She added that estimates were being finalised and it was too early to report with any certainty but it could be in the region of £100k. However this can be offset in part by the external funding support secured from Sport England's National Leisure Recovery that has now been confirmed as £213k. She added that the support the Council has been paying to the contractor is in line with other local authorities.

She added that the progress against Wyre Forest Forward savings targets presented at paragraph 6.5, now includes the Cabinet proposal agreed at March Council and an analysis of the savings achieved to date is presented at Appendix 4 of the report, and the Localism Partnership savings target is presented in the table at paragraph 6.6.

In conclusion, she said that the current forecast for the outturn position for 2020-21 was a welcome saving of £175k compared to the revised budget. She said the final position would undoubtedly be different as there are many variables including decisions made on provisions and reserves at year end.

Councillor L Whitehouse left the meeting at 6.26pm.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism seconded the proposals.

Decision: The Cabinet DECIDED that the projected budget variations and comments outlined within the report and appendices 2 to 6 be noted.

CAB.68 Review of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

A report was considered from the Community Services Manager to invite members to consider whether the Council should make any changes to Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) following the review after a 6-month period of implementation and results of the consultation process.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism presented the report. She explained that at its meeting on 7th July 2020, Cabinet agreed with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this issue with included a request that there would be a 6-month review of the 3 implemented PSPOs. With the recommended review in mind a consultation regarding all 3 PSPOs was launched on 6th of January and ran for four weeks ending on the 3rd February 2021. She added that the consultation gave residents the opportunity to have their say on rules to tackle dog fouling and the new measure which limited the people to walking a maximum of 3 dogs at any one time.

She further explained that the 2 separate surveys ran along at the same time inviting people to comment on the street drinking restrictions in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn town centres. A total of 287 responses were received with relating to the alcohol restrictions for Stourport-on Severn and Bewdley; and the responses showed a clear majority in support of the restrictions continuing, in fact as part of their responses residents used the opportunity to report alcohol-fuelled incidents they had personally experienced.

Before formally moving the recommendations for approval, the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and Localism took the opportunity to speak on several comments that had been made throughout the process.

She advised that it had been said that the Council had been undemocratic on this issue. She said she refuted this in the strongest terms. The recommendations that came to Cabinet in July had considered the results of an open consultation process. At that time, a 6-month review from the date of implementation of the 3 PSPOs was promised and had taken place. As part of the 6-month review a further public consultation had taken place and formed part of the report that went to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March and here this evening. She added that the Council had also encouraged and enabled public speaking on the matter, and lastly the recommendation before Cabinet this evening reflects the wish and recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Therefore, she was at a loss to see how that had been an undemocratic process.

She added that there has also been much mention of a petition of around 2500 signatures on this matter. What has been omitted was that this was a global Facebook petition containing signatures from all over the world including America, South Africa and India and by no means just signatures from Wyre Forest where the PSPOs were implemented.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services seconded the proposals. She said she had received many supportive emails from dog walkers regarding this issue, as unfortunately they could see it being played out on social media; and thanked them for their support.

She added that whilst the Kennel Club were in favour of 6 dogs, the RSPCA, the Dogs Trust and Industry Federation does not. She said this clearly shows the Council are democratic; a neighbouring authority had just ruled on 4 dogs,

therefore she hoped that the district did not see an influx of walkers with multiple dogs from other areas.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor M Hart, said the Committee had also been very democratic when the report was discussed at the meeting; all 11 members of the Committee spoke on the item in respect of dogs. He said the majority agreed that it was sensible to increase the limit in line with the recommendations from the Kennel Club's national position. He said in his opinion it was a sensible executive decision that the Cabinet were taking in response to this important change and was supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member. He said it was her resolute nature that had got us over the line, and it was much appreciated. He said the online abuse she had experienced was inexcusable.

Decision: In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 4th March 2021, the Cabinet;

- 1.1 NOTED that there is support for the alcohol orders in Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn as set out in the consultation responses in Appendices 2 and 3 and that no changes are required;**
- 1.2 AMENDED the Dog Control PSPO to substitute 6 for 3 in the limit of dogs that one person may have under his or her control, in line with the consultation response and comments of the Kennel Club and other relevant dog walking organisations as evidenced in Appendices 1 and 4.**

CAB.69 Green Homes Grant – Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 2

A report was considered from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place to recommend amending the Capital Programme to enable the distribution of the Green Homes Grant, Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 2.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Well-being and Democratic Services presented the report and formally moved the recommendations for approval. She explained that the second tranche of funding would allow the authority to invite people to apply for funding to make their properties more energy efficient. She added that the funding was also available for social housing properties.

The Cabinet Member for Operational Services seconded the proposals.

Decision: Subject to Council agreeing the Cabinet's recommendation in paragraph 2.1(e) of the Capital Strategy (22 December 2020), the Cabinet agreed that:

There is an amendment to the Capital Programme to include expenditure of £525,000 to provide Green Homes Grants Phase 2 fully matched by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) funding.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.55pm.

The full meeting is available for viewing on the Council's website
<https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/53298>

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
19th May 2021**A Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cabinet Portfolio Holder to be announced by the Leader appointed on 12 May 2021
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ostap Paparega – Head of NWEDR
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Wyre Forest Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the refreshed strategy that the Council will use to support local enterprise and business growth.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to DECIDE to:

- 2.1 **Adopt the Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy 2021-2026.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 One of the Council's Corporate Priorities is to 'support a successful local economy'. As such, the Council has a very active economic development and regeneration programme and also hosts the North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration (NWEDR) shared service which covers Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest. Good progress has been made in recent years in attracting new investment to the district and supporting new and existing companies to grow.
- 3.2 The Council through its membership of two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham & Solihull, has benefited from participation in a number of strategic business support programmes that support business formation and local business growth. Furthermore, both of the LEPs have 'Growth Hubs' which act as 'access points' for local businesses to find out more about available forms of business support.
- 3.3 As part of its overall approach to supporting economic growth, in recent years, the Council has invested its own resources in a number of initiatives including:
- **Forest House** – acquisition and conversion of this former Community Housing Group depot for permanent incubator space to support fledgling businesses for an initial 3 years; building on the success of the initial SPACE concept;
 - **Kidderminster Rail Station** – working with the County Council with funding from both LEPs the new station and forecourt was completed in 2020;

- **Unity Park** – the erection of nine new small industrial units to complement the adjacent Hoobrook enterprise Park;
- **Development Loan Fund** – provision of loans for projects in the district which contribute to regeneration and economic growth;
- **Business support programmes** – participation in a number of schemes funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- **South Kidderminster Enterprise Park** – Local Development Order, now in its third renewal period; simplified planning for businesses wishing to invest within the district's key employment zone;
- **Apprenticeships** - since 2012/13, the Council has invested up to £50,000 per year to help businesses to employ apprentices.

- 3.4 The Wyre Forest economy is still in the process of recovery from the previous downturn and in reality is still probably in the process of fundamental structural recovery from the decline in the carpet manufacturing industry. The district continues to experience lower than average wages, productivity and skills compared to other parts of Worcestershire and the rest of the West Midlands region.
- 3.5 The first Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy was adopted in 2016 and this is the first refresh. This remains the principal document to guide how the Council plans to encourage enterprise and business growth. The Strategy will complement the adopted Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) which is also being refreshed in parallel; this sets out opportunities for the Council to utilise its property and land assets to support the development of new starter units and grow on space for small businesses, whilst generating new sustainable revenue streams to the Council.
- 3.6 This strategy was considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st April 2021 at which time it was agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the Strategy be adopted, but with the inclusion of reference to the Green Growth Agenda within the Council's aspirations. The Strategy has been updated in the light of these comments.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Within the Strategy, the Council presents a number of objectives that will frame the Council's approach, these include:
- Foster an Entrepreneurial Culture
 - Create sustainable business start-ups
 - Nurture existing businesses and retain them within the district
 - Encourage new inward investment into the district
 - Encouraging Green Growth
- 4.2 The Strategy proposes that the Council utilises three delivery models to deliver its enterprise and business growth ambitions, 'direct commissioning', 'enabling and engaging' and 'support and signposting'. The Council will continue to be pro-active and directly commission services and solutions where it considers that it can achieve an impact and/or there is a gap in the market that needs to be filled.

- 4.3 Having reviewed the available economic evidence and data, the Strategy identifies three principal ways in which the Council can make the biggest difference to supporting new enterprise and business growth;

- **Providing flexible business accommodation**

Through the direct commissioning of new incubator and starter units as well as 'grow on' space, the Council has demonstrated the ability to utilise its own land and property assets and/or purchasing third party owned assets. The Council will continue to work with private sector partners to help facilitate the development of new small-medium sized units, such as those at Ratio Park.

The Council will aim to ensure that tenanted businesses can benefit from 'wraparound' support programmes, offering business coaching, mentoring and potentially grant assistance through the Growth Hubs.

In its role as local planning authority, the Council will also continue its important role in ensuring that the district has a sufficient supply of employment land. The Submitted Local Plan sets out the provision for employment land over the 2016 to 2036 plan period.

- **Providing business support, mentoring and targeted financial assistance**

Going forward, the Council will continue to maximise the benefit of Business Support Programmes to businesses in the district. The Council will work closely with LEP partners to ensure that there is in place a portfolio of schemes available locally that will encourage further business start-up activity, business growth and inward investment.

The Council via the NWEDR shared service is well placed to continue to act as a 'gateway' to local and regional business support programmes and initiatives. The team will work to ensure that local businesses understand what is available and how to access the support that they need.

- **Ensuring that Wyre Forest is 'investment ready'**

The district has been successful in bringing new businesses to the area and also supporting existing firms to invest and expand their operation, creating new jobs for the local workforce. The NWEDR service has raised the profile of the area and together with the Council will continue to promote an 'open for business' culture to position the district as a good place to do business.

The Council intends to continue to play a pro-active role in securing investment opportunities and work to ensure that it creates the right conditions for growth. This will be through delivery of its economic development activities and delivery of services and functions such as car parking, Development Management and Local Plans. Services that support the delivery of the Council's corporate priority to create 'a safe, clean and green living environment' also make an important contribution to supporting business growth, for example the Depot through delivery of its commercial waste and recycling service, helps to save businesses money, whilst the Council's parks and green spaces create a more inviting environment for the

area which can form part of the overall offer to encourage businesses to locate in the district.

4.4 The core objectives of the Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy are as follows:

- Support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities;
- Provide a strategic framework to underpin Council investment in economic development and business growth initiatives and projects;
- To identify how the Council can support the growth of existing businesses within the district, to create a fertile ground for new business ideas and innovations to flourish and for entrepreneurs to succeed in starting up a new business;
- To ensure that the district is positioned as an attractive location for inward investment opportunities, to drive new jobs and investment;
- To help to identify commercial investment opportunities that support economic growth and can potentially provide a significant revenue stream to the Council;
- Promote Partnership working, in particular with the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Growth Hubs;
- To inform, influence and complement other Council Plans and Strategies i.e. Local Plan, Strategic Asset Management Policy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a strategic imperative for the Council to encourage and invest in business growth to help with its own financial position. Business growth ultimately translates into an increase in business rates and in future years the Council will increasingly need to rely on business rates to provide a sustainable form of funding to help maintain delivery of front line services.
- 5.2 The Council is already supporting or leading on a number of economic development and regeneration initiatives utilising existing funding allocated through its budget setting process. However, the Council will continue to be pro-active in securing additional resources through external funding opportunities to deliver some of the business support activities proposed in the strategy. For example, the Levelling Up Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 5.3 As part of this strategy, the Council will continue to encourage and support investment in new commercial workspace, to continue to develop a portfolio of modern business accommodation offers for new and expanding local companies. The Council's Evergreen Investment Fund and Development Loan Fund remain potential funding sources to help finance projects alongside other funding including grant funding from the Local Enterprise Partnerships.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy and the proposed activities contained within it are supportive of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities and relevant Council strategies, including the Financial Strategy and Strategic Asset Management Policy.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it takes account of any changes to the economic climate or the wider business support environment. The Council will monitor the progress made in delivering against its enterprise and business growth ambitions by reporting against and monitoring a suite of measures.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 8.1 There are no issues to be addressed.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions to support economic growth and provides a strategic framework against which the Council's activities can be developed.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix 1 - Wyre Forest Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy

2021-2026 Enabling Enterprise & Business Growth in Wyre Forest

A Strategic Approach



1. Introduction

This document sets out the Council's strategic approach to helping new businesses to start up successfully and to nurture existing businesses within the district, to support them to achieve sustainable business growth.

This strategy sets out the Council's ambitions for economic growth and how the Council through its direct and indirect actions will deliver its support, including the importance of the Council's role in developing a successful Functional Economic Geography (FEG) across North Worcestershire and the wider West Midlands for its businesses to thrive in.



2. Strategic Context

The Council's economic development and regeneration activities are particularly focused on supporting business growth by creating the right conditions to attract new businesses and to enable existing businesses to flourish. Significant successes have been made over the past years since the Council first adopted this strategy in 2016 in attracting new investment and jobs to the district, assisting local firms with their expansion plans, improving the business start-up rate in Wyre Forest and improving infrastructure.

As a direct consequence of the the ReWyre Programme which began in 2009 and subsequent 'State of the Area' debates in 2012 and 2013, the Council has invested significant amounts of its own resources to support projects that have promoted business growth and new enterprises. Examples include

Forest House - Building on the success of SPACE, the Council has purchased and converted this building into new incubation space to support fledgling businesses for an initial 3 years;

Silverwoods – The Council has built nine small industrial units on the former 'Frenco' site and plans are underway for the construction of six more medium sized units off Crosbie Grove.

Business support programmes – participation in a number of European Regional Development Fund funded schemes;

South Kidderminster Enterprise Park – The Local Development Order has been renewed twice and facilitated new build such as Specsavers Lens Online and International Glazing Services and Barton Firtop through a simplified planning process for businesses wishing to invest within the district's key employment zone;

Apprenticeships - since 2012/13, the Council has invested over £250,000 to help businesses to employ apprentices; since the scheme started over 50 apprentices have been supported.

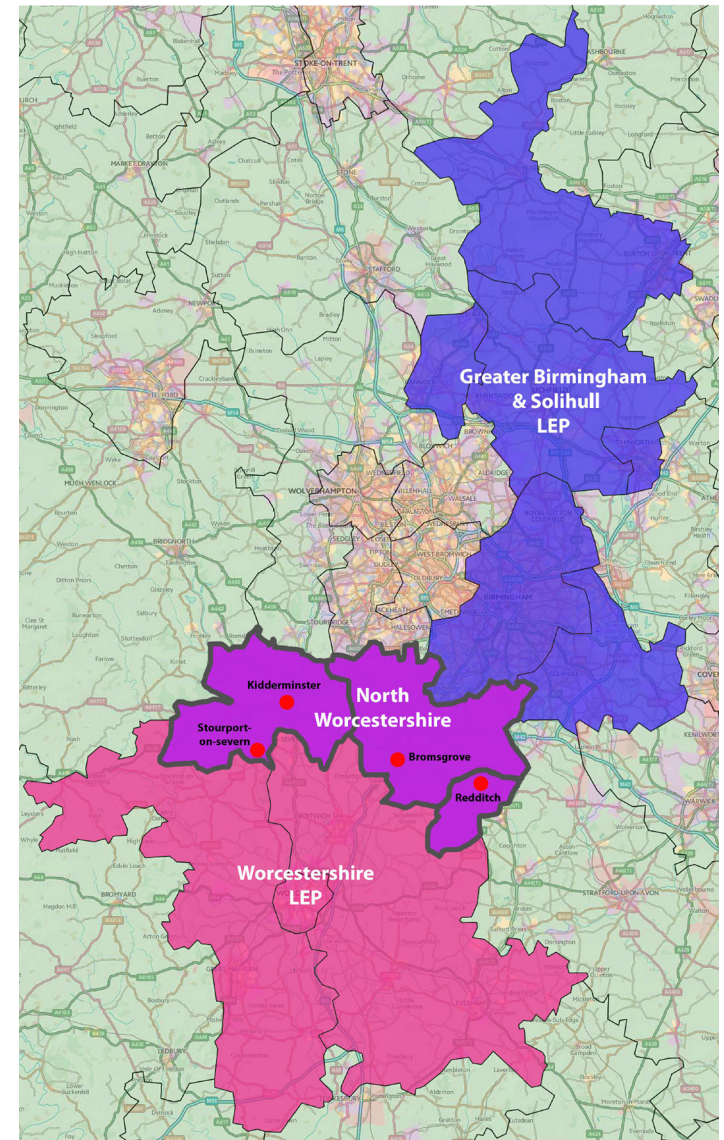
The Council has successfully embraced an 'open for business' culture and endeavoured to work with its key partners to nurture the growth of local companies and attract new inward investment that otherwise would not have been invested in the district. The Council has promoted a growth agenda through the progress towards the adoption of its new Local Plan 2016-2036 and has a joined up approach to the delivery of its services to make Wyre Forest part of the North Worcestershire 'Natural Place to Do Business'.

The Council has not only played a direct role in attracting public monies into the district to support new infrastructure and regeneration, but has also played an active role in supporting economic growth across the wider FEG through the use of its Capital Portfolio Fund and Development Loan Fund. Examples of key new infrastructure are to be found in Kidderminster's new Rail Station building and new road layout for Churchfields; funding has just been awarded under the Future High Streets Fund for Kidderminster Town Centre which includes plans to redevelop and refurbish the Former Magistrates' Court as a new creative and innovation hub. Through the establishment of the Capital Portfolio Fund the Council has acquired strategically significant assets within and outside the district across different sectors where there was a demonstrable business case that doing so would support the economic growth opportunities for the district and the wider FEG. The Council through its Development Loan Fund has been able to offer direct loan support to developers wishing to invest in the district to support regeneration or economic development.

Wyre Forest District Council has hosted the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) shared service since 2011 which covers the three local authority areas including Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest. The NWEDR service has firmly established its profile across the West Midlands area, working in partnership with both the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and their respective Growth Hubs to ensure that businesses in Wyre Forest get the best access to the wider business support services offered locally and regionally. In 2019 the three North Worcestershire councils adopted an economic strategy for the combined geography for the period 2019-2024. This should be read in parallel with this strategy for enabling enterprise and business growth.



The two LEPs have played an increasing role in supporting local business growth and formation as well as part funding key infrastructure and have introduced strategic programmes utilising funding from Local Growth Fund and European Structural Funds.



As part of their Strategic Economic Plans, both LEPs have made a commitment to supporting a number of 'priority sectors'. These sectors either are of strategic importance to the LEP economy or have the potential to grow and develop. Wyre Forest has an opportunity via its dual membership of the LEPs to benefit from support programmes that are commissioned by the LEPs to grow these sectors:

Worcestershire LEP

1. Advanced manufacturing
2. Cyber security and defence
3. Agri-food/Agri-tech
4. Visitor & Destination economy



Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership

GBS LEP

1. Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering
2. Life Science
3. Creative Industries
4. Energy technology & Services
5. Business, Professional & Financial Services

Cross-Cutting Priorities

1. Skills
2. Business Support & Access to Finance
3. Place
4. Emerging and Disruptive Technologies
5. Digital



**Greater Birmingham
& Solihull**
Local Enterprise Partnership

Furthermore, the launch of two 'Growth Hubs' covering each LEP area means that local businesses can access a range of business support advice and support opportunities. It is likely that there will be a continuing re-focusing of business support activity towards the Growth Hubs, as national programmes such as the Manufacturing Advisory Service and Growth Service are to be closed down. There is a commitment across public sector partners to work together in a more integrated way, sharing data, resources and knowledge to ensure that businesses receive a more seamless and responsive service.

3. Wyre Forest Economic Context

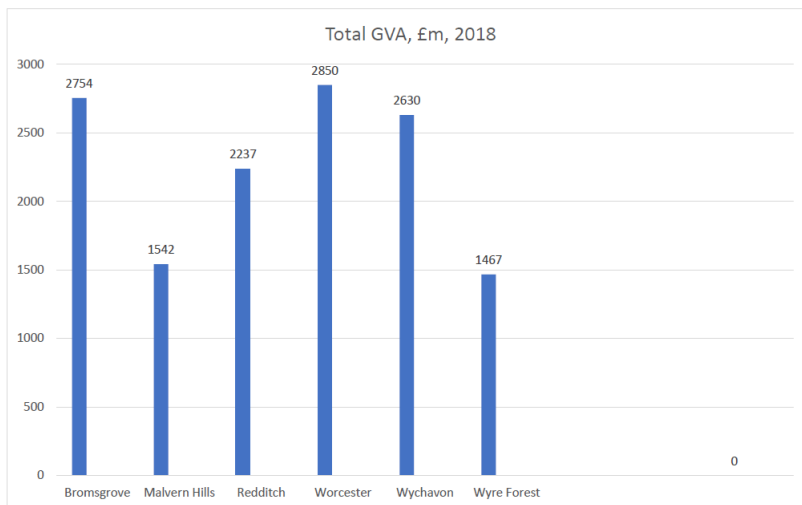
Evidence suggests that the district still suffers from lower wages, skills and productivity than other parts of Worcestershire and the region. However, the district has an improving record around business start-ups and enterprise. It is also important to acknowledge the impact of Covid-19 which is already seeing a significant change in the operation and fortunes of our businesses – both positive and negative.

Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) shows that between 2009 and 2012, Wyre Forest experienced zero growth in the number of people employed in the district, with modest growth in private sector employment negated by a similar contraction in the public sector. Furthermore, the area has performed badly over the last few years in terms of wages which has acted as a drag on local income levels and purchasing power and the ability of local residents to get onto the housing ladder.

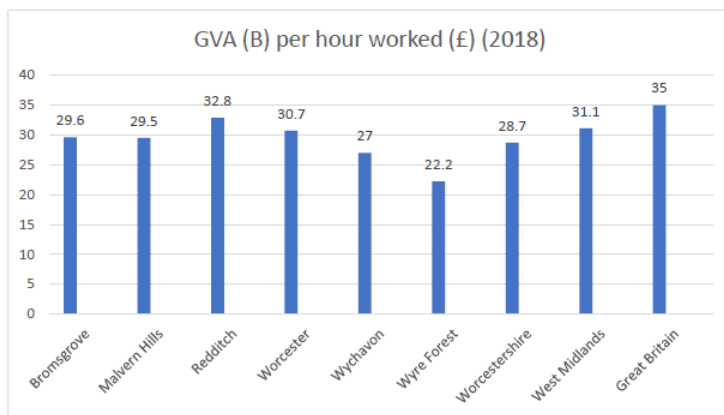
Although wages (as measured by average weekly pay per full timeworker) have increased slightly since 2012, they remain steadfastly behind the county and regional rate. A key factor has been the inability of Wyre Forest's economy to fully re-structure following the decline of traditional sectors such as the carpet industry.

The Wyre Forest economy is increasingly reliant on the service sector to provide employment, with the retail, accommodation and food services accounting for one third of all jobs in the district. These sectors provide lower wages than knowledge intensive sectors such as manufacturing and also have been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.



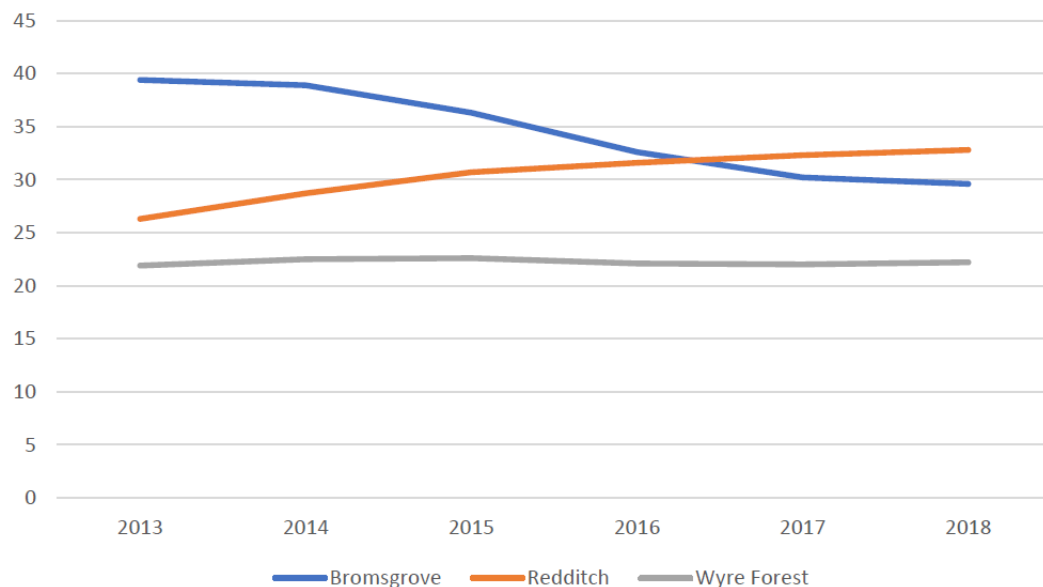


In 2018, Wyre Forest had the lowest total Gross Value Added (GVA) of any local authority area in Worcestershire.

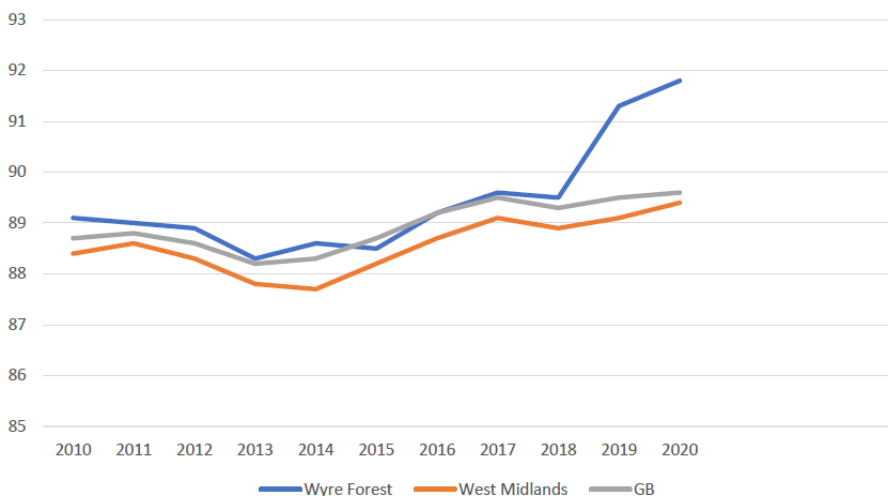


In 2018, Wyre Forest had the lowest level of productivity (measured as GVA per hour worked (£)) compared to any other district in Worcestershire and significantly below the regional and national levels.

Table 3 - Nominal GVA per hour worked (£)

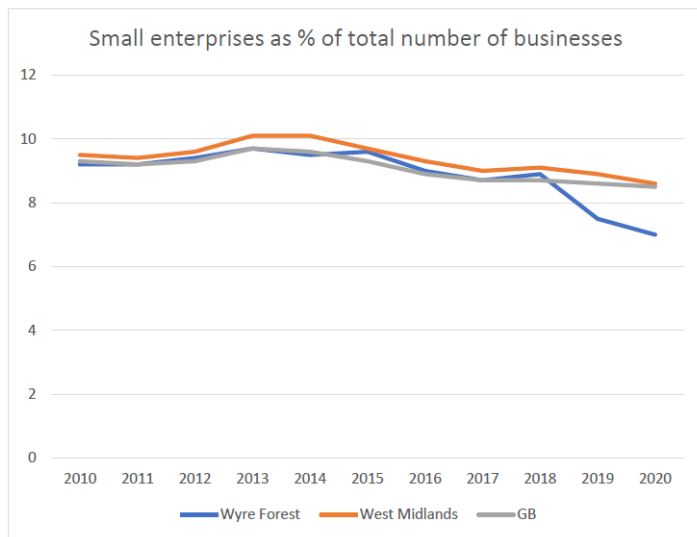


Micro-enterprises as % of total businesses



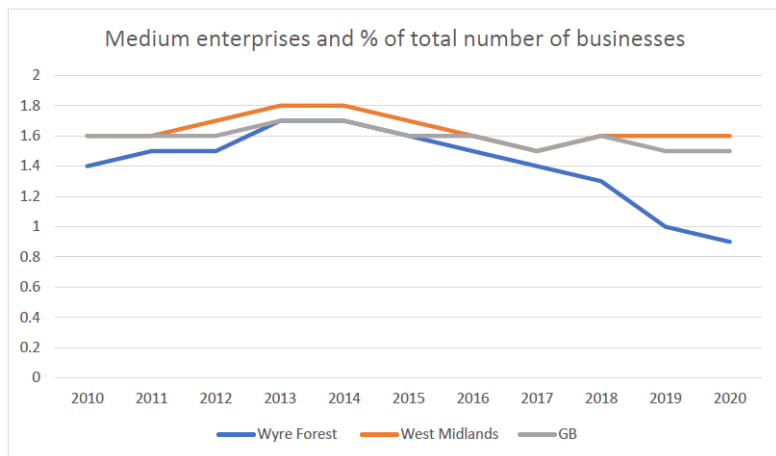
Micro-enterprises (0-9 employees) as % of total number of businesses

The chart shows significant growth of micro-enterprises in Wyre Forest over the past decade well above regional and national averages.



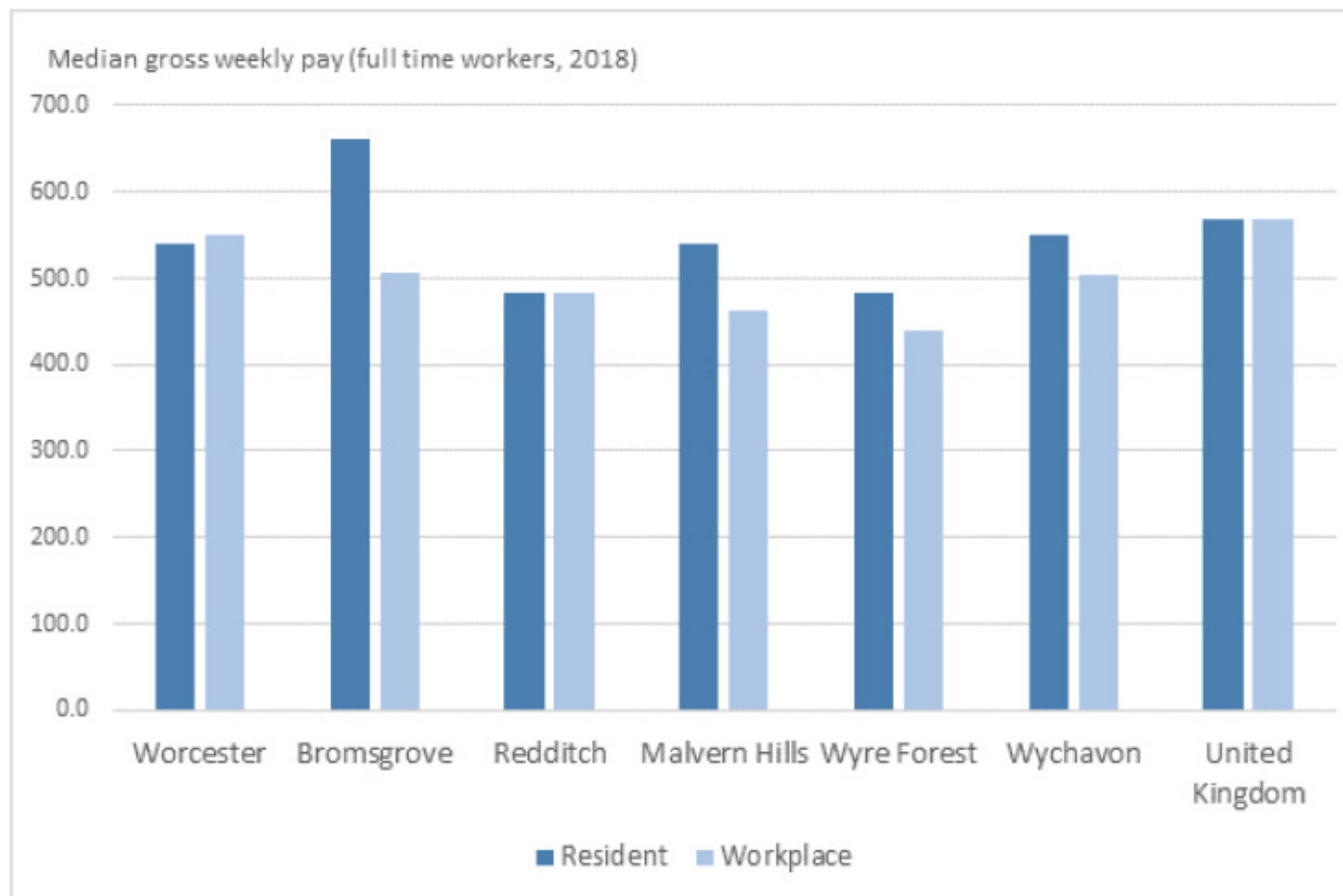
Small enterprises (10-49 employees) as % of total number of businesses

The chart shows a reduction in small businesses in Wyre Forest over the past three year and a drop below regional and national averages.



Medium enterprises (50-249 employees) as % of total number of businesses

The chart shows a sustained reduction in the percentage of medium businesses in Wyre Forest over the past seven years and a significant drop below regional and national averages.



Wyre Forest is predominantly a 'small business economy' with the majority of firms (91.8 %) within the district employing up to 9 workers. There are relatively few companies employing over 250 workers (0.3%) which is similar to the overall regional rate. The district has an improving record on enterprise and business start-ups, with just over 78 new business registrations per 10,000 working age population compared with 72 across the West Midlands. Self-employment is also on the rise, with 8.7% of the working age population falling within this category.

As part of the current Local Plan review process, the Council has commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to undertake an Employment Land Review. The report identifies a number of issues that will have an effect on the ability of the district to support business start-up activity and business growth, these include:

**Demand for industrial properties is strongest for units up to 27,000 square foot;
mainly due to the fact that the local economy is dominated by small-medium sized businesses;**

There is scope for the further provision of flexible work space and small units to accommodate business start-ups and expanding local firms, offered on flexible leases and 'easy in-easy out' terms;

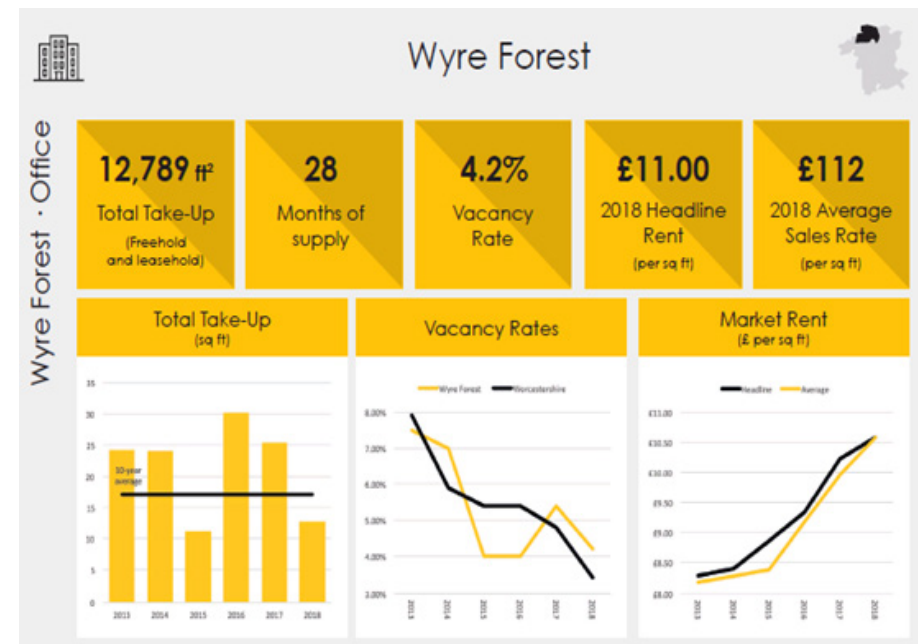
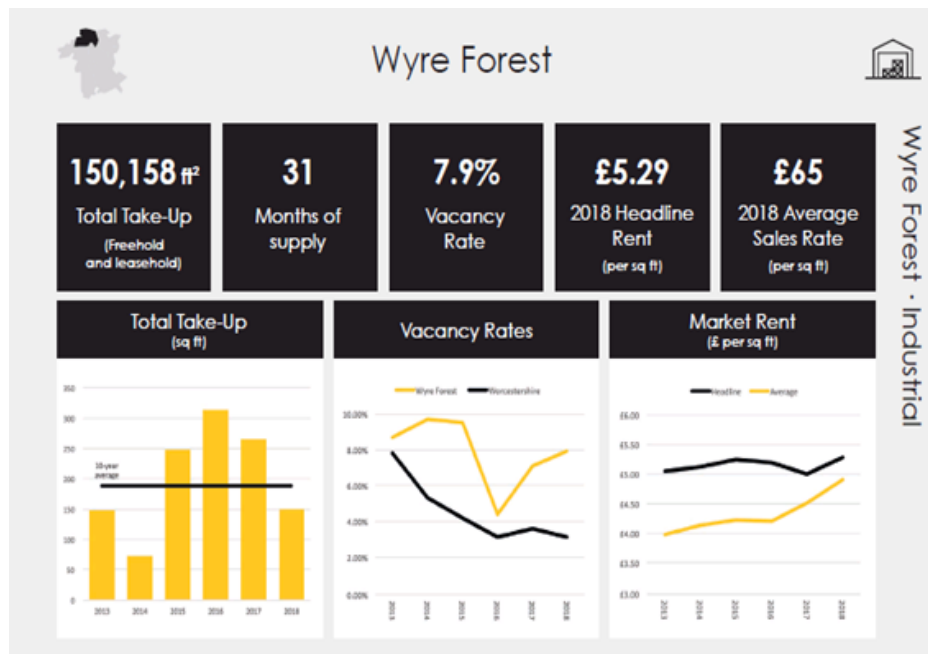
However, the above units are not being provided by commercial developers due to a lack of certainty and risk in filling the units;

**The District lacks the necessary critical mass to attract and sustain larger office occupiers;
office facilities in Wyre Forest tend to mainly service small local occupiers;**

Due to the distance from the motorway network, Wyre Forest is a less desirable location for logistics firms;

Policies such as the Local Development Order for the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park area have proved to be positive in attracting investment to the district and encouraging local business growth.

The two graphs below show the supply position in the office and industrial sub-markets in Wyre forest in 2018
(source: GJS Dillon, 2019)



4. Our Enterprise and Business Growth Ambitions

One of the Council's corporate priorities is 'supporting a successful local economy'.

Key to the realisation of this corporate priority is to help new businesses to start-up successfully and to support existing businesses to achieve sustainable business growth. This strategy sets out how the Council proposes to continue to deliver its economic ambitions and ensure that they remain 'front and centre' in all areas of the Council's service delivery.

The Council recognises that the Wyre Forest economy is transforming successfully, but is in need of further structural change. The Council is firmly committed to continuing to do what it can to ensure that the district makes the transition from a traditional manufacturing area to a modern, dynamic, digitally connected and flexible economy that is resilient and can adapt to future challenges as well as the present on on-going implications of Covid-19.

Recent history has proved that areas like Wyre Forest will not be able to rely on one or two major industries to provide its employment so we continue to plan for and develop a diverse economy which provides for a range of opportunities and is a fertile ground for new ideas and innovations to come forward.



Enterprise and Business Growth Ambitions

Corporate Priority 'Support you to contribute to a successful local economy'

Foster an entrepreneurial culture

Encourage the next generation of entrepreneurs to start up their own business
Make it easy for people to start up their business
Put in place effective 'pre-start' support programmes

To create sustainable business start ups

Provide access to high quality coaches and mentors for new start-ups (0 to 12 months)
Offer 'incubation' or flexible workspace to provide the right environment for businesses to start up
Intensive programmes for 'high growth' businesses and young business (up to 3 years)
Provide sufficient grow on space

To nurture existing businesses and retain them within the district

Strategic engagement with our key businesses / employers
Support programmes to encourage business growth and expansion
Availability of suitable sites and premises

To encourage new inward investment into the district

Maximise opportunities to position Wyre Forest as an excellent place to do business
Responsive and flexible approach when dealing with prospective investors
Work pro-actively with existing land owners and developers to promote available employment sites and premises

To encourage a green economy

To support businesses to develop and adopt low carbon and environmental technologies that will help to drive the green economic recovery

The Council will continue its pro-active approach to supporting business growth and creation through its Economic Regeneration activities, which will continue to be primarily delivered through the NWEDR shared service.

However, the following Wyre Forest District Council services will also continue to contribute, in their own way, to supporting local businesses and realisation of the Council's corporate priority, 'supporting a successful local economy' and 'a safe clean & green living environment':

- **Local Plan 2016-2036:** delivering land use policies which enable the District to be a good place to do business and which support wider regeneration proposals aimed at delivering new investment, jobs and skills to the area;
- **Strategic Housing:** planning for and delivering new affordable housing in the district to provide housing opportunities for aspiring people and families, therefore encouraging them to live and work in the district;
- **Development Management:** advising and guiding businesses, wanting to change, expand or develop existing land and/or buildings, through the planning process;
- **Street Cleansing:** keeping the District clean and tidy for businesses and visitors;
- **Waste Collection:** offering commercial waste collection and recycling services to businesses;
- **Leisure Centres:** offering opportunities for the workforce to stay fit and healthy through a range of physical activities
- **Green Spaces and Parks:** creating a more inviting environment for the area which can form part of the overall offer to encourage businesses to locate in the district.
- **Car Parking:** providing visitors and businesses with a range of car parks in all three centres;
- **Finance:** Guiding relevant businesses to apply for small business rate relief and discretionary support as appropriate; providing direct loans to businesses delivering regeneration initiatives in the district;
- **Capital Portfolio Fund:** Strategic acquisition of assets across the FEG which support economic growth from which the district can benefit.
- **Strategic Tourism:** Helping to promote the District's visitor attraction and accommodation businesses and local events;
- **Worcestershire Regulatory Services:** Supporting economic growth, especially in small businesses, by ensuring a fair, responsible and competitive trading environment.

5. Delivery Approach

Over the last few years, the Council has demonstrated its credentials in terms of supporting local economic growth. The approach in this document reflects 'evolution' not 'revolution' and intends to build on the good work done to date. However, to achieve our ambitions we will need to continue to explore new ideas and models for delivery and develop our understanding of what businesses actually need.

The Council will use 3 'delivery models' to support enterprise and local business growth, as follows:

Direct Commissioning

The Council is proactive in directly commissioning business support or accommodation such as it does with Forest House and the new industrial units at Unity Park.

Enabling & Engaging

The Council works alongside public or private sector partners to facilitate support or accommodation such as it did working with Worcestershire County Council and SLC Rail to develop the new Kidderminster Rail Station.

Support and Signposting

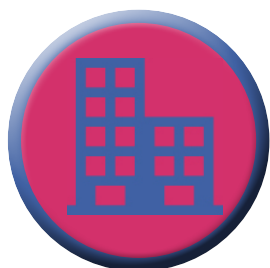
The Council supports the work of others such as LEPs and Growth Hubs where it acts as a 'signpost' for businesses looking for support.

The Council will consider using each of these approaches depending on the circumstances and will always take into account who is best placed to provide a solution to a particular business need. In many cases, the Council will play an 'enabling' or 'signposting' role, but it may be appropriate on occasions to be more pro-active and directly commission services where it is clear that there is a gap in the market that could be filled by the Council.

6. Proposed Activity

Delivering against our ambitions is the most critical part of this strategy. Although economic growth will primarily be driven by investment from the private sector, the Council and its strategic partners such as Worcestershire County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnerships can make a considerable contribution to the development of a successful local economy.

Aside from the fact that the Council is a major local employer, has some land and property assets and purchasing power which can potentially benefit local companies, the Council can make the biggest difference to the enterprise and growth agenda in three ways:



Providing flexible business accommodation



Providing business support, mentoring and targeted financial assistance



Ensuring that Wyre Forest is investment ready



Providing flexible business accommodation

The Council manages a diverse portfolio of property and land assets. In recent years, the Council has focused on utilising its assets to support the local economy through plans to regenerate key sites in the district as well as exploring opportunities to support local businesses.

The Council's Strategic Asset Management Policy (SAMP) sets out a future approach which is focused on identifying opportunities for the Council to invest in existing and new assets to generate revenue and support economic growth, whilst disposing of under-performing assets to provide capital funding to invest. The Council has approval to deposit such capital receipts into an 'Evergreen Investment Fund'. Funding from this pot can be invested into schemes that bring a commercial return to the Council.

Through its direct commissioning approach the Council used its business incubator unit at Hoo Farm Industrial Estate branded as SPACE as 'proof of concept' which led to the acquisition and conversion of Forest house on the same industrial estate as the permanent home for new business incubation.. The unit was purchased and converted in 2020 and provides flexible workshop, office and storage space for small start up and growing businesses as their first business accommodation (rather than working from home).

Leases are for a maximum of three years during which businesses are supported to establish and grow before being encouraged to move out into more permanent accommodation at the end of the three year period, thus opening up space for new businesses to access.

As part of this strategy, the Council recognized the need to support the incubated business tenants at Forest House to move out at the end of the three year period and has constructed nine new small industrial units on the site of the former Frenco works, now named Unity Park, which adds to the existing popular units on the adjacent Hoobrook Enterprise Centre. But the Council is going further and recognising the need for the public sector to lead the way (per the Litchfield report) is also planning the new build of six medium sized industrial units, Forest Industrial Park, off Crosbie Grove in 2021.

In parallel the Council continues to work with private sector partners to help facilitate development of further new units or conversion of existing buildings that would accommodate start up or growing businesses.

The new units at Unity Park and Forest Industrial Park provide essential small to medium sized units between 600 sq ft to 4,000 sq ft. The Council continues to work with strategic partners such as the LEPs and Growth Hubs, to ensure that businesses can benefit from 'wraparound' support programmes, offering business coaching, mentoring and potentially grant assistance.

The Council will also be open to exploring opportunities to work with the private sector to deliver larger industrial or office units (2,000 square foot and above) that could be offered at the market rate on long lease arrangements.

The Council's Evergreen Investment Fund and Capital Portfolio Fund will be a potential sources of funding to finance 'investable' schemes along with the Development Loans Fund and financial mechanisms such as prudential borrowing and any grants that can be secured from LEPs.

In its role as local planning authority, the Council also has an important role to play in ensuring that the district has a sufficient supply of employment land and that sites and premises are of the right type and size.

The new Local Plan provides for 29Ha of new employment land over the 2016 to 2036 plan period.





Providing business support, mentoring and targeted financial assistance

In recent years, Wyre Forest has benefited from participation in a number of business support programmes funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and delivered in conjunction with LEP partners. Some of the key outputs delivered in Wyre Forest as part of the 2014 - 2020 ERDF programme include:

- **Funding secured: £1,341,666**
- **Existing Businesses supported: 93**
- **Start ups generated: 92**
- **Jobs created: 130**

Worcestershire and GBSLEP have allocated almost all of their European Structural Funding with current programmes funded until 2023. Programmes of support are currently available to help business to start-up and grow (Priority Axis 3). There are also a number of programmes that provide specialist support for innovation (Priority Axis 1), moving towards a green economy (Priority Axis 4) and upskilling the workforce. Programmes of support that are currently available are:

Enterprise for Success
Enterprising Worcestershire
Elevate
WINN
Proof of Concept
Business Energy Efficiency Programme
Low Carbon Opportunities Programme
Elevate Technology
Supplier Skills Programme
Skills Support for the Workforce

Going forward, the Council plans to continue to maximise the benefit of ERDF funding to businesses in the district. The Council will work closely with LEP partners to ensure that there is in place a portfolio of schemes available locally that will encourage further business start-up activity, business growth and inward investment.

The Council (via NWEDR) has already indicated financial and 'in-kind officer' support for several strategic projects being promoted by larger local authority partners such as Birmingham City Council, Solihull Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Subject to the funding applications being approved, NWEDR will ensure that project delivery is co-ordinated effectively in North Worcestershire and eligible businesses are aware of the support that is on offer. The programmes will ensure that eligible local businesses and entrepreneurs can benefit from a menu of support including:

- Information/ guidance and diagnostic to identify business needs;
- Intensive support from a qualified business adviser;
- Coaching and mentoring support for pre-starts and new business start-ups;
- Targeted financial assistance with schemes offering grants of between £10,000 and £100,000 to encourage business start-up activity or existing businesses to be able to progress their growth plans;
- Support for product development and process improvement;
- Sector specific support for key sectors;
- Intensive assist for businesses with high growth potential;
- Innovation advice and 'proof of concept' support;
- Supply chain development including access to opportunities such as HS2;
- Support to achieve resource efficiency;
- Support for Apprenticeships, training and workforce development.

The Council via the NWEDR shared service is also well placed to continue to act as a 'gateway' to local and regional business support programmes and initiatives. The team will work to ensure that local businesses understand what is available and how to access the support that they need and also ensure that an effective working relationship is maintained with the Growth Hubs, so that local businesses can benefit from a 'seamless' customer journey.

Summary of current business support programmes –

Start

Enterprise for Success
Birmingham City University Enterprise for Success workshops
Enterprising Worcestershire
NWEDR Start-up Grant
Peer to Peer Network from Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Growth Hub
Peer to Peer Network from Worcestershire LEP

Grow

Elevate Programme Worcs
Manufacturing Growth Programme
NWEDR Booster Grant
Small Business Leadership Programme
Peer to Peer Network from Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Growth Hub
Peer to Peer Network from Worcestershire LEP

Recover

Sustain & Grow
Elevate Programme Worcs
Adapt Business Support

Innovate

Proof of Concept
Low Carbon Growth Support Project
WINN

RELOCATE

Property Investment Programme

RECRUIT

Wyre Forest Apprenticeship Grant
Bromsgrove Apprenticeship Grant
Redditch Apprenticeship Grant
Develop Graduate Programme
Kickstart

UP-SKILL

Skills Support for the Workforce
Supplier Skills Programme

SPECIALIST SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Additional Restrictions Grant For more information on eligibility criteria and application forms for the above two grants, click here for Redditch businesses, Bromsgrove businesses Wyre Forest businesses.
Agricultural & Horticultural Business Grants
Low Carbon Opportunities Programme
Business Energy Efficiency Programme
Low Carbon Growth Support Project
Peer to Peer Network from Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP Growth Hub
Peer to Peer Network from
Worcestershire LEP



Ensuring that Wyre Forest is investment ready

Over the past few years the arrival of Amtek, now Liberty Aluminium Technologies, and Superform to Kidderminster has re-energised the manufacturing base and this growth is expected to continue with other developments planned or underway including:

May 2021, Barton Firtop due to open its new 45,000 square foot facility which is the first phase of its expansion and relocation into the district where its manufacturing, testing and warehouse facility brings its world class filtration systems operation to the Silverwoods site;

Autumn 2017, Ratio Park, Finepoint Way Phase 1 begins to let small and medium sized units from 960 sq ft to 2145 sq ft; phase 2 of the site still development ready;

March 2021, Suma Developments Ltd of Shrewsbury begin work on 35,000 sq ft of industrial units on Silverwoods Way, 17,000 sq ft of which the Council is due to purchase as 'Forest industrial Park' providing new units of 2-4,000 sq ft capacity;

March 2024, Following the successful award of Future High Streets Fund monies, the Council plans to open a new 4,000 sq ft facility in the former Magistrates' Court and indoor market building in Kidderminster town centre as a creative and innovation hub, providing space for business acceleration and creative industries to locate and expand.

The Council has played a pro-active role in securing investment opportunities and has worked to ensure that it creates the right conditions for growth, whether this is through its economic development activities, streamlining of its planning processes or by demonstrating the strategic leadership required to do whatever it can to incentivise investment into the district.

The introduction of flexible planning policies such as the Local Development Order (LDO) for the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park, now in its third period, has provided a demonstrable example of how the Council can make it as easy as possible for businesses to invest in the district.

The Council intends to continue to ensure that enterprise and business growth is at the heart of everything that it does so that Wyre Forest can attract further investment and support further entrepreneurial activity.

Strategic Framework

This document has set out the continuation of the approach the Council has been pursuing to encourage enterprise and business growth activity.

The diagram overleaf provides a visual representation of the strategic framework that will guide the Council's effort to supporting business growth at all stages of the 'business life cycle'.

The strategy is intended to cover a five year period, but the Council's approach will be kept under regular review to ensure that any changes to the economic climate or business support environment can be factored in. Furthermore, the Council will monitor the progress made in supporting enterprise and business growth by reporting against and monitoring a suite of 'measures' which are attached.

Enterprise and Business Growth Strategic Framework

Foster an entrepreneurial culture

Pre-start (WFDC Physical and business support potential offer)

Provision of small starter units - industrial/office/storage offering units typically up to 1,000 sqft

Managed work space/incubation

Engagement with schools/colleges

Coaching/mentoring/business planning

Small scale 'starter' grants

To encourage new inward investment into the district
To nurture existing businesses and retain them

Mature businesses (5 years +)

Industrial/ office units - over 2,000sqft depending on size and nature of business

Current market analysis shows a shortage of good quality units between 2,000 and 10,000 sq ft

Sector specialist support

Support for innovation

Supply chain development

Support to access large business grants

Broker access to equity, loan or other forms of finance

Apprenticeships, training and workforce development

bespoke packages of support for prospective inward investors.

Realisation of corporate priority
'support you to contribute to a successful local economy'

Young businesses (post start >2 years)

'Grow on space' typically up to 2,000 sqft; businesses still benefit from supportive environment

Fast growing companies may be looking for larger space c5,000 sqft Post start business advice/coaching

Support to access business growth grants

To create sustainable business start-ups

Start-up (up to 2 years trading)

Small starter units - offering units typically between 1,000 and 2,000 sq ft

Managed work space/ incubation

Business advice/coaching/mentoring

Potential 'high growth' intensive support

Support to access business start up grants

WFDC 'Approach'

Support & signposting

Enabling & Engaging

Direct commissioning



Wyre Forest
District Council

www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk

North
Worcestershire



Appendix - Strategic measures

Support you to contribute to a successful economy	WFDC Enterprise and Growth Ambition	Proposed measures	Quarterly Frequency of Reporting
	Foster an entrepreneurial culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of schools supporting business related projects No. of FE colleges supporting business related courses No. of engagements between NWedR & schools/Colleges 	Annually Annually Six monthly
	To create sustainable business start ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nos. of businesses attending NWedR supported programmes surviving more than 1 year Nos. of businesses attending NWedR supported programmes surviving more than 2 year Nos. of businesses attending NWedR supported programmes surviving more than 3 year 	Annually Annually (after 2 years) Annually (After 3 years)
	To nurture existing businesses and retain them within the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nos. of businesses receiving support from NWedR/ERDF funded programmes Businesses receiving support which either increase profits and/or turnover and/or employees and which remain in the district. Nos. of businesses occupying WFDC owned accommodation 	Annually Annually Annually
	To encourage new inward investment into the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of WFDC controlled property created per annum No. of promotional campaigns per quarter No. of approaches (direct or through intermediaries) made to potential businesses about available property/land No. of enquiries received resulting in a business locating in WFD No. of incentives promoted to businesses Total commercial floor space and/or land readily available in WFD advertised on search engines. 	Annually Quarterly Quarterly Six monthly Quarterly Quarterly



Wyre Forest
District Council

www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk

North
Worcestershire



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Cabinet
Wednesday 19th May 2021**

**Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 1st April 2021**

A Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise 2021-26

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place which set out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise 2021-26.

The Committee discussed the report and thanked the Corporate Director and his team for the work they had done in promoting business growth within the District over many years and for the securing the relocation of the engineering company Barton Firtop. The Committee felt that since 2016 a climate emergency had been declared and the authority had taken steps to address the issues and that additions be made to the objectives and principles within the strategy to include reference to the green growth agenda and the promotion of Council's expectation of net zero carbon emissions.

Recommend to Cabinet that:

The Strategy for Enabling Business Growth & Enterprise 2021-26 is agreed, subject to the Green Business Growth agenda being included within the Enterprise and Business Growth Ambitions on page 52 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Background papers:

See the report on page 34 of the pdf at this link:

http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc56520_20210401_o_and_s_agenda.pdf

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET****19th May 2021****Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026**

PART OPEN & PART EXEMPT AS THERE IS INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE AUTHORITY HOLDING THAT INFORMATION).	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cabinet Portfolio Holder to be announced by the Leader appointed on 12 May 2021
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place
CONTACT OFFICER:	Victoria Bendall, Estates Officer Victoria.bendall@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026 Appendix 2: Property Disposal Strategy 2021 (exempt)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the adoption of the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026 and associated Property Disposal Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to DECIDE to:

- 2.1 **Adopt the Strategic Assessment Management Plan 2021-2026 and Property Disposal Strategy 2021.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2014 the Council reviewed its approach to utilising its assets to support the local economy through plans to regenerate key sites in the district, as well as supporting local businesses to invest in their own plans for growth.

As a result the Council adopted a new approach, considering investing in existing and new assets to support its corporate priorities to engender local economic growth as well as generating new or improved revenue compared to that which had previously been the case and disposing of under-performing assets to provide capital funding to invest. Consequently the Evergreen Investment Fund (EIF) was established, which aims to use the Council's assets to generate capital receipts and/or improve revenue streams and contribute to regeneration.

- 3.2 The Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) is the principle document to identify how the Council plans to manage its diverse portfolio of property and land assets. This portfolio is key to both the delivery of Council services and its Corporate Plan Priorities.

- 3.3 In 2017 the Council entered into a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) with PSP Facilitating Ltd as an alternative means by which the Council could add value to the development or disposal of its assets. This alternative delivery vehicle is currently working on a number of potential site developments.
- 3.4 The SAMP and Disposal Strategy was considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st April 2021 and it was recommended that Cabinet adopt the SAMP with the addition of further narrative to recognise that the Council holds some assets which are of community benefit rather than just purely for financial return. The SAMP has been amended to reflect this.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The core objectives of the Strategic Asset Management Plan are:
- Provide a structured 3-5 year property strategy
 - Assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities
 - Effective and sustainable use of the Council's land and buildings to support improved delivery services
 - Enable disposal of surplus or under-performing assets to generate capital receipts for reinvestment and reduce running costs
 - Use of the Evergreen Investment Fund to facilitate regeneration initiatives and other revenue generating opportunities
 - Support the Council's Capital Strategy
 - Promote Partnership working and shared use of accommodation

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council aims to retain any property asset which provides a rental return on investment of 4% or above, unless there are exceptional strategic circumstances. The Property Disposal Strategy will look separately at each business case for disposal or retention of property not making a minimum 4% return, taking into account the specific type of asset held and costs of retention.
- 5.2 Capital funds generated from the disposal of land and property assets will be directed to the Evergreen Investment Fund for future investment use.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Strategic Asset Management Plan will ensure that delivery of the property strategy is supportive of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities and relevant Council strategies.
- 6.2 All property transactions are made in accordance with current legislation, including new energy efficiency regulations, community right to bid and regulations governing delivery of self and custom build housing.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Property Disposal Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that surplus or under-performing assets are identified for disposal. The process seeks to obtain best

value for the Council's assets working within market conditions and realistic timescales. Without an up to date and effective SAMP the Council risks having a portfolio of under performing assets and may miss opportunities to invest in economic regeneration activities that could improve revenue income streams.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 8.1 There are no issues to be addressed.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Property assets provide a significant opportunity for the Council to support economic regeneration and growth in the district. The Strategic Asset Management Plan is a key driver in setting principles and priorities for the management of the Council's property asset portfolio.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.
Property Disposal Strategy 2021 (Exempt).

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021 - 2026



Contents

- 1 - What is the strategic Asset Management Plan?
- 2 - What are the Council's Property Assets?
- 3 - Operational and Non-operational Asset Split.
- 4 - Who manages the Council's Property Portfolio?
- 5 - How do we manage our assets?
- 6 - What do we want the Strategic Asset Management Plan to do?
- 7 - What are our Asset Management Achievements?
- 8 - How well does the portfolio perform?
- 9 - What are the Strategic Asset Management Plan objectives for 2021 - 2026?

Appendices

Property Disposal Strategy 2021

WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN?

The Asset Management Plan is the key document to identify how Wyre Forest District Council plans to manage its diverse portfolio of property and land assets. This portfolio is key to both the delivery of Council services and its Corporate Plan Priorities.

The Council's property assets are used to support regeneration and growth and also to ensure that the Council has sufficient and suitable premises from which to operate, to ensure that it meets its corporate objectives.

The Strategic Asset Management Plan should be read alongside the Council's Facilities Asset Management Plan, which explains how the Council manages its operational properties and the Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy, which sets out how the Council is being proactive in facilitating economic growth, including how the Council intends to use its own assets as part of this strategy.

Examples of this can be seen in the way the Council has redeveloped the former Frencos site off Silverwoods Way to create Unity Park comprising nine new 600 sq ft industrial units and the acquisition and conversion of Forest House on Hoo Farm Industrial Estate to provide 22 workshop and office units of varying sizes as business incubator and growth space.



WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Since 2014 the Evergreen Investment Fund has been established, which aims to use the Council's assets to generate capital receipts or recycle them into regeneration and other projects which also improve the Council's Medium term Financial Strategy.

The Council has also established its Capital Portfolio Fund using its access to Public Works Loan Board finance to acquire and develop a portfolio of properties both within the District and at strategic locations within the Functional Economic Geography (FEG) which supports the growth of the local economy and supports the wider area and which has a significant economic influence for business and residents from the District.

Through the Capital Portfolio Fund a developing portfolio of cross sector acquisitions have been completed following a demonstrable business case being made, which contribute to the corporate priority 'to support a successful local economy'

- **Worcester Street/High Street, Kidderminster – retail units**
- **Stratford Court, Solihull – offices**
- **1 Buntsford Gate, Bromsgrove – offices**
- **Riverside, Kidderminster – retail units and offices**
- **Goldthorn Road, Kidderminster – industrial unit**

As a responsible landlord, the Council continues to ensure that these assets are managed properly and has appointed BNP Paribas as Property Managers. To ensure that as a portfolio the Council maintains the capital and revenue value of the properties, Jones Valerio have been appointed as Asset Managers.

The impact of Covid-19 on the property market is still uncertain but it has had a negative impact on some of the Council's tenants, particularly in the retail and leisure sector, resulting in rental arrears and will continue to be a challenge over the coming months. The Council will continue to work with its tenants and appointed agents to mitigate arrears and the impact on the performance of the Council's property assets.

WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN?

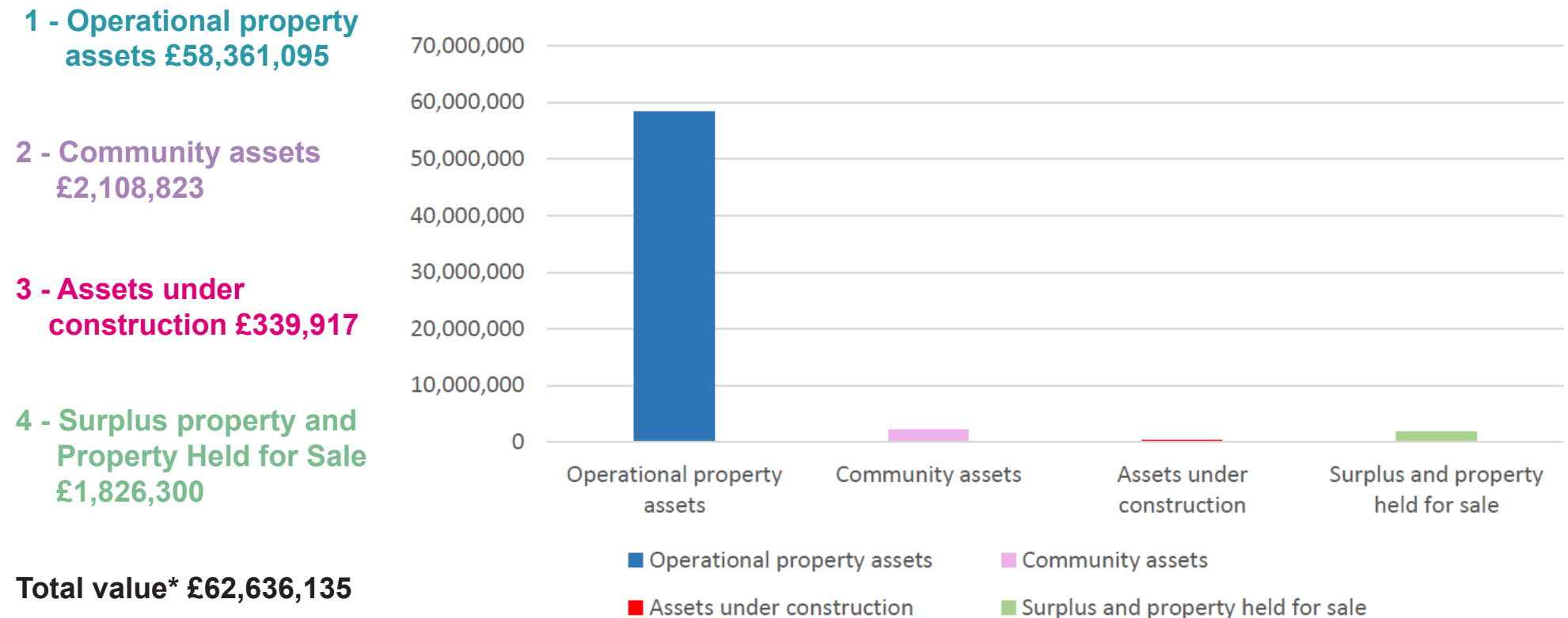
In 2017 the Council entered into a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) with PSP Facilitating Ltd as an alternative means by which the Council could add value to the development or disposal of its assets. This alternative delivery vehicle is currently working on a number of potential site developments.

The Council has successfully bid for £20.5m through the Government's Future High Streets Fund, which will see the transformation of the centre of Kidderminster and will enable the Council to acquire key strategic properties to re-connect the town as well as utilising its sites at former Crown House, Bromsgrove Street car park and the former Magistrates' Court and indoor market as a direct stimulus to new development that will diversify the town centre and promote more town centre living and employment opportunities across the town. The programme will be delivered over the period to the end of March 2024 with the development of the Council's sites being brought forward in parallel.

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY ASSETS?

The Council's property portfolio comprises a wide diversity of property and land assets with an approximate value of £62.6 million.

These include operational assets used in the delivery of Council services, such as administration buildings, car parks, parks and open spaces, as well as income generating assets including industrial units, offices and retail.



WHO MANAGES THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY PORTFOLIO?

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT
COUNCIL'S
ASSET PORTFOLIO



PORTFOLIO HOLDER
CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
REGENERATION

LEAD OFFICER
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND PLACE



PROPERTY TEAM

FACILITIES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT TEAM

LEGAL SERVICES

NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION (NWedR)

FINANCE TEAM

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES TEAM

HOW DO WE MANAGE OUR ASSETS?

Appointment and performance monitoring of external Property Consultants and contractors

Landlord and Tenant work - Lease renewals, rent reviews, assignments and sub-letting

Disposals and acquisitions of land and property

Day to day management of office, retail and industrial property including Space at Hoo Farm and Hoobrook Enterprise Centre

Asset valuations and Insurance valuations

Setting and monitoring repair and maintenance budgets

Rating appeals for Council owned property

Project Management

Strategic Estate Management of the Council's operational and non-operational property

Close working with other Council departments to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities

The Property team is pivotal to the strategic management of the Council's corporate property assets



Management of property assets for community use

Ensuring sustainable use of energy within Council assets, including compliance with new energy efficiency regulations

WHAT DO WE WANT THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN TO DO?

- ➔ Compile and maintain up to date and accurate information about land and property assets
- ➔ Support the Council's Strategic Housing objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2019-23
- ➔ Acquisition of property assets to contribute to the Corporate Plan priority to support a successful local economy
- ➔ Support the delivery of self and custom build housing
- ➔ Ensure that assets are fit for purpose, accessible and well maintained
- ➔ Support the Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy of the Council
- ➔ Efficient, effective and sustainable use of the Council's land and buildings to support improved delivery services
- ➔ Promote partnership working and shared use of accommodation.
- ➔ Provide a structured 5 year property strategy, which will be reviewed annually
- ➔ Ensure all transactions are made in accordance with current legislation, including community right to bid

CORE
OBJECTIVES
OF THE
STRATEGIC ASSET
MANAGEMENT PLAN



WHAT DO WE WANT THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN TO DO?

- ➔ Provide a clear decision making process for property related matters
- ➔ Support overall improvement of the public realm
- ➔ Assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities
- ➔ Efficient management of the Land & Property portfolio to provide a significant revenue stream
- ➔ Assess asset portfolio and consider acquisition opportunities
- ➔ Support the Council's Financial Strategy
- ➔ Support the localism agenda and transfer of selected assets such as public WCs and parks to Town and Parish Councils.
- ➔ Continue to work with PSP Facilitating Ltd (Limited Liability Partnership) to add value to potential site developments.
- ➔ Enable disposal of surplus or under-performing assets to reduce running costs and generate capital receipts for new acquisitions

CORE
OBJECTIVES
OF THE
STRATEGIC ASSET
MANAGEMENT PLAN



WHAT ARE OUR ASSET MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS?

The Strategic Asset Management Plan ensures that the Council's use and management of its property assets helps to deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2021-2023.

Supporting local economic growth by granting of long leasehold extensions on the Council's industrial estates.

Co-location of public and private sector bodies at Wyre Forest House to improve services and generate rental income.

Transfer of car park land in Bewdley to facilitate delivery of a new health centre.

Rationalisation of the Council's administration buildings to reduce running costs and enhance service provisions.

Compliance with energy efficiency regulations across the portfolio to meet target emissions reductions as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

Development of Unity Park to create 9 new industrial units

Acquisition and conversion of Forest House to provide more business incubator units at Space

Capital Portfolio Fund acquisitions to create a developing portfolio of cross sector acquisitions

Disposal of under-utilised assets to reduce costs and generate capital receipts

Disposal of freeholds to businesses to help them finance their own growth

Land transfers to community organisations to enable provision of enhanced sports facilities

Transfer of selected assets to Town and Parish Councils under the Localism agenda

Support a safe, clean and green environment

Support a successful local economy

HOW WELL DOES THE PORTFOLIO PERFORM?

- 1 • The property portfolio generated c£1.5m of rental income in 2019/20 and this is expected to remain similar in 2020/21, although there will be some impact on rental income due to Covid-19.
- 2 • The Property Disposal Strategy will look separately at each business case for disposal or retention of property not making a minimum of 4% return, taking into account the specific type of asset held and the cost of retention. Capital funds generated from the disposal of land and property assets will be directed to the Evergreen Investment Fund for future use.
- 3 • Occupancy levels at Space since opening in January 2014 have averaged over 85%.
- 4 • Occupancy levels at Hoobrook Enterprise Centre currently at 100%.
- 5 • Capital receipts of £3.37m raised from land and property disposals and £168,000 raised in leasehold extension premiums since 2010.

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES FOR 2021-2026?

Ensure all operational buildings and land are able to operate effectively whilst maintaining their value

Disposal of surplus space either by letting or sale in accordance with the 2021 Disposal Strategy (see appendix)

Retention of property assets which provide significant return on investment to maintain/improve revenue stream

Disposal of under-performing/surplus assets to generate a capital sum

Enhancement of the portfolio through property acquisition and development

Mitigate impact of COVID-19 on property rental income



Use Evergreen investment fund to facilitate regeneration

Expansion of SPACE brand at Hoo Farm, Hoobrook Enterprise Centre and Civic Centre

Move towards WFDC as private landlord

Use all property more efficiently, effectively economically and collaboratively. Continue to support the localism agenda and transfer of some assets to Town and Parish Councils.

Partnership working
Shared use of accommodation

Introduce measures to monitor property performance

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Cabinet
Wednesday 19th May 2021**

**Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 1st April 2021**

Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-26

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place that set out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) 2021-26.

The Committee discussed the report. The Committee agreed that whilst it was important the authority maximised the assets to their full potential, there was also a community aspect to a number of the assets and formed part of the history of the area. It was important that the document reflected the assets were not just used for commercial purposes, they were part of and used by the community.

Recommend to Cabinet that:

The Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-26 and accompanying Disposal Strategy 2021 is agreed, with the inclusion of comments referencing the community benefit to be derived from some assets rather than simply their financial yield.

Background papers:

See the report on page 81 of the pdf at this link:

[http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc56520_20210401_o_and_s_agenda.p
df](http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc56520_20210401_o_and_s_agenda.pdf)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
19th May 2021**Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan 2021-2026**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cabinet Portfolio Holder to be announced by the Leader appointed on 12 May 2021
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place
CONTACT OFFICER:	Elaine Brookes Elaine.brookes@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan 2021-26 Appendix 2: Wyre Forest House Tenancy Management and Marketing Strategy.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the adoption of the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to DECIDE to:

- 2.1 **Adopt the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan 2021-2026, including the Wyre Forest House Tenancy Management & Marketing Strategy.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Facilities & Asset Management Team are key to ensuring that the Council's operational buildings and site portfolio is fit for purpose, accessible and well maintained.
- 3.2 The Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan (SF&) is the principal document to identify how the Council plans to manage its operational sites and building portfolio; ensuring the portfolio is compliant with statutory, regulatory and corporate building management standards and supports the Council's Corporate Plan to contribute to a successful local economy.
- 3.3 Following the letting of office space at Wyre Forest House in February 2015, since that date the Council have now successfully let space to 13 external organisations with 7 currently in occupation. It is the Council's continued aspiration to grow the income from Wyre Forest House by taking a commercial approach to marketing available space and income generating opportunities. The Wyre Forest House Tenancy Management & Marketing Strategy accompanies the SF& to ensure the Council has a sound strategic basis to maximise the optimum use of space for

the generation of income whilst continuing to meet the operational needs of the Council and its tenants.

- 3.4 The SF& and Wyre Forest House Tenancy Management & Marketing Plan was considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st April 2021 and it was agreed that they be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The core objectives of the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan are:

- To provide a structured 5 year facilities and asset management strategy.
- Assist in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities
- Support the objectives of the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.
- Ensure the Council's operational buildings and site portfolio is fit for purpose, accessible, well maintained and compliant with statutory, regulatory and corporate building management standards.
- To implement a Tenancy Management & Marketing Strategy for Wyre Forest House.
- Ensure buildings support the Council's commercialisation activities through the letting of space to private tenants, the hire of public meeting rooms and the use of the cafe service at Wyre Forest House.

- 4.2 Like many office based businesses the Council's use of its operational buildings has been affected in 2020 and 2021 by the Coronavirus pandemic. Whilst buildings have been kept open and made social distance safe during the pandemic where services have continued to be delivered, like many companies the Council is considering its floorspace needs and safe configuration going forward. In December 2020 the Council agreed to consider embedding the new flexible ways of working which the pandemic has necessitated, for permanent ways of working and with greater emphasis placed on a 'hybrid' for most staff where they use a combination of working in the office with working at home. At the time of writing the potential for the Council to reduce its office footprint as a result of this new way of working is still being considered.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Wyre Forest House currently has 7 organisations renting space at Wyre Forest House. This provides an annual rental income of £186,826 (including charges for IT services and telephones).
- 5.2 The income generated from hiring out the public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House has decreased by 95.7% in the past twelve months due to the pandemic; taking income for 2020/21 to £1,094.26 to date.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The SF& will ensure that delivery of the facilities and asset management strategy is supportive of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities and relevant Council strategies, including the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2021-2026.
- 6.2 The SF& will ensure that the Council's operational buildings and site portfolio are compliant with statutory regulations relating to building management.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The SF& will be reviewed regularly to ensure that objectives of the plan are being achieved and risks to the Council from breaches of statutory compliance are minimised and managed. Without an up to date and effective SF& the Council risks having a portfolio of under performing assets and may miss opportunities to generate additional income through the letting of space to private tenants and the hire of public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 8.1 There are no issues to be addressed.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan is a key driver in setting principles and priorities for the management of the Council's operational buildings and site portfolio. Property assets provide a significant opportunity to generate revenue income for the Council and the aim is to maximise the opportunities available in Wyre Forest House.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan 2021-2026
Wyre Forest House Tenancy Management and Marketing Strategy.

11. CONSULTEES

- 11.1 Corporate Leadership Team

Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan 2021–2026

Elaine Brookes
Facilities & Asset Manager
Economic Prosperity & Place

Contents & Appendices

Page 3 – What is the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan?

Page 4 – Facilities & Asset Management Team

Page 5 – Facilities & Asset Management Overview

Page 6/7 – Review of Facilities & Asset Management Outcomes -
2017 - 2020

Page 8/9 – What are the Facilities & Asset Management Team
objectives for 2021 – 2026?

Page 10 – Stakeholder Engagement

Page 11/12 – Challenges & Risks

Appendices:

Wyre Forest House Tenant Management & Marketing Strategy

What is the Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan?

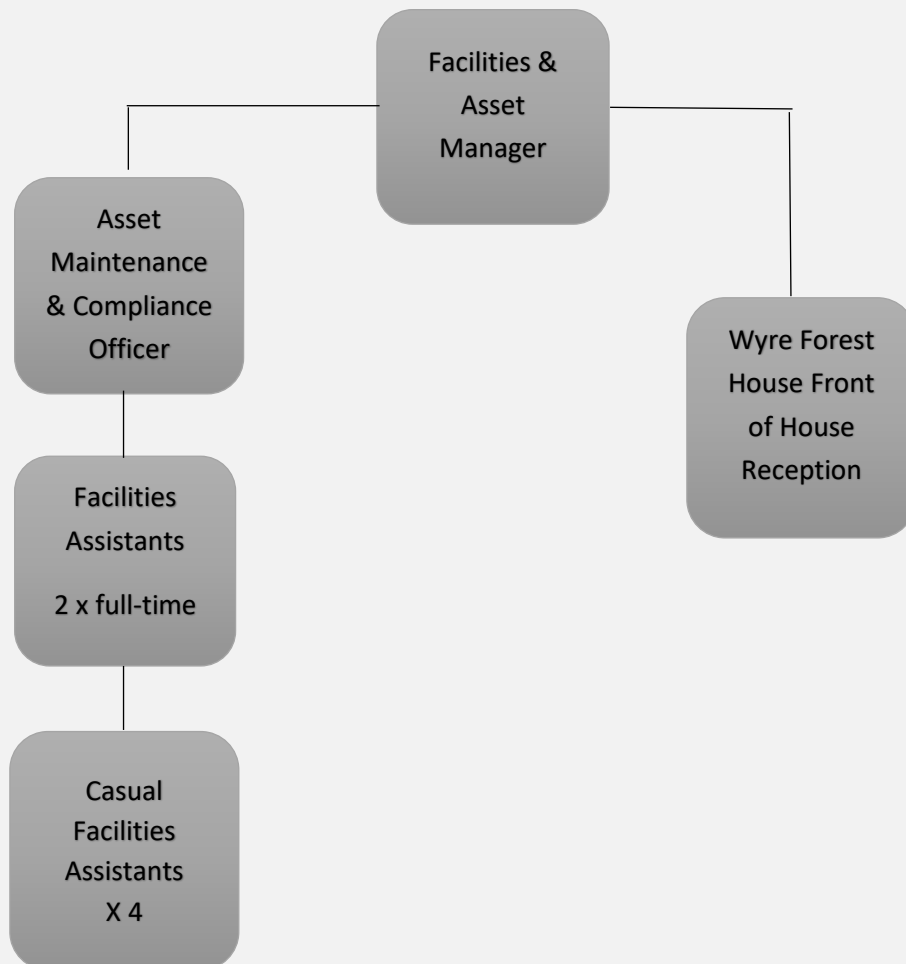
The Strategic Facilities & Asset Management Plan is a key document detailing the planned and proactive approach for the management and delivery of the Council's facilities and asset management services to support the primary objectives of Wyre Forest District Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021 – 2024, focusing on

- People
- Safety
- Sustainability
- Cost effective facilities management services
- Building compliance with key regulations, legislation, and codes of practice

Facilities & Asset Management Team

Wyre Forest District Council's Facilities & Asset Management services are provided by a small in-house team supported by contracted external specialist service providers.

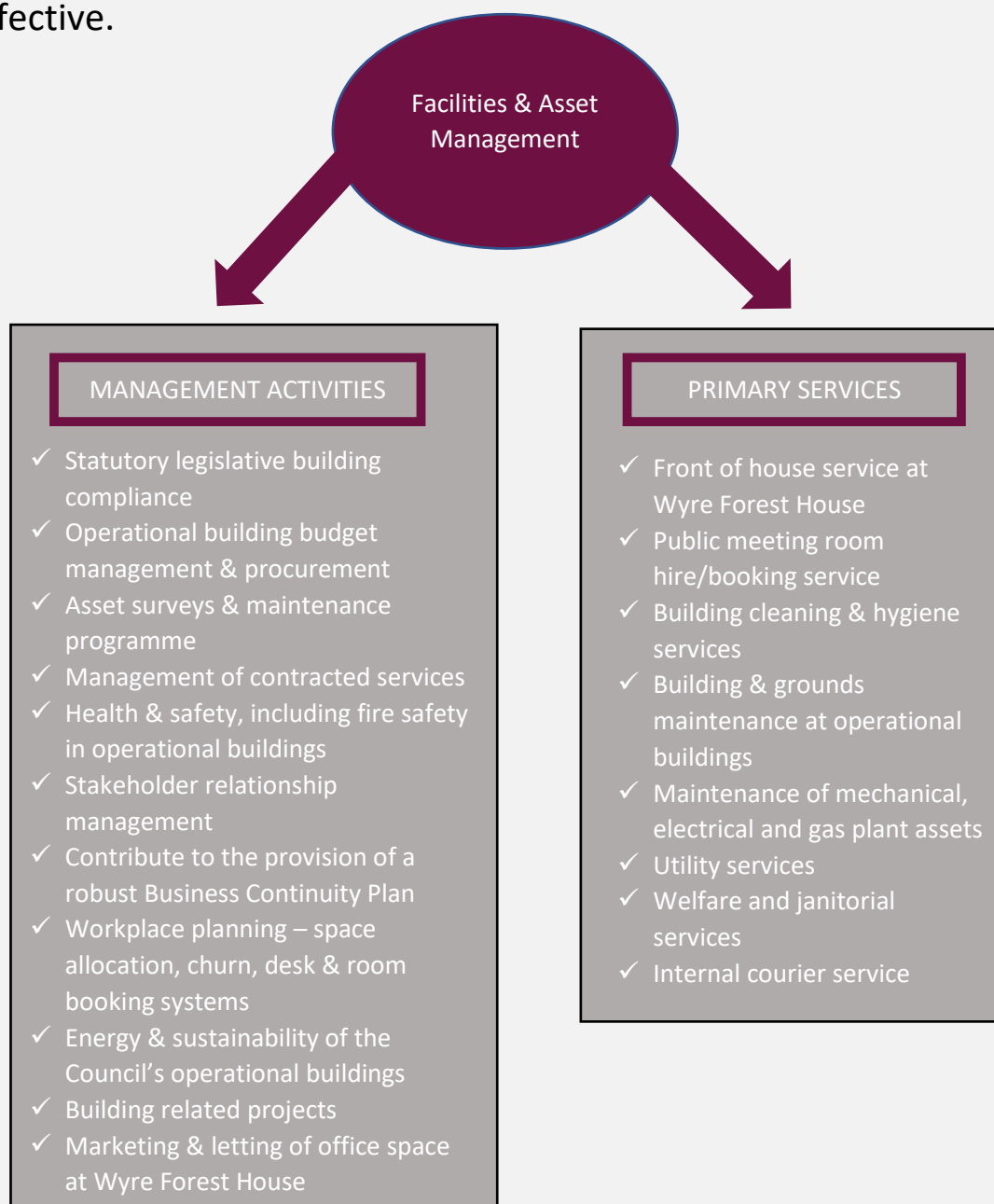
Structure



Facilities & Asset Management

Service Overview

The Facilities & Asset Management Team ensure the needs and objectives of the Council's Strategic Financial Strategy are supported by the effective management of the Council's places and spaces; providing services to staff and key stakeholders to ensure the working environment is safe, compliant, sustainable and cost effective.



Review of Facilities & Asset Management Outcomes 2017 - 2020

Outcomes achieved by the Facilities & Asset Management Team prior to the Covid-19 pandemic:



Commercial Income from the letting of office space and the hiring of the public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House

- Income directly attributed to tenancies at Wyre Forest House for the financial years 2017 – 2020

£555,186 (including shared services income for tenant ITC arrangements of £16,091)

- Income for the hire of the public meetings rooms during the financial years 2017 – 2020

£52,632.05 (includes £12,260 recharge for elections)



Letting of space at Wyre Forest House

Two new key Wyre Forest House tenants secured in 2019

- Aspens Vintage Events took on a lease to operate their catering service and café service at Wyre Forest House
- Severn Academies Education Trust took on a lease to occupy 4 offices on the first floor of Wyre Forest House

Wyre Forest House currently hosts 7 tenants with an annual total income of £186,826 (including charges for IT services and telephones)



Capital Portfolio Fund - working with the Council's Estate Surveyor, the Facilities & Asset Management Team provided an interim facilities & asset management service for the buildings and tenants of the Council's newly developed Capital Portfolio Fund properties until the procurement and appointment of an external property management company.



Depot 2020 Project & Wyre Forest House Accommodation Review

A successful accommodation review was carried out following the completion of the Depot 2020 project. Teams were decanted from Wyre Forest House to the refurbished accommodation at Green Street, which allowed internal moves within Wyre Forest House to take place to create additional vacant office space for commercial let.



Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The pandemic has seen a significant change in the way the Council's operational buildings are used and how the Facilities & Asset Management Team run the buildings.

The Facilities & Asset Management Team have made a significant contribution to the implementation of the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

A Covid-19 Working Group was set up for the various work elements required for returning to the workplace once lockdown restrictions were lifted.

Covid-19 'Working in Offices & Call Centre' Risk Assessments were completed, and measures subsequently put in place for the safe return to the workplace in keeping with Government guidelines.

A desk booking system was developed for Wyre Forest House and Green Street buildings to enable managers to take control of their team and working arrangements.

Tenants were kept informed and involved in the process for working safely and the team have supported the tenants by ensuring that they are able to continue with their business activities within Wyre Forest House.

Unfortunately, the impact of the pandemic has seen the Council's commercial income significantly reduced from the letting of the public meeting rooms at Wyre Forest House.

We have also seen a downward trend in interest for the lease of vacant office space as a result of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

What are the Facilities & Asset Management Team objectives for 2021 – 2026?



Review of future floorspace requirements to meet the Council's reduced accommodation needs

- The team will provide support to the Corporate Leadership Team for the commissioning of a business case to investigate possibilities and options to meet the Council's objective for the optimum use of buildings and space as the Council transitions to new ways of working and becomes a smaller organisation.
- We will prepare briefs for space layout, assess feasibility of changes, balancing costs versus benefits to help develop strategies for introducing alternative ways of working.



Transition to new 'hybrid' working arrangements

- The Facilities & Asset Management team will support the Council in its transition to a new 'hybrid' way of working which will mean roles will be re-defined where feasible to ensure more flexible use of home/office working and will require a reduced office footprint.
- This flexible workstyle will bring about a reduction in the amount of office floor-space required and at the same time will reduce the amount of travel made by employees to support the Council's Green Advisory Panel in their objective to reduce carbon emissions.
- Once roles have been defined across the agreed patterns of working the Facilities & Asset Management team will assist the Corporate Leadership Team to translate the work patterns into floorspace requirements, e.g. the number of desks required, which will work in parallel with the review of the floorspace requirements to meet the Council's reduced accommodation needs.



Energy and sustainability

- Sustainability and environmental management are an important operational criteria within the Council's buildings and the Facilities & Asset Management Team will be working with the Council's Principal Health & Sustainability Officer and Worcestershire County Council's Programme Manager to seek access to funding under the Public-Sector Energy Efficiency Programme (PEEP) to carry out –
 - Energy efficiency assessments at Wyre Forest House and Green Street to identify suitable energy savings options
 - A feasibility survey for a new energy efficient LED lighting system and solar PV installation at Wyre Forest House

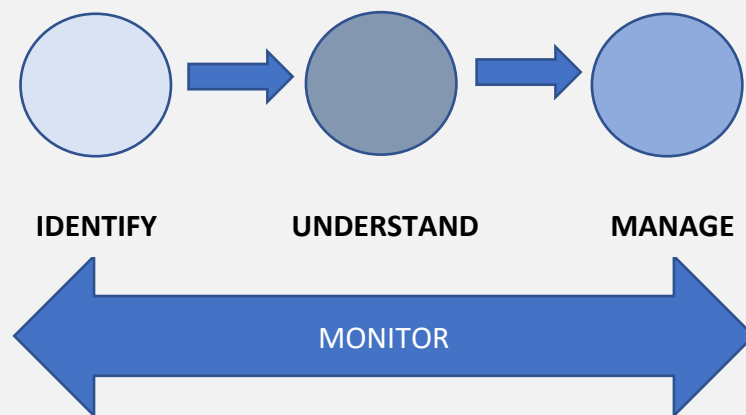


Building management, compliance, health & safety

The Facilities & Asset Management Team will –

- Review planned and reactive maintenance contracts to develop specifications to use and manage contracts in accordance with business requirements whilst ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.
- Continually review and update building risk assessments, including fire risk assessments and fire evacuation procedures for operational buildings following the review of floorspace and the introduction of 'hybrid' working arrangements.
- Carry out in-house portable appliance testing to a scheduled programme of testing beginning with home working portable electrical equipment, e.g. pc's, screens, phones, cables etc.
- Ensure the Council's buildings are compliant with key regulations, legislation, and codes of practice to promote a safe and healthy working environment.
- Implement the Wyre Forest House Tenant Management and Marketing Strategy.

Stakeholder Engagement



The Facilities & Asset Management Team actively engage with our stakeholders to work to identify and understand their ideas and concerns so that we can build, manage, and maintain relationships both internally and externally to continually improve on the services delivered.

Channels used are:

- Face-to-face where possible
- Remote meetings (Teams, Zoom)
- Email
- Telephone
- Digital Notice Boards
- Wyred Weekly on-line system
- Corporate Briefings
- Wyred-In Newsletter/mailshots using GovDelivery system
- Social media

Challenges & Risks



Wyre Forest House Vacant Space

2020 was a challenging year in many ways; the pandemic had a dramatic effect on the number of enquiries for office space being received across the market in general. However, the number of enquiries has begun to increase, and the Council is hopeful that companies will look at alternative ways of providing flexible office space for their organisation outside of city centres in areas that can provide good quality office accommodation with parking.

With this in mind the Facilities & Asset Management Team will continue to promote the vacant office space available at Wyre Forest House to meet the flexible terms organisations will be seeking as they consider different ways to offer office space for their employees.

A refreshed Wyre Forest House Tenant Management and Marketing Strategy will be implemented setting out the aims and objectives to continue to grow income by the letting of surplus office space at Wyre Forest House.



Challenges & Risks (2)



On-going impact of the pandemic and the use of operational buildings

The use of Council buildings will need to be continually reviewed as the Government Covid-19 guidelines change. The Facilities & Asset Management Team will ensure on-going reviews are carried out for the adjustment of operational arrangements to ensure optimum use of the buildings, including the hiring of the public meeting rooms.

We will monitor trends of change and the future direction of the workplace and facilities management needs and lead key stakeholders through the process to minimise any impact on their day to day activities.

The team will also consider the impact of the pandemic when ensuring accommodation needs are met as the Council transitions towards becoming a smaller organisation with a smaller office footprint within the operational buildings.



Wyre Forest House

Tenant Management and Marketing Strategy

Introduction

Following the first letting of office space at Wyre forest House in February 2015, the Council has successfully let space to a total of thirteen organisations since this time. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the additional renting of the public meeting rooms had increased year on year.

To continue to meet the Council's objective for the generation of revenue, this strategy is intended to ensure the optimum use of space within Wyre Forest House, adopting a commercial letting approach, whilst continuing to meet the operational needs of the Council.

Aims & Objectives

The Council aims to:

- Continue to grow income by letting surplus space and the hire of public meeting rooms
- Meet the changing accommodation needs of the Council
- Ensure a commercial approach for the marketing of vacant office space
- Provide businesses the opportunity to occupy high quality, modern and flexible space
- Ensure the building retains its corporate image

Our Strategic Plan

Space Planning

- Ensure the Council's needs are met efficiently and effectively
- Maximise opportunities for letting of surplus space to generate income
- Ensure Wyre Forest House provides the quality of space to support occupants needs

Marketing of Vacant Space

- Adopt a commercial approach to marketing opportunities to grow income
- Use marketing agent and digital means for marketing vacant space
- Offer flexible terms to enable businesses to take space at Wyre Forest House

Hire of Public Meeting Rooms

- Use digital means for marketing the hire of public meeting rooms
- Maintain a competitive schedule of rates
- Carry out an annual quality benchmark exercise

Relationship Management

- Provide a quality professional front of house service
- Engage with our stakeholders to identify, understand their ideas and concerns to continually improve on the services delivered

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Cabinet
Wednesday 19th May 2021**

**Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 1st April 2021**

Strategic Facilities Asset Management Plan 2021-26

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity & Place that set out the proposals to update and adopt a Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan (SF&) 2021-26; which also included the management and marketing plan for tenancies at Wyre Forest House.

The Committee welcomed the plan and fully supported the proposals.

Recommend to Cabinet that:

The Strategic Facilities and Asset Management Plan 2021-26 is agreed.

Background papers:

See the report on page 65 of the pdf at this link:

[http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc56520_20210401_o_and_s_agenda.p
df](http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc56520_20210401_o_and_s_agenda.pdf)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
19th May 2021**Kidderminster 2040 – A Vision for the Town Centre**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Cabinet Portfolio Holder to be announced by the Leader appointed on 12 May 2021
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ostap Paparega – Head of NWEDR ostap.paparega@nwedr.org.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Draft Kidderminster 2040 Vision

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the adoption of the vision for the future of Kidderminster town centre 2040.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is asked to DECIDE to:

- 2.1 **Adopt the Kidderminster 2040 Vision for the Town Centre.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The District Council has a very strong track record of planning strategically for the development of Kidderminster town centre dating back in recent times to the adoption of the ReWyre initiative back in 2009. On the back of that ReWyre vision the Council was able to successfully attract funding from Worcestershire County Council to undertake the public realm works from Exchange Square to the High Street/Worcester Street junction and then more recently to enable the opening up of Worcester Street to traffic. In 2016 the Council adopted the vision for the Eastern Gateway which has now become known as Lionfields and this was successfully embedded into the adopted Local Plan to ensure that the proposals had materiality when key planning decisions had to be taken. As part of the Lionfields initiative the Council has been able to enter into a Development Agreement for the redevelopment of the former Glades Leisure Centre site and also adopted a vision for the redevelopment of part of the surplus spaces on Bromsgrove Street car park in 2019. All of this rich strategic narrative was undoubtedly a determining factor in the successful award under the Future High Streets Fund to enable the further transformation of the town.
- 3.2 However, what the Council did not have was a vision for the long term development of the town centre that linked all of these interventions. That was the catalyst for the bid to the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) enabling fund for initiatives under its Towns and Local centres programme which was submitted in January 2020. The Council was awarded £40k which it match funded with £10k to commission support to develop a new town

wide vision; and Hemingway Design were appointed in September 2020 after successfully tendering for the project.

- 3.3 The significance of the Council having a vision for the future of the town has, of course, added significance in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic which accelerated the decline of town centres, so the Council being able to use this time for setting the strategic direction for the town for the coming 20 years is never more timely. It is worth noting at the outset that this vision shouldn't be mistaken for a 'masterplan', it is not intended to be site prescriptive, that is the step following this one; this is about how the Council sees the vision for the town over that prolonged period, accepting that the Future High Street Fund success is relatively short term over the next three years, but will nevertheless represent the beginning of the delivery of that new vision. It should also be noted that the proposals in the vision should not be taken as prescriptive proposals for specific sites which might currently have a different land use. This is a 20 year vision and opportunities for implementation will ebb and flow, some elements will inevitably change over that period allowing some parts of the vision to be delivered as envisaged, some may need to adapt and may indeed become deliverable on sites which are yet to come forward for redevelopment.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Vision which has been produced by a multi-disciplinary team led by HemingwayDesign in collaboration with the Council's key officers from the North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration (NWEDR) (Appendix 1) also followed public consultation which was undertaken in late 2020 which included a number of workshop sessions held over the course of a day with different key stakeholder groups.
- 4.2 Just under 2000 responses were received to the consultation from a broad age range from under 25s to over 65s. Seventy seven of the respondents live in Kidderminster and under half of the respondents only visited Weavers Wharf or a supermarket in the town; this corresponds with the challenge the Council has always understood which is how to get more people into the traditional town centre. Only a third of those visiting the town stopped for more than hour, also highlighting the known challenge of getting people to 'linger longer'.
- 4.3 The Vision is premised on inclusivity – *"town centres with a strong degree of social capital are more likely to be inclusive places reflecting the priorities of the people who use it. Increasing social capital is therefore a key part of the Vision for Kidderminster"*. The Vision is articulated under the headings of 'Process', 'Place', 'People' and 'Purpose'. Six top local priorities for change are highlighted from the consultation and workshops:
- More independent and local shops
 - More green spaces and access to the river and canal
 - More local and independent cafes and restaurants
 - Better open public space to hold events and festivals
 - More cultural space for arts, music, film and theatre
 - More people living in the town
- 4.4 The Vision covers the wider extent of the town and in particular highlights a key 'civic street' linear connection from St Mary's Church to the north of the town, right up to the rail station on Comberton Hill, highlighting the impediments to this route

caused primarily by the presence of the ringroad. The opportunity to maximise the water environment created by the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and River Stour is also a key highlight.

- 4.5 The Vision highlights the distinctive place and heritage that makes Kidderminster the place it is, looking at how improvements can be made to its richness of diversity and how it could be more welcoming and better connected. It looks at how more town centre living could be created and how the town should increase the 'experiential' offer to encourage people to visit and stay longer. There is a strong entrepreneurial opportunity identified, particularly important as the town emerges from the pandemic. There is also a strong theme around the town being a 'healthier' town and maximising the waterside opportunities and the green space opportunities as well as recognising the need to develop in a sustainable way.
- 4.6 The Vision recognises the early interventions which can be achieved through the Future High Streets Fund initiatives and embraces those changes as early steps towards achieving the Vision, as well as looking forward at opportunities such as the recently announced Levelling Up Fund to take the Vision to the next level stages.
- 4.7 The adoption of this vision by the Council now is also timely in the context of future opportunities to bid for further transformational funding, starting with the Levelling Up Fund in June 2021 and expected in 2022/23 the Shared Prosperity Fund which replaces the European funding streams post EU exit. In the same way that previous strategic documents provided the firm foundation for the FHSF bid, so this 2040 Vision will demonstrate that the Council has some clarity over the direction it is heading in.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has already been awarded the funding to support the work developing this Vision; further funding towards implementing it will be accessed through further submissions into appropriate funding opportunities.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from the adoption of this Vision.
- 6.2 In terms of policy implications, it is intended that this Vision and any iterations of it or following masterplan documents will be part of the evidence base for the next version of the Local Plan which will need to be reviewed within five years of its adoption (expected early 2022).

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no direct risks as a consequence of the Council adopting this Vision; the risk of not doing so being far greater that the Council as community leader had no vision for the town centre and that as a consequence was unable to successfully access further funding streams to enable it to continue its transformation programme.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 8.1 There are no issues to be addressed.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Through the award of funding from the GBSLEP, the Council has been able to develop a new Vision for Kidderminster town centre through to 2040; by adopting such a vision the Council is able to demonstrate its forward thinking and establish a plan to deliver the continued transformation of the town.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Kidderminster 2040 Vision

Client: Wyre Forest District Council
Draft report 20th April 2021



Kidderminster Town Centre Vision

Contents

will update for final version

- 1. Vision.....X
- 2. Process.....X
- 3. Place.....X
- 4. People.....X
- 5. Purpose.....X
- 6. Projects.....X

1. Vision

In 2040 Kidderminster Town Centre aspires to be a progressive market town that is truly inclusive, diverse and sustainable and celebrates its natural assets, its history, and is a place where everyone can socialise, relax and enjoy spending their hard earned cash.

Kidderminster Town Centre Vision

Town centres are changing. We have known this for some time, but the pace of change has accelerated and the need to respond is increasingly urgent.

Kidderminster's response to the challenges it faces needs to be bold. But it also needs to be planned and coordinated. There are significant opportunities for change, and substantial funding has been secured to help deliver this change. It is essential therefore that Kidderminster makes the most of this 'once in a generation' opportunity.

The importance of developing this vision has increased in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic and town centres need to respond positively to the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic. Kidderminster must think carefully about its response and build on the particular characteristics of the town rather than trying to develop a solution that can be rolled out in all town centres.

This document sets a clear direction of travel for Kidderminster over the next 20 years. It is not a 'blueprint' for development, but an ambitious Vision to steer the form and quality of investment needed in the town centre.

The Vision will help steer the variety of projects which are already planned in the town centre, including the £20m from the Future High Streets Fund, and it will help access other financial support, such as the Levelling Up Fund.



Kidderminster is a town with a long history, and the ingredients for a bright future. With a distinctive manufacturing heritage, an interesting and varied waterfront, excellent rail access, a strong civic presence, an independent spirit and an engaged local community that clearly values its town centre, it is well placed to address the major social, economic, and physical challenges facing all town centres.

This is an optimistic Vision for Kidderminster town centre. It places culture, learning, health, the environment and most importantly people at the heart of the town. It is a vision that celebrates Kidderminster's heritage, bringing historic buildings back to life. It is an inclusive vision, by and for local people, just under 2000 of whom contributed their views and ideas.

Kidderminster Town Centre Vision

The Vision prioritises four elements fundamental to creating successful town centres of the future:

Place: town centres need a clear identity rooted in ‘place’. This is a vision that celebrates Kidderminster’s heritage and natural environment, bringing life back to its waterways and its historic buildings.

People: town centres need to prioritise people. People focused environments encourage people to linger, to discover and to return.

Purpose: town centres need to demonstrate a wider social purpose. This Vision promotes action which will help address the challenges of physical and mental health, social exclusion, biodiversity and climate change.

Process: town centres need to engage continuously with their communities. An inclusive process will create an inclusive town centre.

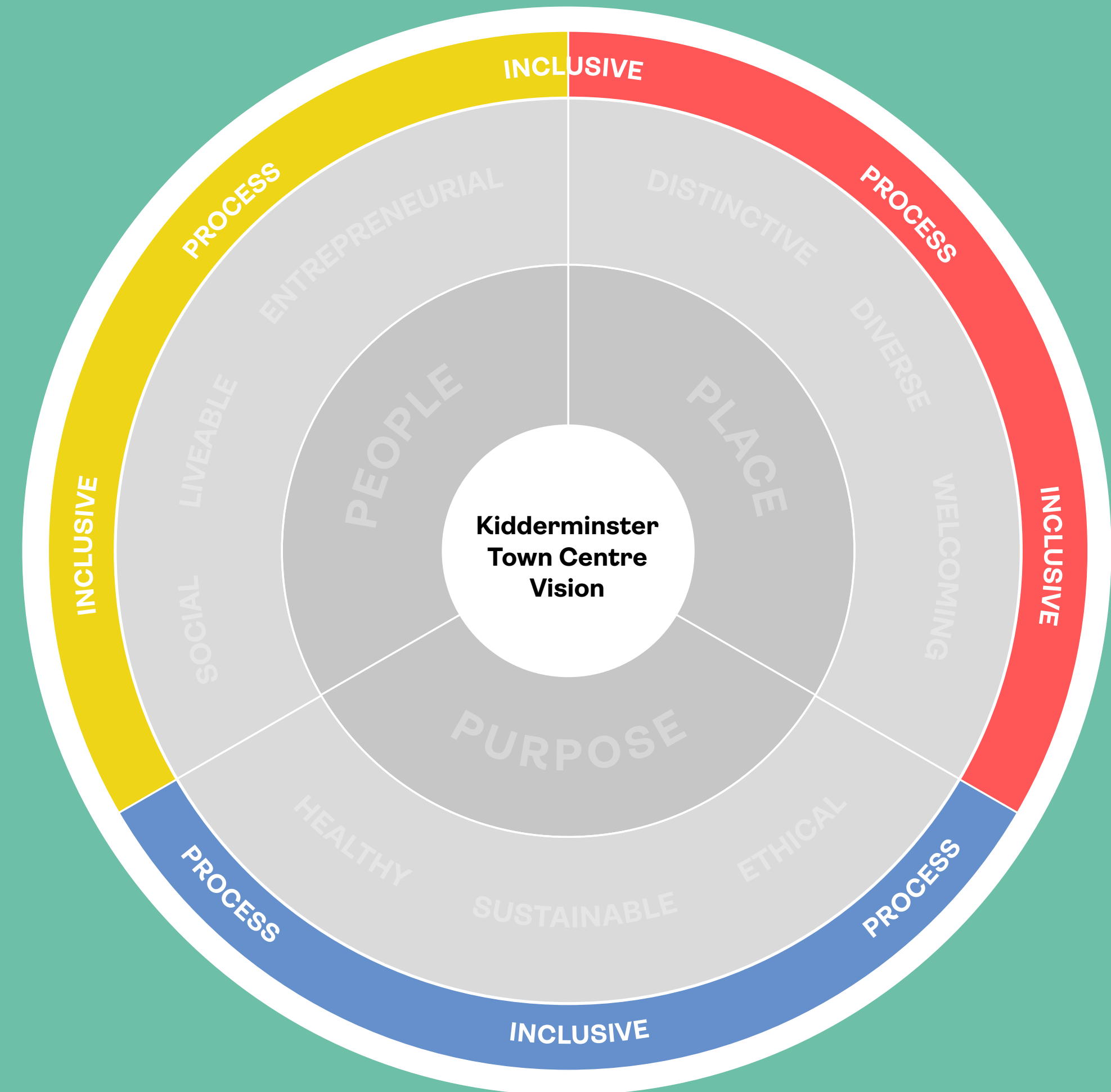




2. Process

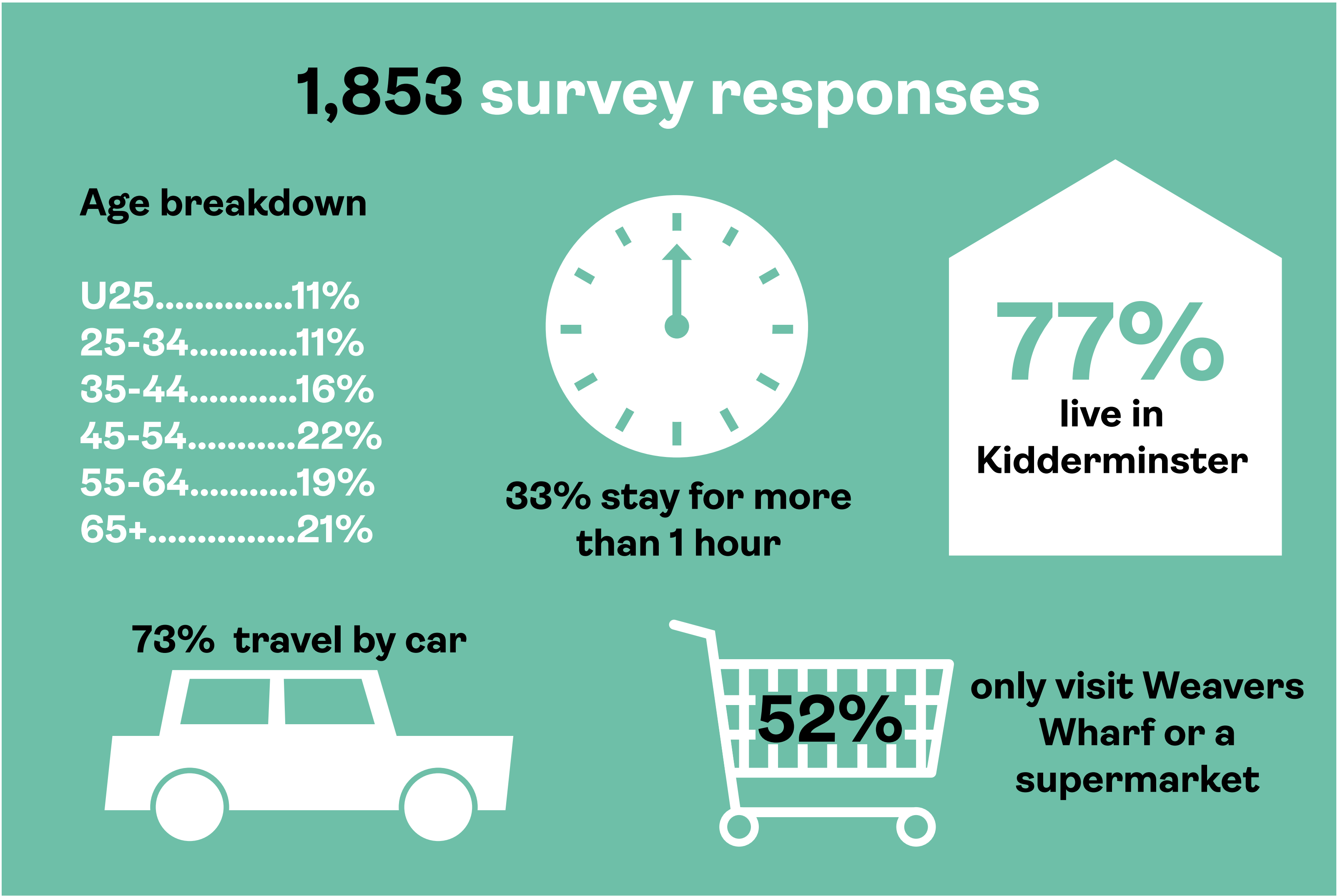
Inclusive processes build social capital - by this we mean that people of Kidderminster will have a say in how their town centre develops.

Social capital reflects the degree to which a community feels able to influence what happens in its town centre. Town centres with a strong degree of social capital are more likely to be inclusive places reflecting the priorities of the people who use it. Increasing social capital is therefore a key part of the Vision for Kidderminster.



The best places are shaped by the people who use and value them most, and almost 2,000 people provided their input to the Vision. Other stakeholders were involved in zoom workshops, socially distanced walking tours and meetings. The results showed a clear desire for change.

(provide link to read full report).



Local Assets

Process

The Vision prioritises those parts of Kidderminster town centre that local people value the most. This includes the canalside, the River Stour and the cluster of outdoor restaurants around Husum Bridge. It includes the market, independent shops, restaurants, and bars dotted around the town centre, with clusters on Worcester Street and Vicar Street. It includes civic assets such as the Town Hall, the library and the Carpet Museum as well as Brinton Park. It also includes celebrating the towns history like in the Carpet factory and Slingfield Mill, the former Brinton carpet factory.

Local residents were asked to identify their favourite places in the town centre:



Local Priorities

Process

Kidderminster residents value their town centre but recognise that it needs to change.

The top 6 priorities for change identified in the survey were:

- More local and independent shops
- More green space and access to the river and canal
- More local and independent cafes and restaurants
- Better public open space to hold events and festivals
- More cultural space for arts, music, film and theatre
- More people living in the town centre.

These priorities reflect the wider desire across the country to see more diverse town centres with more cultural activity and a focus on local and independent businesses. Residents and visitors want to see greener town centres with more open space. They want to see more people living and working in their town centres, bringing life outside normal shopping hours. This Vision therefore seeks to address the priorities for change identified by the people of Kidderminster.

97% of people supported change.

The top 6 local priorities for change were:



Understanding Differences

Process

Inclusive town centres recognise that not everyone has the same priorities.

Town centres are important social spaces for young people, particularly during the day. Young people in Kidderminster are significantly more likely than other age groups to visit with their friends, whether to eat and drink, see a film or just ‘hang out’.

The desire for better cultural and arts provision in Kidderminster is also strongest in the 18-25 age group suggesting an opportunity to bring more young people into the town centre. Younger people and older people are less likely to have access to a car and more reliant on walking, cycling and local buses. As a result, those under 25 or over 65 place a higher priority on improving public transport.

The biggest town centre priority for over 65s is improving access to the water and providing more green space. This age group also gives greater importance to building more homes in the town centre.

Those under 25 or over 65 place a higher priority on improving public transport links to the town centre.



18-25 year olds give greater priority to improving cultural activity in the town centre

U25s visit the town centre more often for eating, drinking and socialising.

20% of young people visit the town centre to study, and Kidderminster College is likely to play an increasingly important social and economic role in the town.

The biggest priority for over 65s is more green space in the town centre

Continuing Involvement Process

To be successful, Kidderminster will need to maintain the conversation with local people. Continuing to plan and design in partnership with the community will ensure Kidderminster is an inclusive town centre, meeting the needs of all its residents, visitors and businesses.

Kidderminster will put in place mechanisms to involve young people in the future planning of the town centre. It will start by working with Kidderminster College students to co-design the new public spaces.

Verify with the College that they are up for this shared approach



Bristol’s Urban Room, run by the Architecture Centre is an open, accessible and democratic space where everyone can actively participate in the future of our buildings, streets and neighbourhoods. The Urban Room project allows the community to come together to explore innovative and creative ways for people to experience buildings at first hand through:

- pop up installations in community settings
- travelling Urban Rooms
- live builds with communities
- immersive, interactive outdoor commissions
- talks and debates
- and as part of artist’s residencies.

Embedded within the project is Urban Room – Next Generation, a series of family workshops and creative collaborations with communities, children and young people which will explore the project themes of diversity and inclusive environments.

3.Place

Distinctive town centres are strongly defined, and have an understanding of their history and how that has been shaped by their physical environment. They have a greater sense of local identity, a better connection with their local communities and a stronger ‘brand’ to attract visitors.

Diverse town centres are more interesting, more inclusive and more resilient. They are more flexible and adaptable to social, environmental and economic change.

A welcoming town centre can be accessed and used by as everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, ability and sexuality. It is a place where design takes well-being and mental health into account. It is welcoming to residents, businesses, students and visitors.



Distinctive Kidderminster

Place

Kidderminster’s industrial heritage remains visible across the town centre. It is particularly prominent in the Church Street/Vicar Street/Exchange Street corridor, and in the Castle Street/Dixon Street/Green Street areas. New public spaces will enhance the settings of St Mary’s Church, Baxter URC Church, The Piano Building, Morton’s Works, the rejuvenated Former Magistrates’ Court and the Museum. New pedestrian routes will encourage exploration of a wider town centre, and raise awareness of the town’s industrial and civic heritage. All routes will connect back to the civic heart of Kidderminster, the Town Hall and Penny Black Square.

The town’s natural environment has shaped Kidderminster’s growth. The river and surrounding hills were the reason the town was established. The river and the canal supported the growth of the town’s manufacturing base and are the focus for many of the factory buildings that create Kidderminster’s unique identity.

Distinctive town centres are strongly defined. The historic image of Kidderminster shows a strong defined town edge with open landscape in the foreground. Dealing with the ring road in a positive way and not as the back of the town can create a strong town centre in the future.



The public said:
“Re-kindle Kidderminster’s heritage”

Kidderminster's identity is rooted in its physical and historical connection to the water. The Vision recognises the urban qualities of the canal and the natural qualities of the river corridor.

The Vision creates new public parks and social spaces that exploit the hilltop views and the waterfront setting with new homes, cafes and restaurants to bring life to these spaces.

Distinctive Kidderminster Place

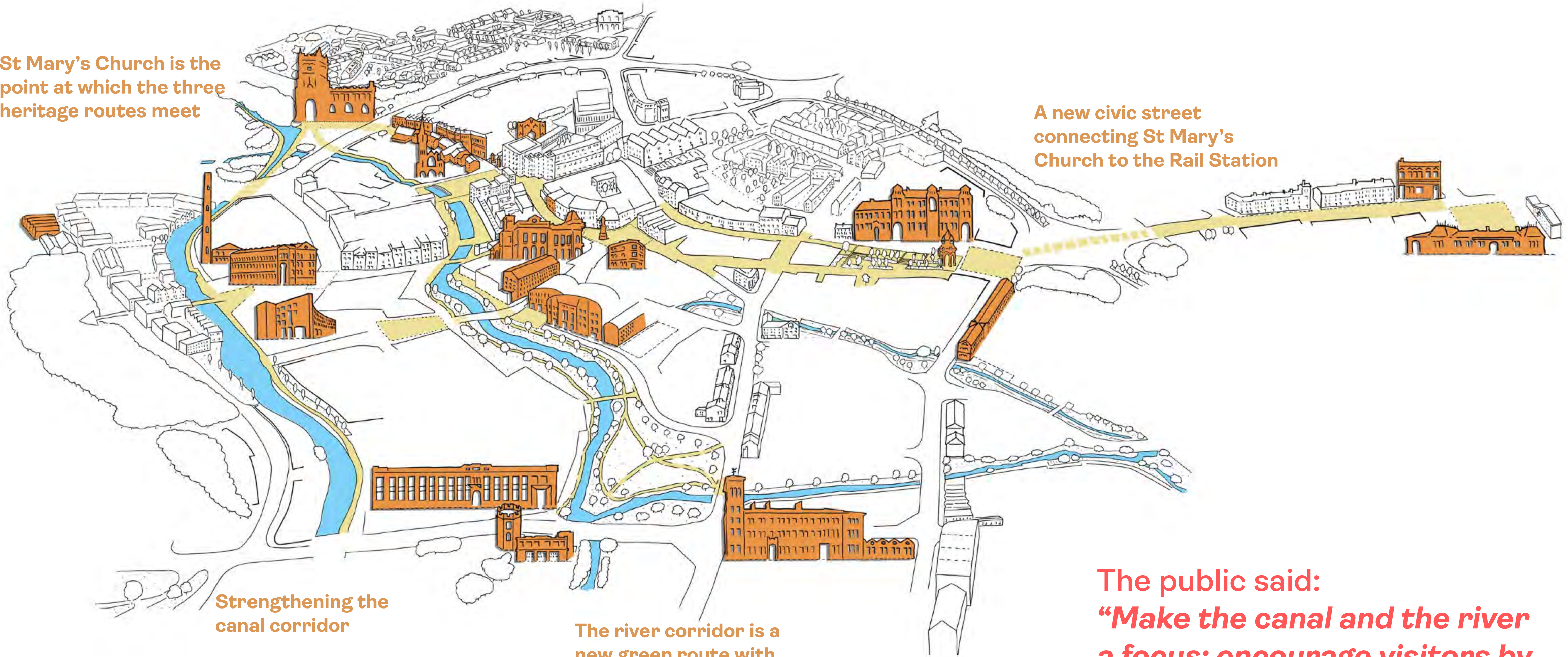
St Mary's Church is the point at which the three heritage routes meet

A new civic street connecting St Mary's Church to the Rail Station

Strengthening the canal corridor

The river corridor is a new green route with public spaces celebrating key buildings

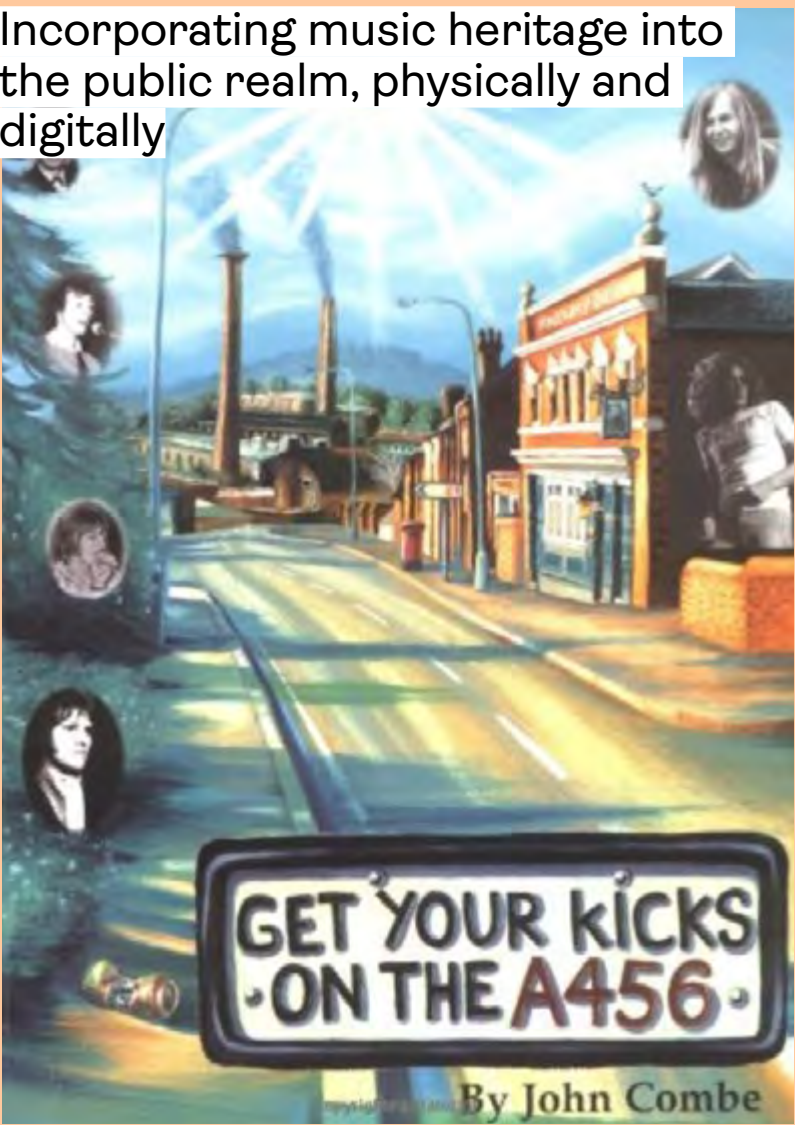
The public said:
“Make the canal and the river a focus: encourage visitors by making them really special, vibrant places with cafés, arts and cultural activities.”



Key project: Heritage and the Public Realm

The Vision identifies opportunities for new public spaces to enhance the setting of important heritage buildings and features. New spaces will be created outside the Museum and Former Magistrate’s Court, at the arrival from the railway station and to enhance the setting of the URC Baxter Church. The recently Grade II listed ‘Retaining Wall with Sculptural Relief’ by William Mitchell could also become a much stronger gateway feature in the town.

The potential also exists to incorporate Kidderminster’s heritage into the design of the public realm, both physically and digitally, to create a stronger trail around the town centre. Integrating carpet and textile designs into the physical fabric of streets and spaces can bring the heritage to life in a different way. Individual streets can have their own unique carpet pattern, complemented by the street furniture and lighting. Whilst the music heritage lends itself to audio-visual projects as well as distinctive street art.



Diverse Kidderminster

Place

The Vision for Kidderminster creates a varied residential offer across the town centre, with space for young people, families and older people. It provides space for small businesses to grow and expand. It brings health and community uses into the town centre.

The Vision creates new spaces and repurposes buildings for markets, pop-up retailing, street food and events, creating a more diverse town centre offer. Importantly it creates different experiences across the week, encouraging more regular visits and a sense of discovery.

The Vision supports new internal and external spaces for creative businesses, with a focus on improved events spaces within the the Town Hall.

Priority: More local and independent cafés and restaurants



Bringing a “festival vibe” to the town centre



Play can be simply fun



Bringing public amenity and artists together in temporary installations



Play can be architectural



Sustainable actions can inspire and be inclusive



The Vision creates a variety of places to live, eat, drink, shop, socialise and relax. It provides a distinctive setting for important civic and heritage buildings. It creates interesting and accessible routes for pedestrians and cyclists that connect Kidderminster's important streets, spaces and buildings. It encourages visitors to explore Kidderminster and strengthens local pride in the town's heritage.

Key project: Kidderminster Town Hall

Priority:
More cultural space for arts, music, film and theatre

Kidderminster Town Hall has been a civic and cultural focal point in the town centre for over 150 years. A venue for music concerts, business and community events, municipal functions and registering births and celebrating weddings, it is one of Kidderminster’s most important buildings, and sits at the heart of the town centre, physically and socially.

The Vision reinforces this role and makes the Town Hall relevant and accessible to the whole community. It identifies opportunities to improve facilities for performing artists and audiences with raked seating, new audio-visual and lighting systems. This will enhance the Town Hall as a performance venue for music, theatre, dance and film in the town centre.

A new meeting and community arts space, inserted within an existing courtyard with café and restaurant facilities and a stronger external presence will promote the Town Hall better, improve the visitor experience and bring more people into the town centre. Reinterpretation of the Court Room, improvements to the Council Chamber and old library area will improve the education facilities in the town centre and showcase Kidderminster’s heritage.



Welcoming Kidderminster Place

A range of jobs and homes brings a diversity of people, supports services throughout the week, provides ‘natural surveillance’ and creates a safer, friendlier town centre.

Streets and spaces will achieve a more appropriate balance between vehicles and other users. Some level of traffic can help increase activity and perceptions of safety but low traffic speeds are essential to ensure pedestrians and cyclists feel safe. 20mph will be the default approach within the town centre.

New public spaces encourage interaction between all sections of the community, reducing social isolation. Regular seating will provide opportunities for rest. High quality public toilets will improve health and make it easier for younger children, women, the disabled and older people to visit Kidderminster.

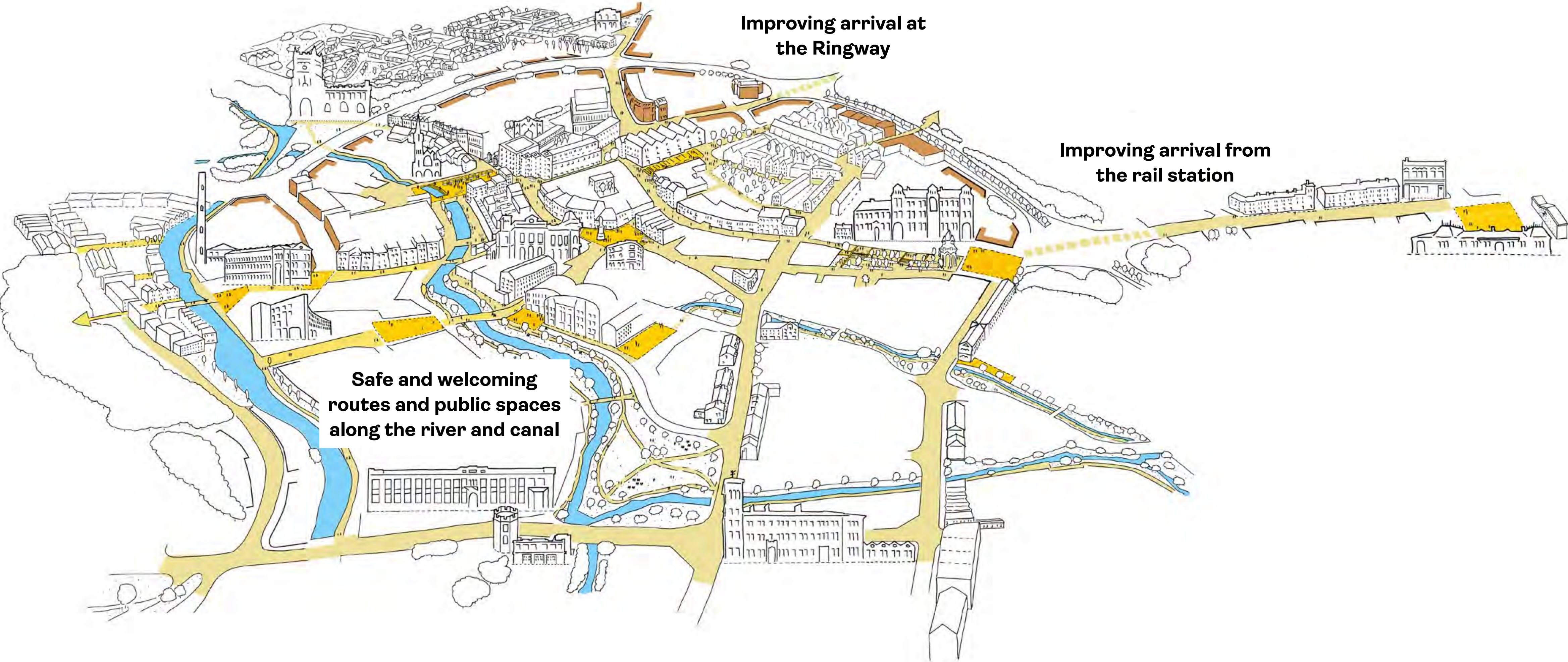
Whilst The Ringway will continue to move significant volumes of traffic, it will no longer act as a barrier between the town centre and those local communities that it currently divides. Revised junction layouts and new crossing facilities will ensure that key routes into town for those walking and cycling will be legible, convenient and enjoyable.



The Vision for Kidderminster is for all residents to feel safe and comfortable visiting the town centre, to feel welcome in its buildings, streets and spaces, and to be able to move easily and safely around it.

Welcoming Kidderminster Place

The Vision creates a variety of new pedestrian routes and new public spaces to help all people feel safe, comfortable and welcome in the town centre.



Key Project: The Bull Ring

Kidderminster has already invested in demolishing Crown House, which has opened up views of the Baxters URC church and created a significant new opportunity area at the Bull Ring. Funding has been obtained from the Future High Streets Fund to consider the potential of re-opening the River Stour in this area to create a new gateway into the town, and a new public space with new bars and cafes to enable visitors to enjoy the water.



The public said:
“Make use of the river area – restaurants and cafés, green spaces. Kidderminster could be beautiful. The old Crown House site should not be a car park.”

Key Project: Pop-up and Meanwhile

The Vision creates a ‘guerrilla’ quarter along the River Stour between the new Bull Ring and the bars and restaurants at Husum Bridge. Pop up stalls, street food, public art, events and meanwhile uses will create an exciting riverfront connection at the heart of the town centre.



4. People

Prioritising people creates ‘liveable’ town centres. Having more people living in the town centre supports the town centre retailers and services, stabilising and if done well, reversing the decline.

It needs more than just living. Kidderminster Town Centre will put people ahead of cars, consider accessibility for all, put people’s health, wellbeing and social needs ahead of the shareholder demands of business. Kidderminster Town Centre will prioritise the environment, learning and leisure in the knowledge that a vibrant retail and strong economic culture will ‘feed off’ a place where people want to be.



Liveable Kidderminster

People

Town centre living is contributing to the renaissance of towns nationwide creating vibrant and often entrepreneurial communities that themselves are major drivers of change, evolution and regeneration. Kidderminster deserves new living that is designed for Kidderminster, not something that can be rolled out anywhere – there are opportunities to lead on this through developments the Council is able to bring forward, instead of being reliant on third party landowners.

The public said: “*Be innovative and provide opportunities for co-living and home-working, alongside family housing*”.



In Cambridge, Marmalade Lane is an award winning co-housing scheme, in which residents benefit from larger areas of shared space and shared facilities and ‘a more social way of life’. The innovative and inclusive process ensures residents are involved at the design stage and in the management of the community.



Goldsmith Street is an award winning, eco-friendly affordable development in Norwich. It was the first social housing scheme to win the Stirling Prize for architecture



Better use will be made of surface car parks, with the opportunity to create higher density schemes bringing life to the town centre, creating safer public spaces and providing homes for young people. In Bristol, 11 affordable and low-carbon, modular ‘zedpods’ were built above Council owned car parking spaces as permanent living space for young workers.



Better use will be made of the opportunities for waterfront living, especially in terms of connecting the Timber Yard site over the canal to the town centre. In Walsall, Urban Splash are replacing a small canalside car park with 15 new modular homes and a small park.

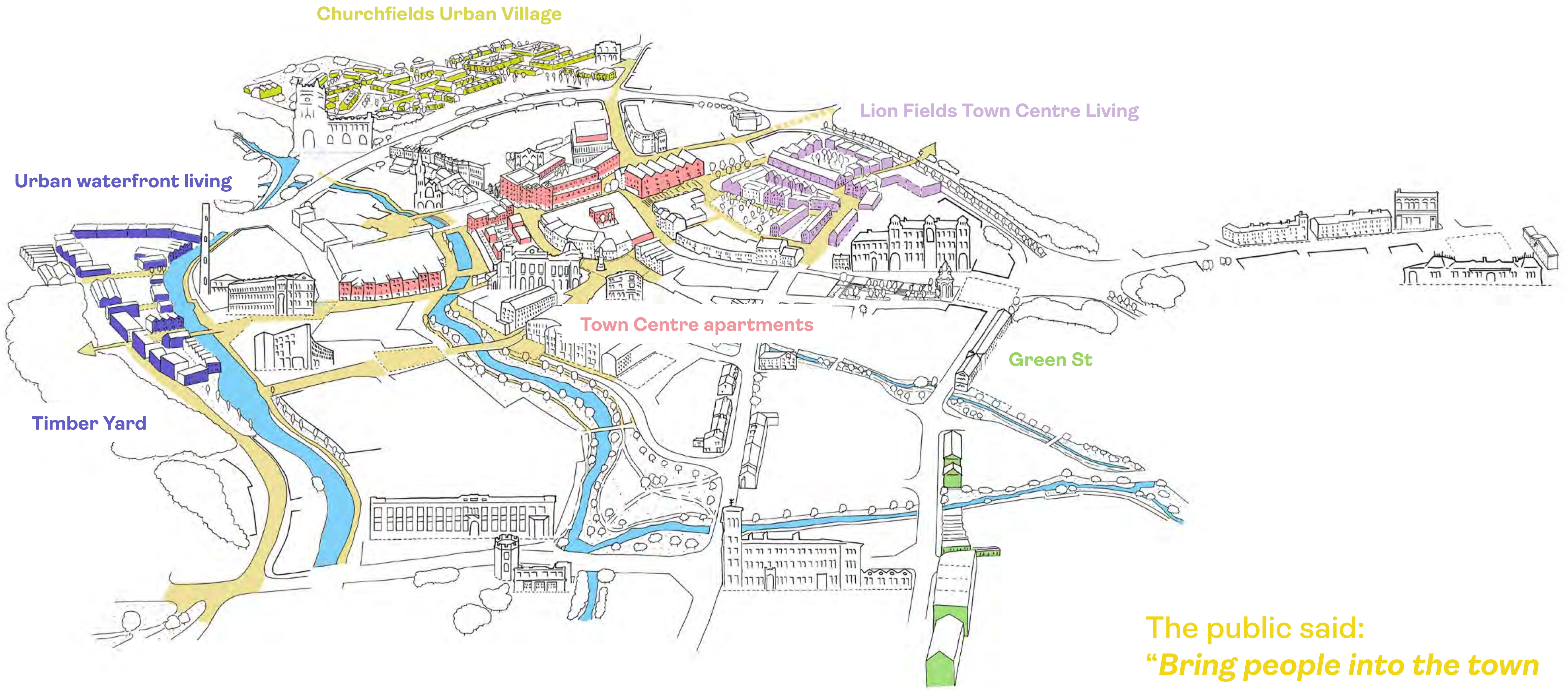


Redevelopment of a former industrial site provides new and improved tow paths, residential including 2, 3 & 4 bedrooms with parking and gardens, community, leisure and new green space all with a nod to the areas industrial heritage which is reflected in the architectural character and is helping to bring people back to redundant industrial sites.

The public said your “**Number one housing priority is affordable homes for young people.**”

The public said: “**Provide more opportunities for people to work from home in Kidderminster**”

The Vision brings a critical mass of new homes that will transform perceptions of town centre living in Kidderminster. It recognises the opportunities for waterfront living along the canal and river at the Timber Yard, new homes at Lion Fields with great views over the town and the 'urban village' qualities of Churchfields.



The public said:
“Bring people into the town
centre with more housing –
make it a community!”

Key Project: Lion Fields

Significant potential exists at Lion Fields for a new mixed-use quarter, providing a range of innovative housing and live-work space, connected to Worcester Street and the Former Magistrate’s Court creative quarter, complementing the proposed leisure investment and within easy walking distance of the rail station. An imaginative scheme could transform perceptions of family living in Kidderminster town centre.

Priority: More people living in the town centre



Key Project: Timber Yard Waterfront Living

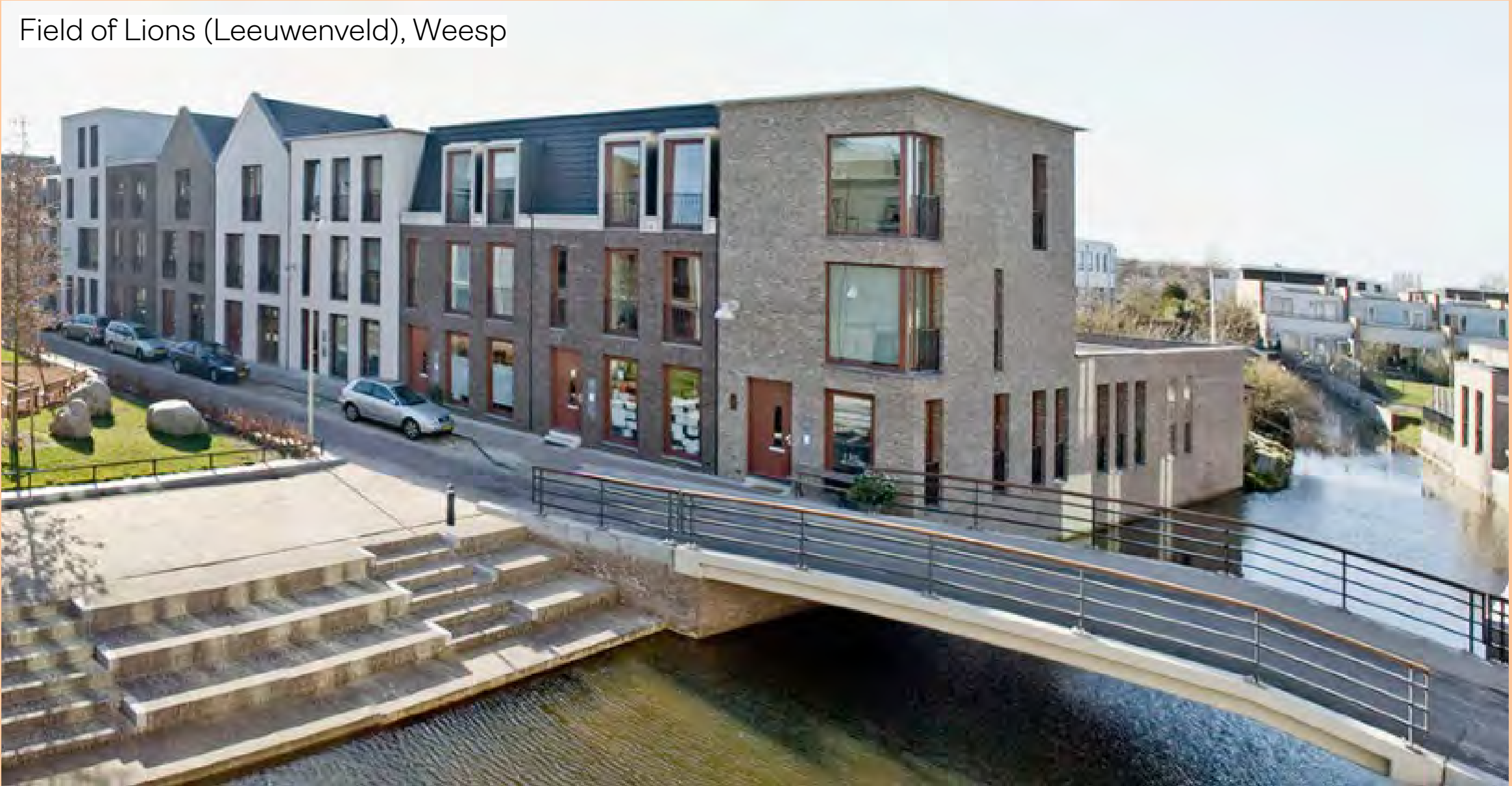
The Timber Yard site offers a great opportunity for waterfront living, taking advantage of the canal and creating a new connection across the water connecting residential areas into the town centre.

An innovative and forward-thinking scheme here could attract and retain a younger generation, by offering desirable and affordable homes within easy walking distance of the town centre facilities and public transport hubs. The site would complement the different character of residential opportunities at Lion Fields and Churchfields Urban Village.

The public said: “***Pack it full of people living and working there. A town centre full of people will make it a lot more vibrant and exciting place to be!***”



Buizengat, Rotterdam



Field of Lions (Leeuwendveld), Weesp



Foundry Mews, London



New Islington, Manchester



Field of Lions (Leeuwendveld), Weesp

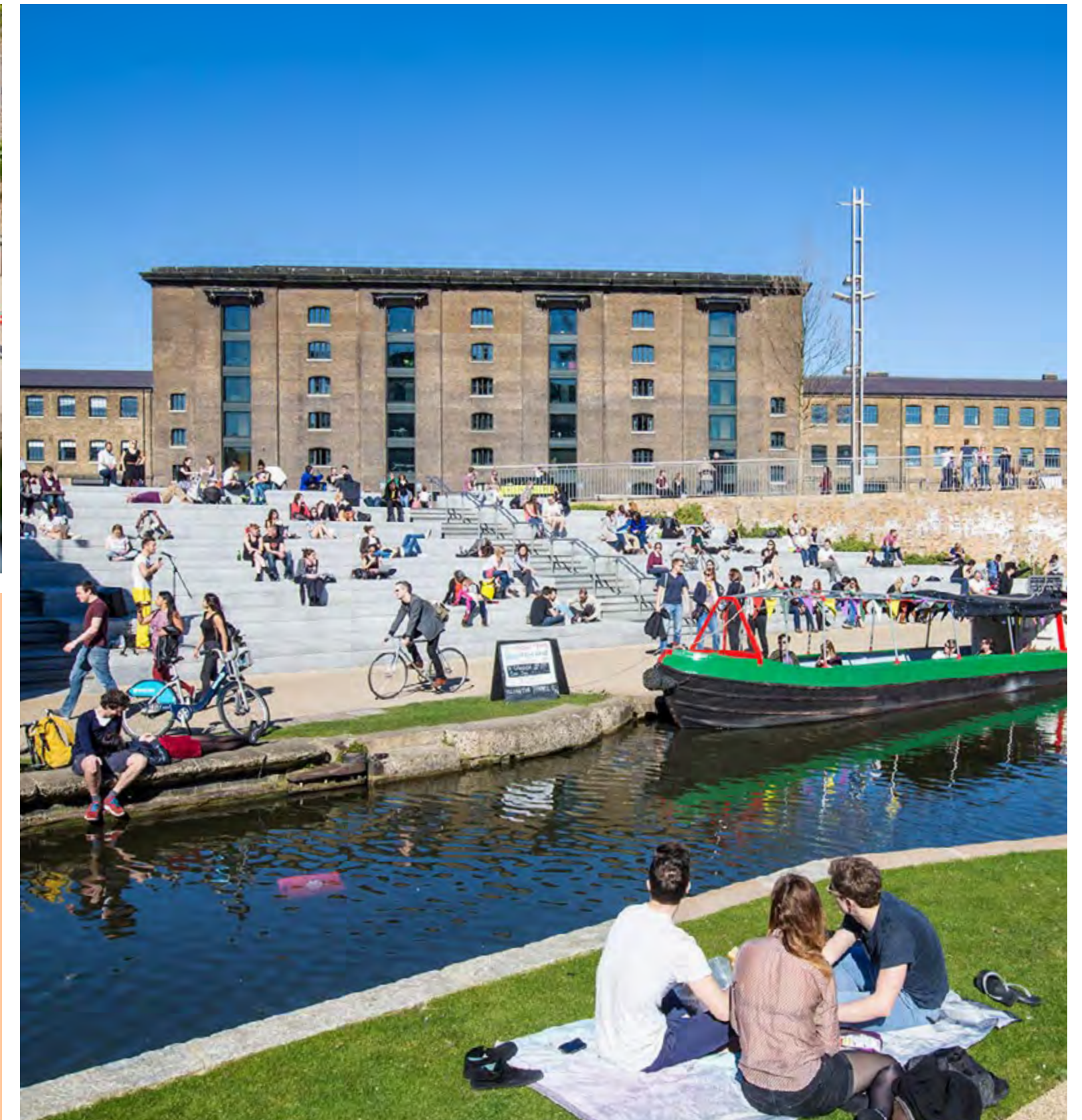
Social Kidderminster

People

Successful town centres have always been about more than shopping, we just forgot that for a while. Kidderminster must be a social place where people will choose to gather for eating, drinking, leisure, culture, education, recreation and community activities, as well as to shop. It will also be a place where people want to come just to relax, meet friends and 'hang out'.

The survey shows that local people value the independent cafes and restaurants in the town centre, and the opportunity Kidderminster provides for outdoor eating and drinking along the river. The Vision extends these opportunities by bringing new uses along the stretch of river between the Bull Ring and Husum Bridge and by opening up the river in the new 'Bull Ring' public space.

Priority: Better open public space to hold events and festivals



The Vision creates places to meet friends and relax in the heart of the town. It opens up the river corridor and shows the opportunity for a new town park. A new space close to the College will help younger people feel more at home in the town centre.

Key Project: Worcester Street Steps

The 'Kidderminster Steps' will create a new destination on Worcester Street, a space for residents and for those visiting the new town centre cinema and leisure attractions.



Entrepreneurial Kidderminster People

Successful town centres evolve. This means they are flexible enough to be able to respond to social and economic change in a way. And in a way that makes the best use of their existing physical assets.

Currently, as the demand for physical retail space declines, town centre buildings and streets need to repurpose themselves for a variety of uses, including employment space. More and more new small businesses are being set up every year, and they need low-cost, interesting flexible space, close to town centres and rail stations.

The Vision provides opportunities for small businesses to test the demand for their products through pop up activity, street markets and market halls. This provides low cost opportunities for start-ups and encourages longer term for demand for permanent space in the town centre. Worcester Street is a perfect example, anchored by the Swan Centre and the Magistrate's Court and with opportunities for reuse of vacant buildings.



We asked what do you want from Kidderminster in the future? The public said:
“Independent retailers with eco friendly ethics.” “Small local shops, more personal and interesting.”



Entrepreneurial Kidderminster

People

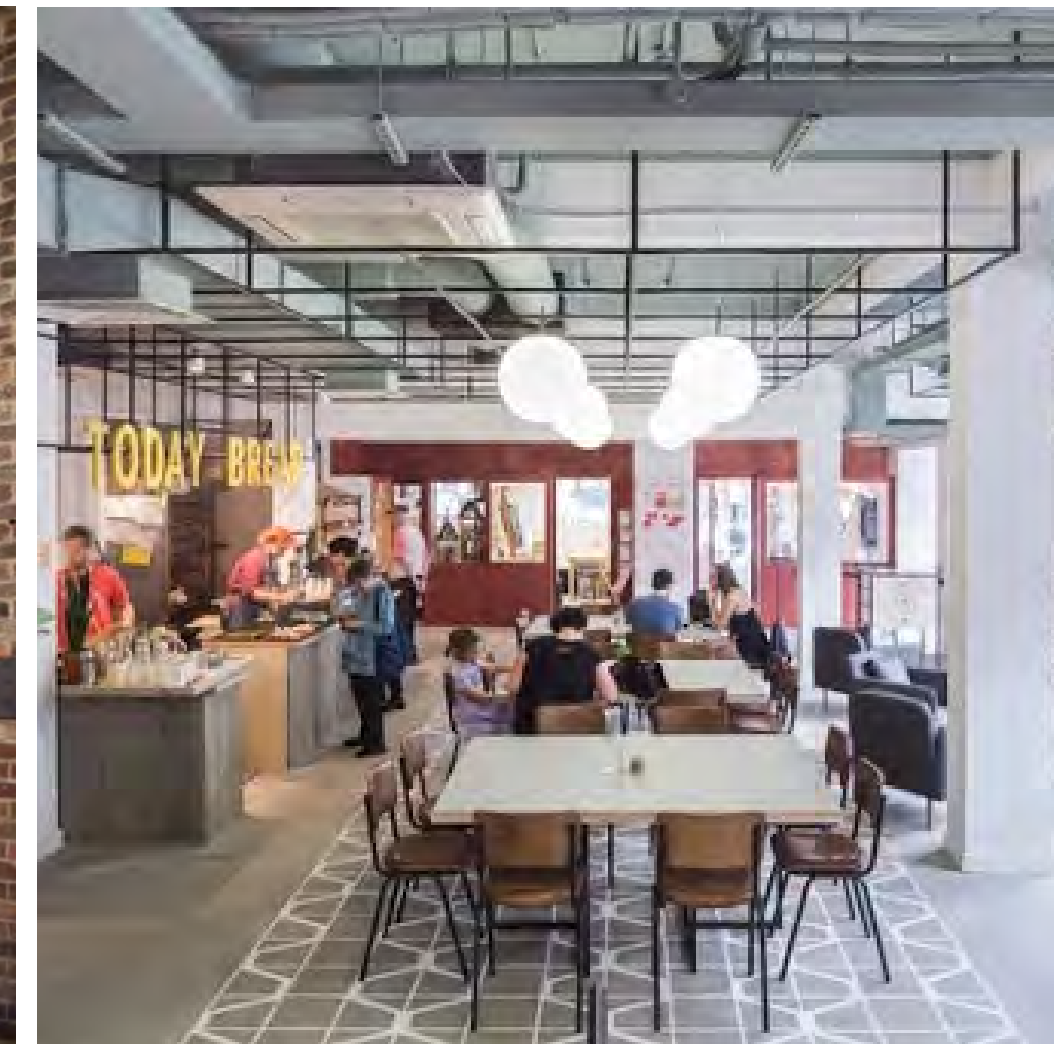
Swan Centre and Rowland Hill

Shopping centres are having to reimagine and ‘repurpose’ themselves as shopping habits change and the demand for retail floorspace falls. The Swan Centre and Rowland Hill shopping centres are well located to bring more homes and more business space into Kidderminster town centre.

Curating co-working space is an opportunity to meet the demand for ‘working from home’ and growth in small business formation. Rooftop space provides potential for community and leisure spaces, for pop up events, bars and restaurants and for new homes.

Post Covid, many shopping centres are also looking to meet the growing demand for local, neighbourhood based shopping. Curating foodhalls and independent ‘department stores’ for small businesses.

The public said the number one priority is: ***“More local and independent shops in the town centre.”***

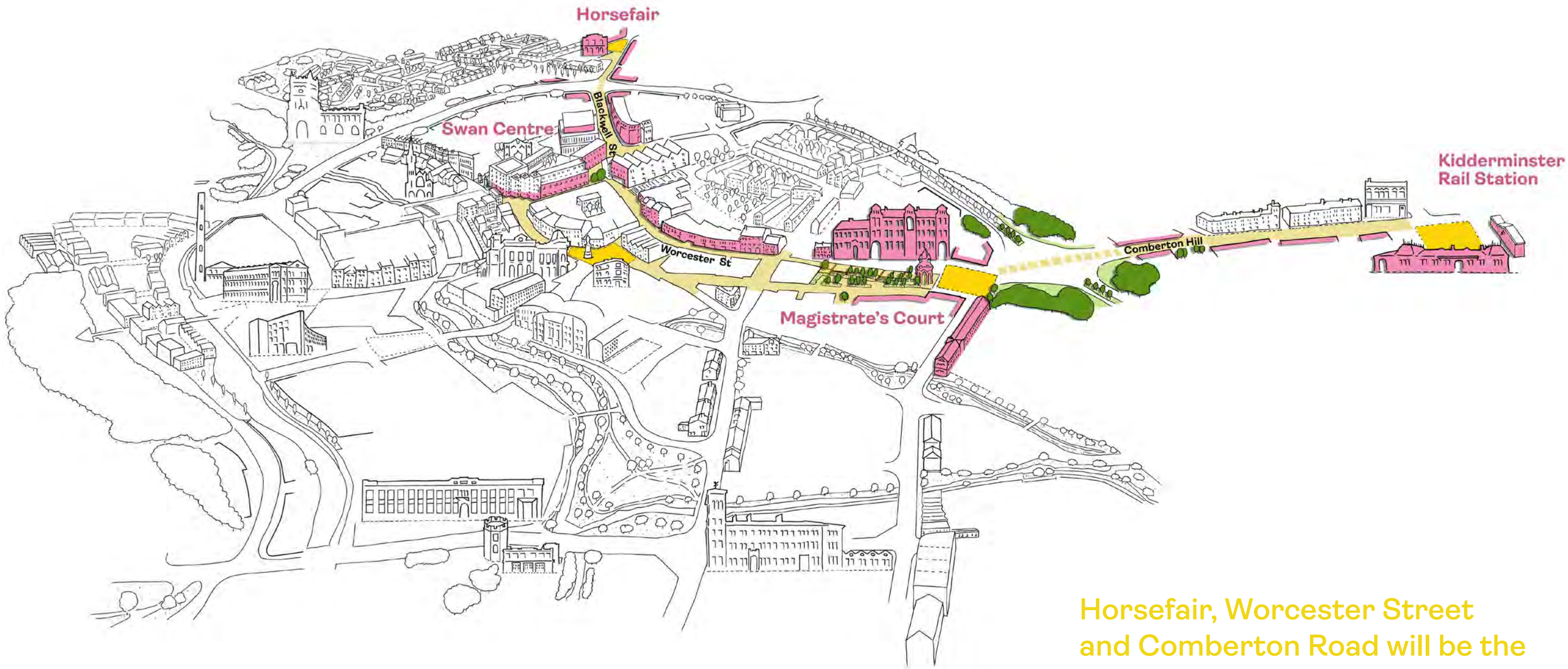


Central Parade, Walthamstow is former council office space on the High Street. It is currently being operated by a local community interest company as a mixed use creative hub, including a variety of retail, co-working, studio and exhibition space and a bakery-café. It also offers cultural events and activities throughout the week and into the evening.

The Avenue shopping centre in Bournemouth is being repurposed as a place where local independents will be combined with bigger brands. It will be more than just a place where you can buy things and be based more on experiences, for example a coffee come bike repair shop will provide the only covered café in the town centre. There will be offices, event spaces, a giant TV screen for public screenings and in due course a roof top bar and places to live.



This Vision places Worcester Street at the heart of an entrepreneurial mixed-use ‘neighbourhood’, providing interesting and unique places to eat, drink, shop, live and work. It would showcase the best of Kidderminster’s local, specialist, independent businesses through the day and into the evening extending from the railway station to Horsefair, incorporating a repurposed Magistrate’s Court, Rowland Hill and Swan Centre.



Horsefair, Worcester Street and Comberton Road will be the independent, entrepreneurial spine of Kidderminster

Key Project: Kidderminster Creative Hub

Former Magistrate’s Court Building

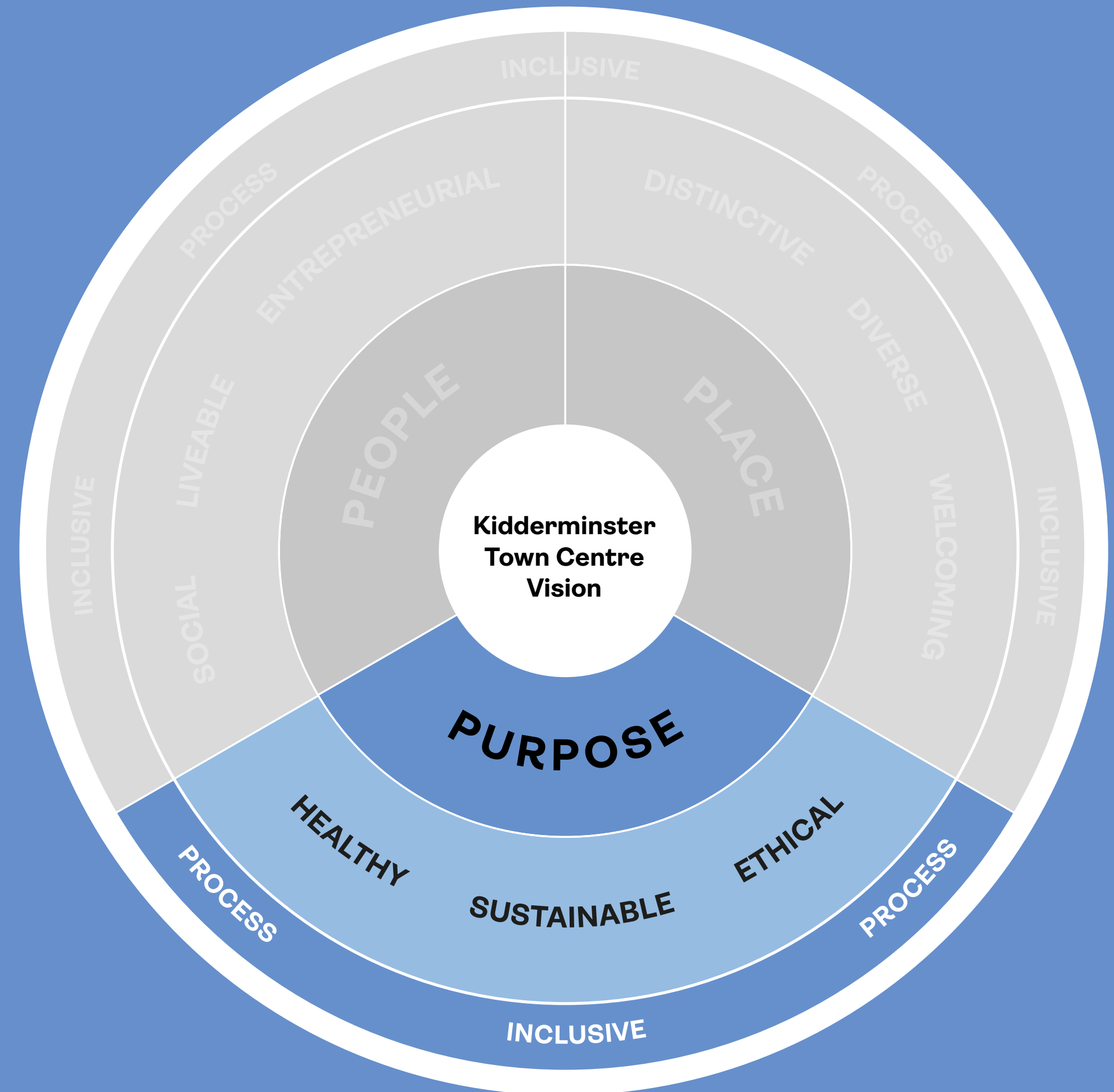
The Former Magistrate’s Court building has funding to create a focus for creative industries and small businesses. Large, empty buildings which are unsuitable for national retailers can be home to a variety of small businesses, bringing life and interest to the street and potential expenditure to support other independent shops, cafes and services.



5. Purpose

Successful towns have a civic and a social purpose, reflected not just in the uses and activities that it provides but in the way it does business.

A place with a clear, defined purpose will always be successful. By rooting a place in purpose you create a strong foundation for decision making, which in turn creates a clear path for the future.



Leading with purpose is essential to building and maintaining a successful town. It’s about coming together to get behind a common mission, creating a set of shared values and goals. By putting purpose at the heart of a town, you are essentially creating a blueprint for the present and future success of a place.

‘What do we believe in and how do we get there?’ sits at the heart of a town’s purpose.

Believing in a healthy town shows that you are dedicated to continually creating and improving the physical and social environments of a place. Health not only applies to residents but includes the health of the local environment too.

Believing in a sustainable town puts the climate crisis at the heart of a place’s purpose. Now more than ever it is vital that a town meets the needs of the citizen’s without compromising the ability for future generations to flourish.

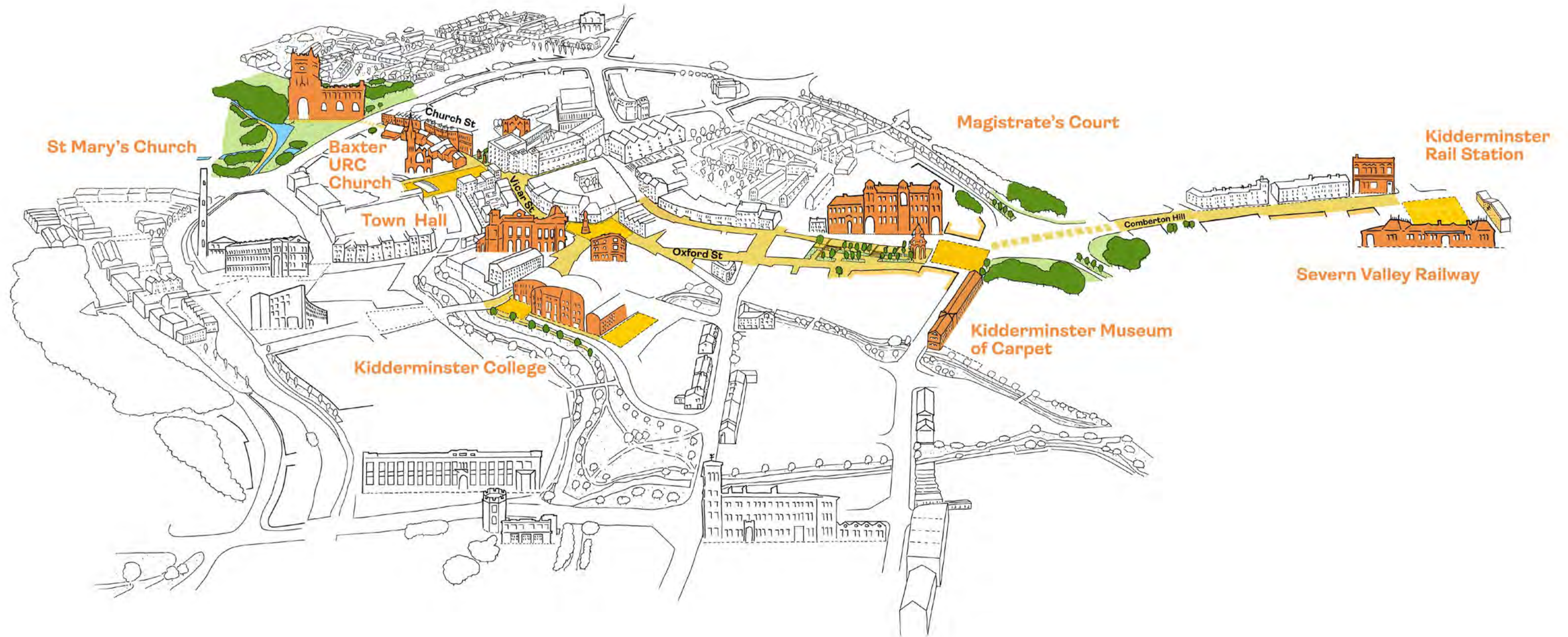
Believing in an ethical city is about promoting what is right, fair, just and good both for the people and the place. It’s about looking at good governance, transparency, social inclusion.

Kidderminster's Vision puts education and culture at the heart of the town centre, literally and metaphorically. Kidderminster College, the Library and Town Hall will be an accessible focus for education, culture and public services at the heart of the town, with a strong civic presence on Vicar Street, Exchange Street and the river corridor.

A new civic street

Purpose

The route from the Rail Station to Kidderminster Town Hall and St Mary's Church will be reimagined as Kidderminster's Civic Corridor, with treatment of the public realm highlighting the importance of its manufacturing heritage, the new creative industries, its civic and cultural buildings.



Key Project: Kidderminster College

A sustainable town centre makes the most of its existing buildings. A vacant building strategy has been commissioned, and Kidderminster will continue to explore ways in which its historical buildings can be brought back into productive use.

Kidderminster is demonstrating “purpose” with its plans to turn the magnificent Magistrates Court into a town centre creative community beacon. The creative industries have been and continue to be at the forefront of town centre renaissances creating economic and social benefit.

New public spaces celebrate the town’s civic and cultural activities, recognising its history and looking to the future:

- A new square to recognise the importance of modern rail connections to Birmingham and the visitor role of the Severn Valley Railway.
- A new arrival space to announce the regeneration of the Magistrate’s Court and the continuing relevance of the Carpet Museum to the fabric and identity of the town.
- New spaces providing appropriate settings for Baxter URC and St Mary’s Church.
- And new spaces to recognise the central role of education to the life of the town and its people.



A new extension and south facing public space would emphasise the important civic role of Kidderminster College, and provide a new space for young people to socialise.

Healthy Kidderminster

Purpose

Healthy town centres encourage physical activity, address social exclusion, provide clean air and a variety of green space. Kidderminster is a very ‘walkable’ town centre, and more of its residents could be walking and cycling. The Vision removes the key barriers to walking and cycling, particularly the underpass from the rail station and the difficult connection across the Ring Road to Churchfields and St Mary’s Church. Reducing car dependency will reduce pollution, traffic danger and congestion. Increased active travel will also improve residents’ health and quality of life.



The public said “***We need safe lock-ups for bicycles, I would cycle into town instead of taking the car.***”

Low traffic neighbourhoods are now being introduced across the country, but the London Borough of Waltham Forest in northwest London has been a pioneer in this regard, implementing modal filters to remove rat-running in residential neighbourhoods. Local vehicle access is still permitted whilst conditions for walking, cycling and simply living are all improved as the quantity and speed of vehicles is reduced.

The Mini-Holland scheme is part of the London Mayor’s Healthy Streets Approach and is aimed specifically at outer London boroughs where residents are more car dependent than inner London. It aims to make these boroughs as cycle-friendly as their Dutch equivalents – where more than 50% of journeys are made by cycle in some cities.

Key Project: Ring Road Arrival

Greening the Ring Road will improve arrival into the town centre for visitors, and improve the quality of the environment for residents. Improved pedestrian crossings and removal of subways will make it easier for residents to walk and cycle into the town centre. Revised junction layouts and new crossing facilities will ensure that key routes into town for those walking and cycling will be legible, convenient and enjoyable. Improvements will focus on connections to residential areas, to the rail station, to Horsefair and to St Mary’s Church.



In 2016 1.6km of Sheffield’s inner city dual-carriageway was transformed with two lanes of the original highway replaced with wild flowers, trees and shrubs as well as seating and public art.



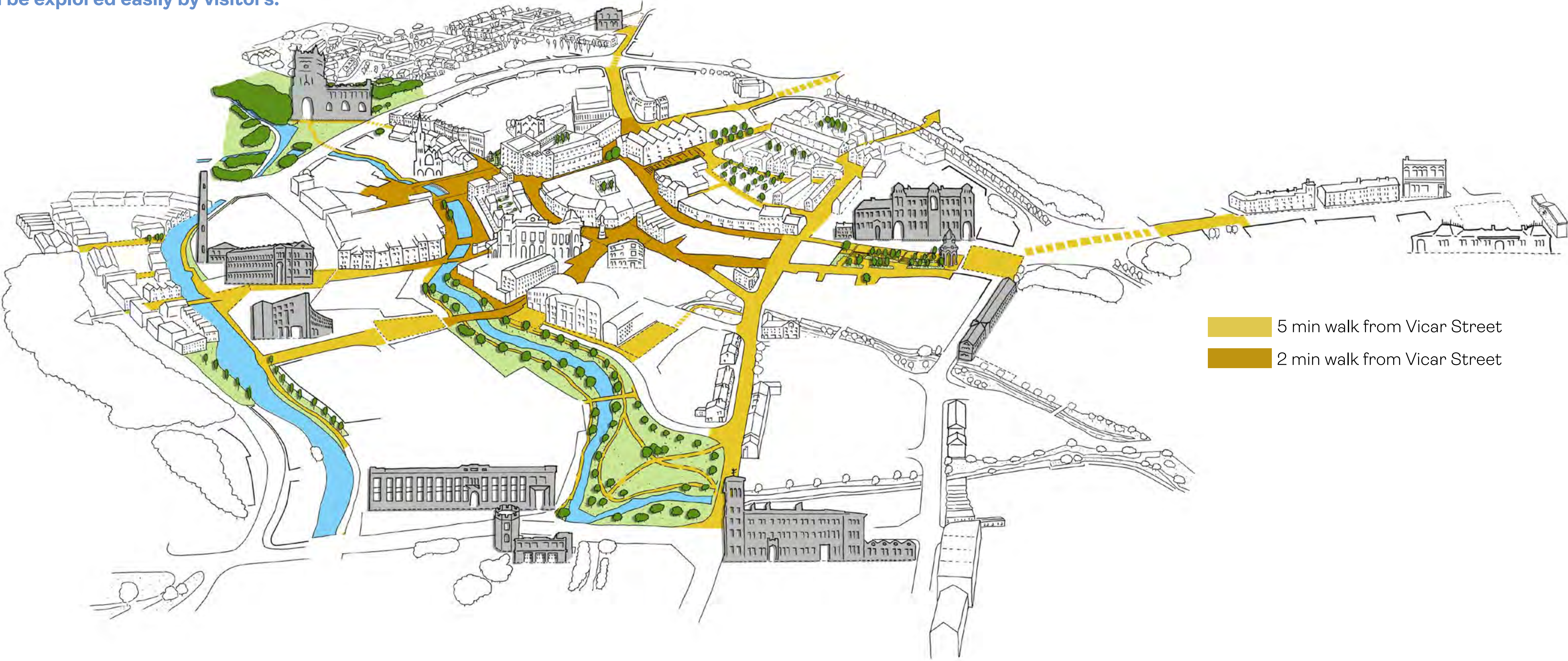
As part of the “Connecting Leicester” project the Belgrave Flyover, built in 1974, was demolished to create a landscaped gateway between the city centre and the Golden Mile.

The Vision creates a compact and walkable town centre. The survey shows that people who walk and cycle visit the town centre more often and spend more. People who walk are more likely to visit local businesses and more likely to visit pubs, bars and restaurants in the evening. So walking is good for physical health, mental health, environmental health and economic health.

Healthy Kidderminster

Purpose

Kidderminster is a compact and highly walkable town centre. A wide range of interesting retail, cultural and leisure attractions are within a comfortable 5-minute walk of Vicar Street, and can be explored easily by visitors.



Green space improves the physical and mental health of those living and working in the town centre. It encourages visitors to stay longer. It promotes biodiversity and helps to address the climate emergency.

The Vision addresses the lack of green space in Kidderminster town centre. It opens up the river as a more natural linear green space, connecting St Mary's Church to the Bull Ring to Castle Street and Dixon Street.

Sustainable Kidderminster

Purpose

The Vision capitalises on the opportunities for more green space in Kidderminster town centre, particularly along the waterfront but also in new public spaces and along the Ring Road.



Key Project: Riverside Park

Decked car parking makes efficient use of space, creating opportunities for a larger riverside park, a place to relax and to celebrate the natural and built environment of Kidderminster.

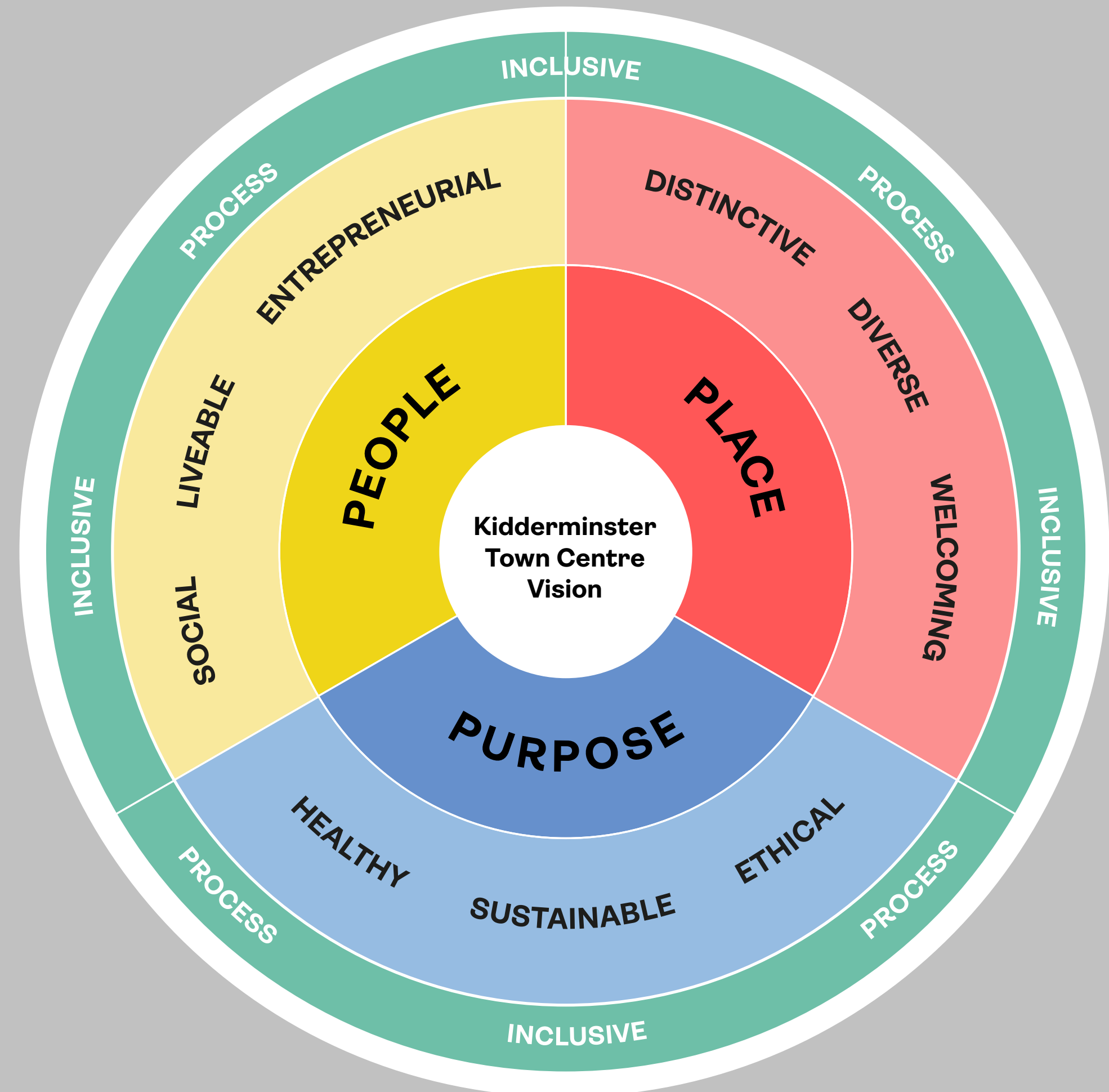
Priority:
More green space
and access to the
river and canal



NEW masterplanning

6. Projects

This is an exciting time for Kidderminster town centre. It has the essential ingredients for a successful future. There is public support for change, a clear Vision to guide that change, a Council that is willing to lead the way and funding available to start to implement that change. The town will ultimately be judged by its actions, by the way it engages with its community and by the quality of development that results.



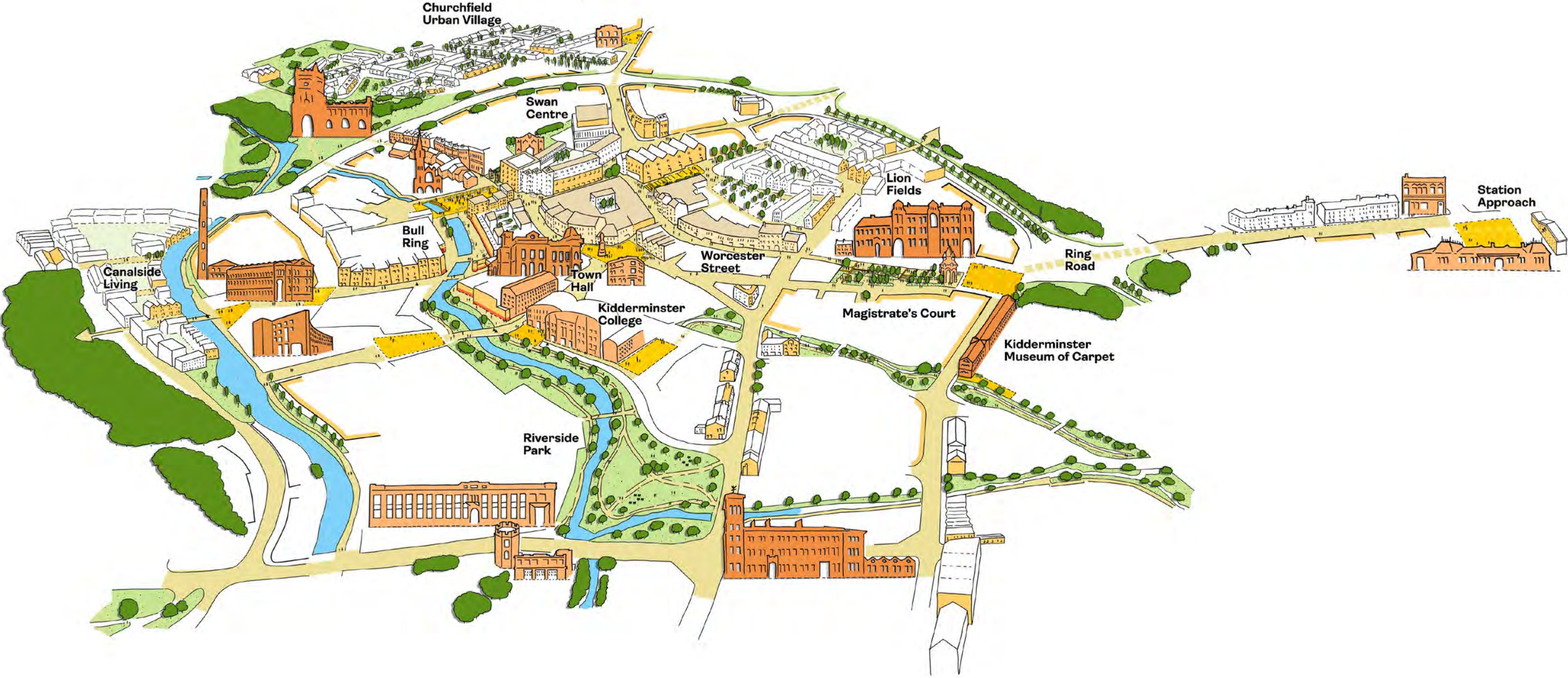
The Kidderminster Vision Projects

Kidderminster has secured over £20m from the Future High Streets Fund which will help start to deliver this Vision. Funding is allocated for the regeneration of the Magistrate’s Court, for the new public space at the Bull Ring, for improvements to Worcester Street and to support strategic property acquisitions. The Vision will also be used to support Kidderminster’s bid to the Levelling Up Fund. Key projects could include the provision of new housing in the town centre, new uses for the Piano Building and connecting the Timber Yard site to Weavers Wharf across the canal. These programmes will reinforce other proposals to enhance the town centre, including improvements to the Town Hall facilities, expansion of Kidderminster College and measures to improve walking and cycling into the town centre.

A coordinated Action Plan will therefore be prepared to deliver the following projects identified within this Vision:

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	KEY VISION PRINCIPLES
Kidderminster Town Hall	Enhancement of cultural and performance facilities within one of Kidderminster’s most important civic buildings (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Ethical
Heritage and the Public Realm	Working with the Museum of Carpet and local artists to promote Kidderminster’s textile heritage through design of the public realm (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Entrepreneurial, Healthy, Ethical
Creative Business Hub	Renovation of the former Magistrate’s Court to create a focus for creative businesses in the town centre. (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Entrepreneurial, Ethical
Canalside Living	Redevelopment of the Timber Yard to create a new residential quarter for Kidderminster along the canal (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Social, Liveable, Sustainable, Healthy, Ethical
Churchfield Urban Village	Completion of the new residential quarter immediately north of the town centre(see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Social, Liveable, Sustainable, Healthy
Lion Fields	New mixed-use quarter, supporting new leisure and business development on Worcester Street and with potential for innovative new housing in the town centre (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Sustainable, Healthy, Ethical
Bull Ring	New public space, removing parking to enhance the setting of historic buildings and with possibilities to open up the river (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Sustainable

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	KEY VISION PRINCIPLES
Pop up and Meanwhile	Promoting temporary uses to support new businesses, attract visitors and reuse vacant properties (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Entrepreneurial, Sustainable, Ethical
Riverside Park	Public space along the river edge to create new pedestrian routes and more green space in the town centre. (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Healthy, Sustainable, Ethical
Worcester Street Steps	A new public space linking Lion Fields to the town centre, and creating a visitor destination to support independent businesses on Worcester Street (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Healthy
Shopping Centres	Repurposing the indoor shopping environment at Rowland Hill and Swan Centre. Curating independent businesses and bringing opportunities for town centre living. (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Sustainable, Ethical
The Ringway	Improving arrival for visitors and creating stronger routes for pedestrians and cyclists to ensure The Ringway is not a barrier to visiting the town centre (see page X)	Distinctive, Welcoming, Liveable, Healthy, Sustainable
Station Approach	A new public square for this important civic area. Encouraging travel by rail and visits to the Severn Valley Railway and Museum, improving arrival and strengthening walking and cycling routes into the town centre (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Healthy, Sustainable, Ethical
Kidderminster College	A new entrance space and social space to recognise the importance of education and young people in the town centre, and the key civic role of the College (see page X)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Entrepreneurial, Ethical



HemingwayDesign

NEW masterplanning



Wyre Forest
District Council