

Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Study

A reimagined Royal Spa Town of the future

May 2023



LDĀ DESIGN



The Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Study has been prepared by LDA Design, with the support of City Science and Knight Frank, on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan Working Group.

This document sets out how the town centre will evolve up to the year 2040 (the Local Plan period) and has been designed to inform the making of a Town Centre Plan that, alongside other strategy documents and planning policies, will form part of the Local Plan. It is the result of an exciting coming together of individuals and organisations, decision-makers, business leaders, local experts, and Council staff, working together to create a vision for Royal Tunbridge Wells.

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This document is to be read in conjunction with the following separate reports:

1. Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Study - Baseline Evidence Report (LDA Design)
2. Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Study - Stakeholder & Community Engagement Report (LDA Design)
3. Town Centre Study: Transport & Carbon Baseline Report (City Science)
4. Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Retail Study and Healthcheck (Knight Frank)

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with ISO 9001:2015

In 2040, Royal Tunbridge Wells is recognised nationally and internationally as a vibrant, welcoming and distinctive town that embraces its Spa heritage character focusing on culture, health and well-being.



1. Our 2040 Vision

A Reimagined Royal Spa Town of the Future

In 2040, Royal Tunbridge Wells is recognised nationally as a vibrant, welcoming, and distinctive Spa Town. It celebrates its past whilst looking to the future and addresses climate change as a global and local imperative, and aims to be at the forefront of decarbonising transport. The town centre embraces its Royal Spa Town heritage character through a focus on culture, health and well-being, with unrivalled access to biodiverse green spaces and parks, and references to its improved heritage assets, drawing people and nature throughout the town centre.

It is a great place to live, work and play with a rich mix of jobs, services, homes, diverse public realm (i.e. the spaces between buildings, the streets, parks, street furniture, such as seating and landscape features), and cultural & leisure facilities, which meets the needs of people at all stages of their lives. Its diverse, passionate and entrepreneurial community works together with energy and passion to achieve a common vision.

Decarbonising transport

Royal Tunbridge Wells has transformed its streets and spaces to connect all parts of the town centre, promoting long term health and well-being through enabling active lifestyles. Walking, cycling, public transport and other forms of sustainable travel are the natural transport choice, further contributing to the transition to a low carbon economy and improving air quality. A network of electric vehicle charging points, car clubs and the provision of more and better cycle infrastructure and storage facilities are available across the town centre.

Promoting an active town centre

Improvements to the public realm have resulted in spaces for markets and cultural events, linking with businesses to improve and develop the day and night-time economy. Streets have been greened through new tree planting with a focus on enhancing biodiversity and linking the attractive and welcoming green spaces that already exist in the town. Public art, walking and audio trails and play spaces are designed to reimagine the spa water that the town was founded on and encourage residents and visitors to enjoy spending time in the town centre.

Harnessing opportunities for change

Buildings and areas of the town that were either in need of redevelopment and / or were previously underutilised have been repurposed and re-energised to create multi-functional spaces for both day and night-time economy, catering to a diverse range of people. The embedded creativity of the town has been realised through the delivery of leisure, ever-changing flexible spaces, tourism, cultural facilities, and a range of retail options to enable a prosperous and thriving town centre, attractive to residents and visitors.

2. About the Town

Royal Tunbridge Wells is a key retail and leisure destination, serving both residents of the borough and beyond. It provides a wide range of retail, leisure and business services to the surrounding catchment. It is also an attractive tourist destination, bringing domestic (UK) visitors from across Kent, East Sussex and London as well as international visitors arriving via Gatwick and the Channel Ports. The vibrant town centre benefits from a rich cultural heritage of both the natural and built environment including a large Conservation Area that encompasses much of the town centre, as well as numerous listed buildings, and distinct areas such as The Pantiles and Calverley Grounds, which is a designated historic park and garden. This distinctive environment is part of what attracts shoppers and visitors to the town centre.

The town centre's character is derived from its undulating topography, an abundance of well kept historic buildings, and its origins as a spa town. The town centre already has many of the attributes to make it a socially and economically sustainable place including generous green infrastructure, retail, cultural and leisure uses, education provision and walkable neighbourhoods. As with many town centres however, complex land ownerships, fragmented development, transport infrastructure and outside economic threats at times dominate and diminish the quality of the built and natural environment.



Town Centre Study Area Plan

The Town Centre Study Area Plan shows the town centre boundary and study area used for the purposes of this document. It should be noted that the town centre does of course extend beyond this area and as such consideration has been made to the wider town setting beyond this boundary.

- Town Centre Study Boundary
- ⇨⇨ Tunbridge Wells Train Station



70%

Of the borough is designated as High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

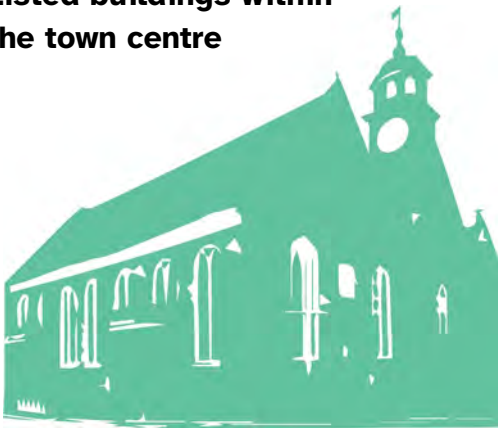
£3.5bn

Total Gross Value Added in the Tunbridge Wells Borough in 2022



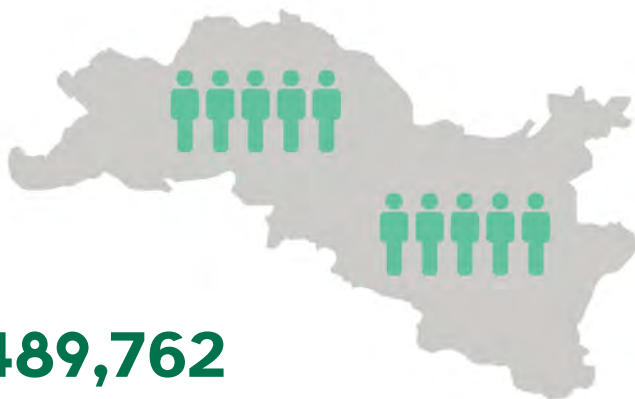
153

Listed buildings within the town centre



1,167,000sq ft.

Town centre retail floorspace in Royal Tunbridge Wells



489,762

Total residential population of Royal Tunbridge Wells' catchment area as a retail and service centre in September 2022

3. Background

The Town Centre Study sets out a vision for Royal Tunbridge Wells up to the year 2040. It is a product of extensive technical studies and comprehensive engagement and is best described as a call for action to shape an ambitious plan for change, bringing key decision makers together in a strategic manner to capitalise on the town centre's unique qualities and characteristics. It proposes a number of key projects and interventions, which will be developed further as part of the future Town Centre Plan, which will form part of the adopted Borough-wide Local Plan. The conclusions of this study align with the ambitions set out in the Tunbridge Wells Submission Local Plan 2021, including Policy STR / RTW 2- Strategy for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and Policy STR 6 - Transport and Parking. The Town Centre Study has been informed by the following technical studies:

1. Town Centre Transport and Carbon Baseline Report (City Science)

This document consolidates the initial evidence base across policy and data to provide an overview of the current transport provisions and carbon emissions relevant to the study area (see Town Centre Study Area Plan in chapter 2). It also considers the wider strategic context and structures the findings in the form of a SWOT analysis.

2. Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Retail Study and Healthcheck (Knight Frank)

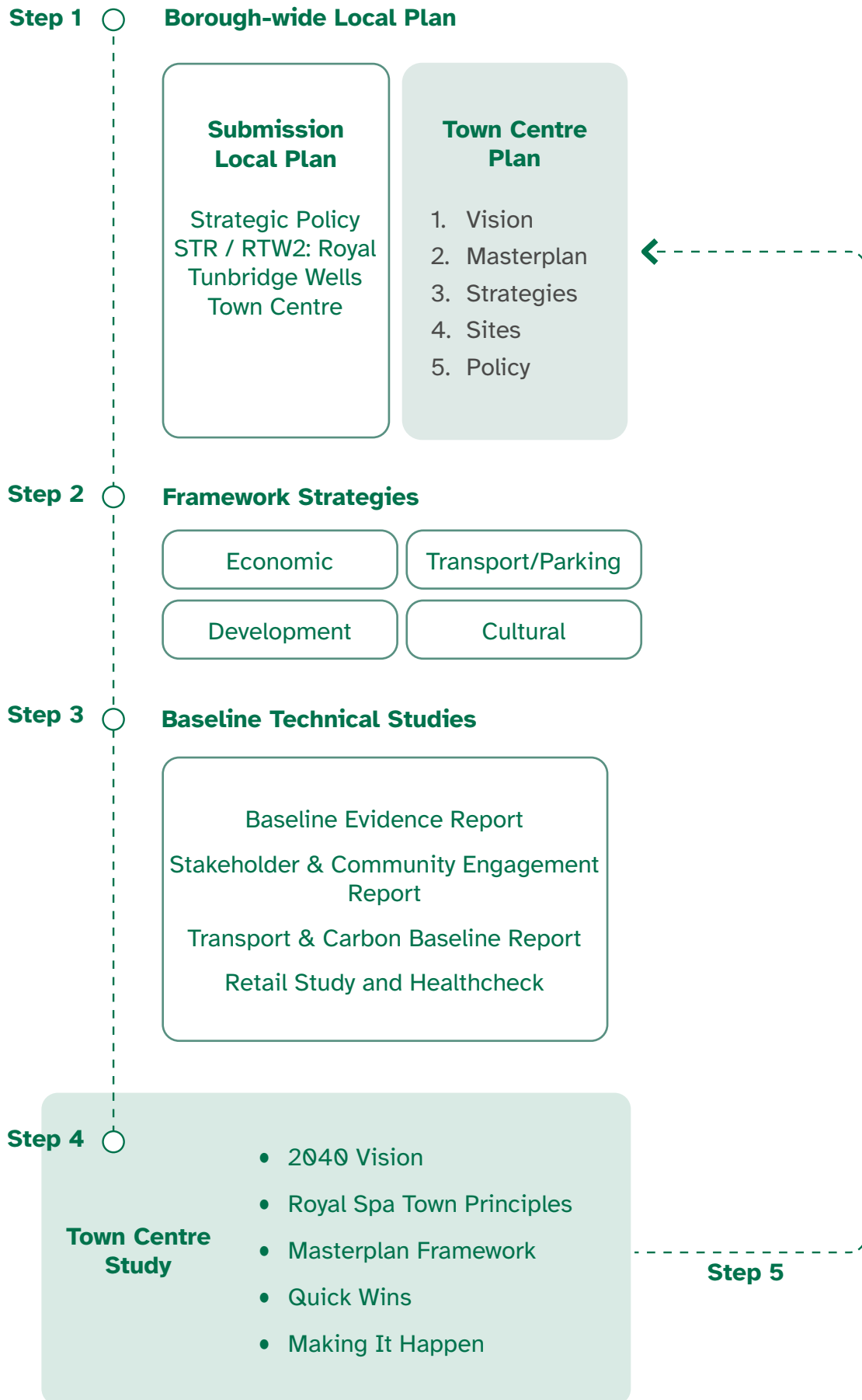
This document provides an overview of the current status of retail in Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and includes information on the performance of retail stores and businesses in the study area (see Town Centre Study Area Plan in chapter 2) and local context. In addition, the report provides strategic recommendations for improving the overall health and vitality of the town centre's retail environment moving forward.

3. Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Study - Stakeholder & Community Engagement Report (LDA Design)

A series of engagement events were held in October and November 2022 to discuss the future for the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre. The purpose of the engagement was to discuss the future of the Royal Tunbridge Wells with local people and businesses, share local knowledge, participate in developing ideas and a vision for the future Town Centre Plan. Various forms of engagement were undertaken, including in-person workshops, a community pop-up event, and a questionnaire on the online engagement platform Talking Point.

4. Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Study - Baseline Evidence Report (LDA Design)

Additionally, a comprehensive summary of the above documents was prepared within the Town Centre Study Baseline Evidence Report (LDA Design). This document has been designed as a high-level summary of the technical studies but also references planning policy and a themed analysis of the built environment, including economics and viability as well as movement and decarbonisation.



Organogram showing the Town Centre Study and related documents

4. Royal Spa Town Principles

These principles contribute to delivering the outcomes of the Vision for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and adjacent area. They are structured under 7 headings which directly relate to the Vision Statement.



A distinct place

Royal Tunbridge Wells spa town character, heritage and unique sense of place is celebrated across the town's distinct quarters via heritage trails, public art, signage and events.



Town centre living

The town centre provides good quality homes to meet a range of needs, including affordable homes, within a welcoming neighbourhood, with access to greenspaces.



Connected landscapes

Royal Tunbridge Wells valued and accessible greenspaces are well connected for people, habitats and wildlife to move between and enjoy. Streets have been greened with trees with a focus on making liveable streets.



Active streets and nodes

Streets have been redefined into high quality spaces where active travel, public transport and shared mobility are the natural and convenient choice for most journeys. Movement through the town is simple, safe and prioritises pedestrians and cyclists.



A low carbon future

All proposals have been designed to consider the town's climate resilience. This includes self-sufficiency with regard to energy, movement, reducing carbon emissions and adoption of sustainable and low carbon solutions for how new spaces, buildings and retrofits are delivered and managed.



A sustainable and resilient economy

High quality and diverse living, working, shopping, learning, leisure, cultural and historic environments attract and retain top businesses and the creative industries. There is a flexible and adaptable approach to future uses and sites that sustains the town's future vitality and viability.



A creative destination

Royal Tunbridge Wells is well known as a creative place in which to live, work and visit. Culture and creativity is embedded in the town, contributing to both social and economic well-being. High quality events across the year bring footfall to the town supporting the day and evening economy.

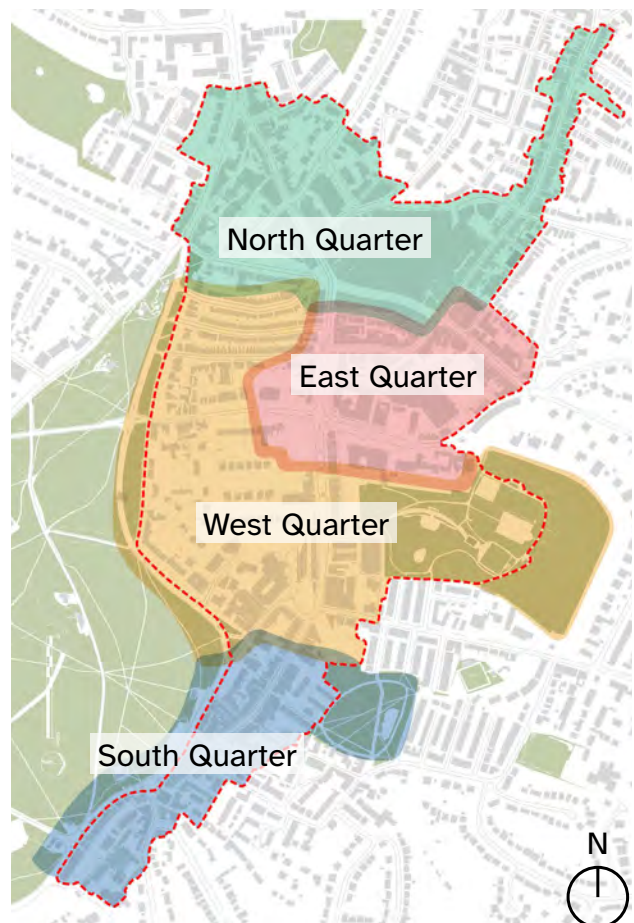


A distinct place

Royal Tunbridge Wells spa town character, heritage and unique sense of place is celebrated across the town's distinct quarters via heritage trails, public art, signage and events.

Focus

- The town's heritage buildings, notable residents and their lives should be celebrated across the town. It will be important to engage with local schools to learn about and promote the town's history to bring heritage alive.
- Digital information, heritage plaques, and signage should inform part of an extended town-wide heritage trail that builds on existing heritage routes to tell the story of how the town evolved.
- Public art should be embedded into the town's fabric and events.
- Where appropriate, new development should acknowledge the historic significance of past developments within the town but should also look to the future.
- Art installations and temporary events should be incorporated into a choreographed programme that celebrates the town's history and future, while also highlighting its distinct sense of place and heritage as part of a wider tourism programme of events, installations, and celebrated culture.



The town centre is characterised by distinct / overlapping quarters of differing activity, and use as shown on the plan above.

- Town Centre Study Boundary
- North Quarter
- West Quarter
- East Quarter
- South Quarter

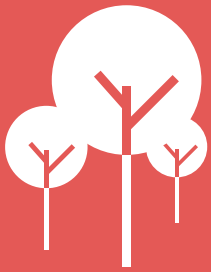


Town centre living

The town centre provides good quality homes to meet a range of needs, including affordable homes, within a welcoming neighbourhood, with access to greenspaces.

Focus

- New homes should cater for a broad demographic in terms of size, amenity space and affordability, and are capable of being adapted to changing demands.
- Housing typologies that are dedicated to a narrow demographic, such as co-living or retirement living, should not dominate.
- New buildings and spaces should be formed of high-quality materials and be well designed. They should enhance the local character, sensitively respond to the heritage and Conservation Area character and help raise the overall quality for the town.
- Building materials and detailing should draw inspiration from the Spa character of the town and the aspirations of the Quarter in which they are located. Materials should be selected that will weather well.
- A mix of development opportunities should be considered including residential and / or offices above ground floor retail and leisure uses as well as new or converted buildings
- Sustainable building design should be promoted that incorporates green elements, such as green roofs and walls and rainwater harvesting, as well as energy efficiency. The use of sustainable materials, modern construction methods, and zero carbon / negative building technologies utilising renewable energy and carbon sequestration to combat climate change should be implemented.
- A taller building assessment should be undertaken to determine suitable reasoning for future development, with a particular focus on scale and massing, the historic urban environment, and appropriate place making. This should identify specific locations for important buildings at key focal points and gateways, taking into account the topography of the town centre.

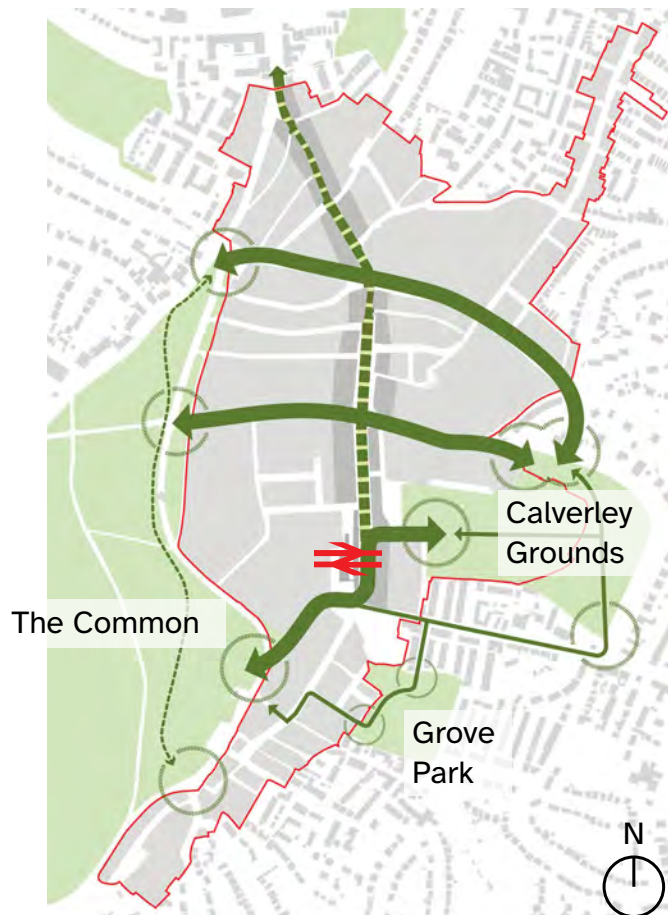


Connected Landscapes

Royal Tunbridge Wells valued and accessible greenspaces are well connected for people, habitats and wildlife to move between and enjoy. Streets have been greened with trees with a focus on making liveable streets.

Focus

- The town centre will enhance its Royal Spa Town character with high-quality green and blue infrastructure connections. This includes greening streets with trees, planting, green roofs, and walls between existing green spaces. Coordinated blue infrastructure (water elements such as open drainage features - swales) projects will celebrate the town's spa town heritage with urban drainage solutions, rain gardens, and water features to assist with water drainage.
- A focus on health and well-being should be a priority, including improving air quality by greening streets and improving access to green spaces.
- Streets should be designed to be liveable, healthy places for people to circulate, breathe and relax. Apply the [Transport for London \(TfL\) Healthy Streets Indicators](#) to the key streets (such as those highlighted in the adjacent diagram) through the town centre.
- Connectivity to the Common should be improved for pedestrians and cyclists. Entrances labelled as 'green gateways' on the adjacent diagram should be celebrated and designed accordingly.



Landscape connections plan

- Town Centre Study Boundary
- ⇄ Tunbridge Wells Train Station
- Connecting habitats and greenspaces
- Greening Street
- Green Gateways

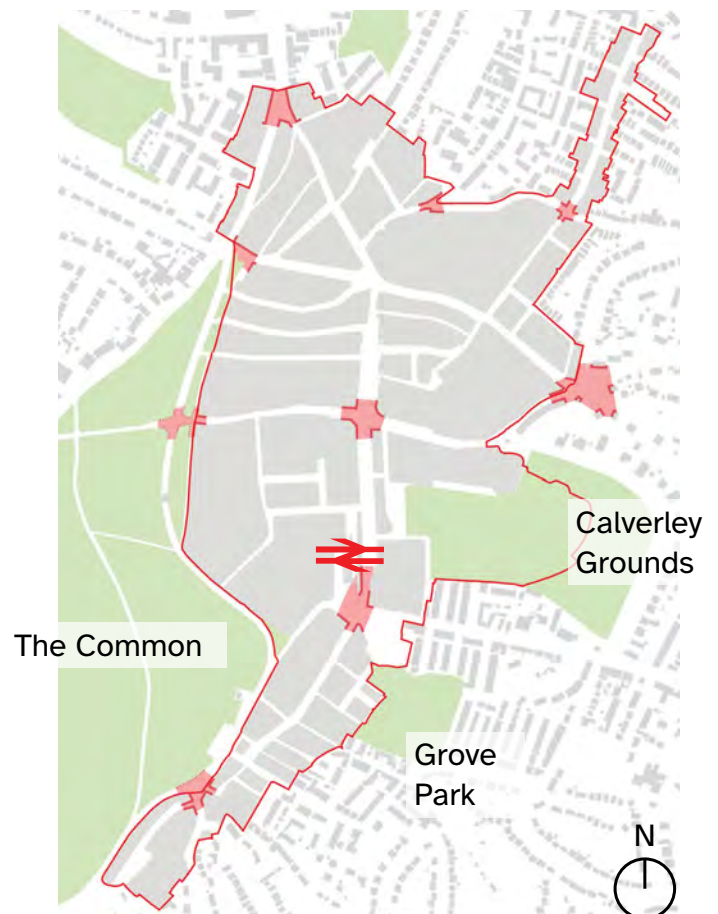


Active streets and nodes

Streets and paths are pleasant for people walking and cycling to use with clean air, space for planting and seating, and are well enclosed by surrounding buildings. Key entrance points to the town should promote active travel where possible.

Focus

- Streets and paths are pleasant and safe for people walking and cycling to use with clean air, space for planting and seating, and are well enclosed by surrounding buildings. Key entrance points to the town should promote active travel where possible.
- Provision for active travel is designed to accommodate future active travel volumes and based on current best practice guidance such as [TFL's '10 Healthy Streets Indicators'](#).
- Improving movement, connectivity, and the public realm will increase the town's value and catalyse regeneration. Key interventions include redesigning main nodal points across the town centre to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, decluttering and greening streets, marking gateways and connecting to 21st century way and cycle routes.
- Mount Pleasant Road and the High Street are predominantly car free with streets and spaces prioritised for active travel with appropriate storage and shared mobility.
- The dominance of vehicular traffic along Grosvenor Road and Camden Road is significantly reduced.



Nodal points plan

— Town Centre Study Boundary

⇄ Tunbridge Wells Train Station

■ Nodes - Key locations that mark the entrance into the town centre or an arrival experience that needs to be redesigned to improve the pedestrian and cycle experience

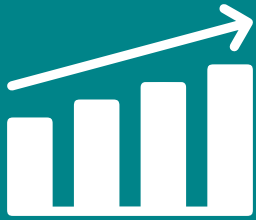


A low carbon future

All proposals have been designed to consider the town's climate resilience including self-sufficiency with regard to energy, movement, reducing carbon emissions and adoption of sustainable and low carbon solutions for how new spaces, buildings and retrofits are delivered and managed.

Focus

- Improvements to the public realm and cycle-ways should encourage modal shifts from local commuting by car (31% of commutes are less than 5km) to alternative methods such as bikes and walking.
- Focus on improvements to public transport to encourage modal shifts from local commuting by car (over half of commutes are under 20km) to alternative methods such as bus and e-assisted transport solutions. Consider the use of trials for e-assisted modes.
- Support local residents by providing government funding information for the installation of alternative energy technologies such as solar PV and heat pumps, with a focus on reducing gas and electricity consumption. This should include a review of all publicly owned built infrastructure and the environmental and cost benefits it could bring.
- Undertake detailed studies to assess how natural carbon storage such as tree planting and habitat restoration can be maximised with reference to the 'Connected landscapes' Royal Spa Town Principles.
- Support local residents and businesses with the provision of government funding information for the installation of building insulation and new glazing options to make domestic and commercial properties more efficient.
- Explore opportunities in relation to proposed developments to implement a district heating network to reduce reliance on gas as a heating source.
- Assess all new housing developments within the town centre with reference to energy consumption, emissions and alternative energy sources.
- Undertake technical studies to assess how a resilient local, sustainable economy could utilise resources more wisely and reduce waste.



A sustainable and resilient economy

High quality and diverse living, working, shopping, learning, leisure, cultural and historic environments attract and retain top businesses and the creative industries. There is a flexible and adaptable approach to future uses and sites that sustains the town's future vitality and viability.

Focus

- Facilitate a balanced town centre retail offer that represents the town's diverse population profile of different backgrounds and income levels.
- Work with stakeholders to determine how to attract new retailers to the town and establish the type and size of accommodation they require. Then work with owners and occupiers to meet these requirements.
- Explore opportunities for a cinema, further leisure uses and Food & Beverage Services across the town centre.
- With a focus on town centre living and retail repurposing, undertake technical studies to assess how redundant retail floor space could be reused / redeveloped to enhance the future of the town centre. E.g., Hotel, leisure, creative and flexible employment spaces, and apartments.
- Explore the use of road closures at certain times to help facilitate the importance of the evening economy.
- Work with stakeholders to assess opportunities for independent retailers and new and young businesses to occupy space within the town centre e.g., Creative hubs, shared workspaces, galleries, technology start-up, restaurants and food outlets.
- Create programmes to assist independent retailers and merchants in moving to larger, subsidized spaces as part of an overall plan to boost the local economy, keeping wealth in the community and diversifying the town centre.
- New and continued investment within the town centre with a focus on the public realm, street and night-time lighting, shop fronts, wayfinding, and the shopper / visitor experience.
- Assess opportunities for meanwhile / temporary uses, street food, and creative events to contribute continued life and activity in the town centre.



A creative destination

Royal Tunbridge Wells is well known as a creative place in which to live, work and visit. Culture and creativity is embedded in the town, contributing to both social and economic well-being. Events across the year bring footfall to the town supporting the day and evening economy.

Focus

- Continue to develop and co-ordinate the existing events calendar into a year-long programme of town centre arts, music and cultural events supported by associated meanwhile uses and Food & Beverage Services.
- Develop further arts and cultural uses associated with the Amelia Scott, Trinity Theatre and Assembly Hall Theatre to create a cultural destination in the town that includes further arts space, Food & Beverage Services and outdoor bars and restaurants.
- Continue to establish a coordinated live music and arts strategy that supports local musicians, street performers and helps support existing live music venues, including designated busking areas.
- Explore opportunities to utilise vacant retail and office space to accommodate artist galleries, studios and exhibition space with a focus on growing the arts, music and cultural activities across town and supporting local creatives.
- Further build on the towns historic spa character by hosting events associated with the towns past to encourage tourism and town centre activity and spend.
- Liaise with local creative businesses and education providers to assist with affordable accommodation and provide the necessary technology and skills needed to help grow the creative economy.
- Coordinate with retailers and restaurants to extend their opening times in conjunction with town centre events to capitalise on footfall.
- Facilitate controlled street closures and the use of pavement space to encourage meanwhile uses and the making of a mixed and vibrant town centre economy.

5. Masterplan Framework

The Masterplan Framework plan (page 19) shows the overarching principles for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre. The diagram is conceptual and therefore certain aspects are indicative in their location / form - such as greening streets and improving connectivity and biodiversity between greenspaces. The precise route and most appropriate location is to be established as part of the more forthcoming Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan.

The following pages set out a vision and potential design interventions for each of the quarters in response to extensive stakeholder and public consultation to collectively achieve the overall Vision for the town centre as established in the Spa Town principles.

Masterplan Framework Legend

-  Town Centre Study Boundary
-  North Quarter
-  East Quarter
-  West Quarter
-  South Quarter
-  Opportunity for re-use / redevelopment
-  Primary / key streets
-  Parks & Greenspaces
-  Nodal point - existing gateway
-  Important green link connections between public open spaces and the town centre
-  Opportunity to introduce / enhance street trees and planting
-  Opportunities to improve the train station arrival experience and the surrounding public realm
-  Opportunities for regeneration with a focus on the making of a mixed use walkable neighbourhood and development infill
-  Opportunities to further showcase and celebrate towns heritage and cultural assets
-  Opportunities to reinforce central part of the town centre by providing further focal points for cultural, arts and civic events
-  Opportunities to improve pedestrian and shopping experiences as well as public realm



The Common

Calverley Grounds

Grove Park

Masterplan Framework



Town Centre Quarters

Royal Tunbridge Wells has a linear town centre characterised by distinct Quarters that give the town its sense of place and identity. Whilst there are no distinct boundaries between them, the Quarters are defined by different types of land uses, buildings, economic activities, open spaces, and topography.

The quarters collectively contribute to the success of the town centre but also represent areas of opportunity for how the town centre could evolve during the Local Plan period. The Spa Town Principles described in chapter 3.0 are cross cutting across all four Quarters – they encompass opportunities to introduce the following:

- New or additional town centre living
- Repurposing retail
- New commercial and creative workspaces
- Food and beverage uses
- Leisure and Cultural activities
- Enhancing connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists
- Public realm improvements
- Transforming highways infrastructure and encouraging sustainable journeys and movement
- Greening streets

These ambitions could be realised in different ways across the different Quarters. Areas of opportunity are highlighted on the plans for each quarter; and explained within the text which give suggestions for

particular interventions and / or potential future planning policies. These are summarised in chapters 7 and 8 at the end of this document.

North Quarter

(Grosvenor Road and Camden Road)

A unique and vibrant destination that appeals to shoppers, tourists, and local residents, created by enhancing the existing spirit of local businesses, diversifying the shopping centre, promoting town centre living, improving the public realm and linking to open spaces.

East Quarter

(Mount Pleasant Road / Crescent Road)

A dynamic and thriving quarter focusing on civic life and creative, cultural and leisure activities, with an emphasis on providing a wide range of interests /activity for everyone to enjoy at heart of the town centre.

West Quarter

(Train station and surrounds)

An area of the town designed to enhance the sense of arrival for visitors to the historic Royal Spa Town, by showcasing its health and well-being benefits through improved connections to green spaces, and providing easy navigation to other key destinations and focal points in the town centre.

South Quarter

(High Street and The Pantiles)

A quarter dedicated to showcasing the existing cultural and heritage assets that have shaped Royal Tunbridge Wells by improving the public realm and creating a place that truly captures the town's rich history.

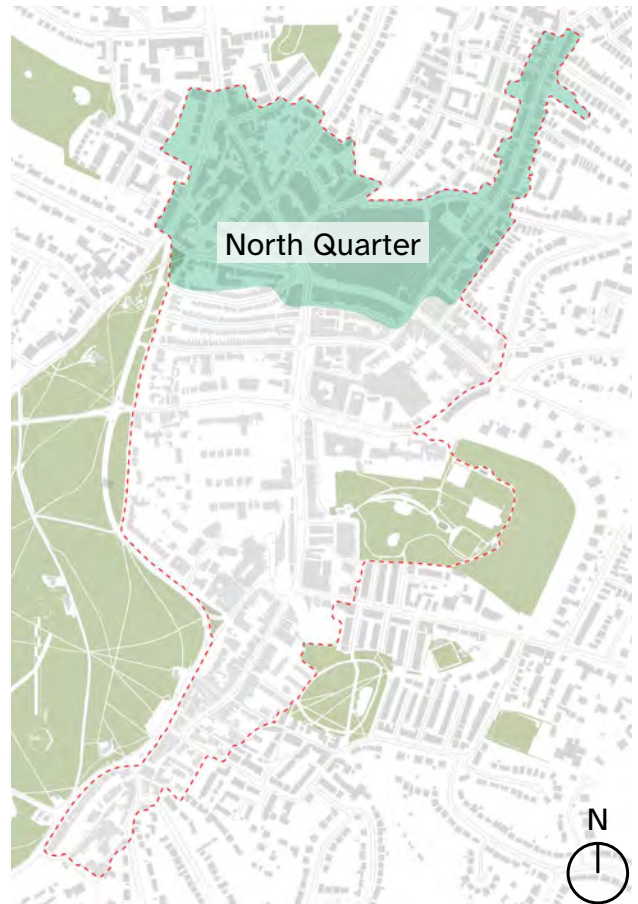


North Quarter

Grosvenor Road & Camden Road

An important arrival area into Royal Tunbridge Wells from the north, the experience should be welcoming, setting the tone for the remainder of the town centre.

The focus for this area is to create more pleasant and safe experiences for pedestrians and cyclists, reducing the amount of vehicular traffic, introducing wider footways, and greener landscaping. The retail environment should be enhanced with improved shop fronts, restored building frontages, active street frontages in front of shops, and opportunities to introduce town centre living. Public realm improvements will mean that active travel modes are the most convenient way of moving around.



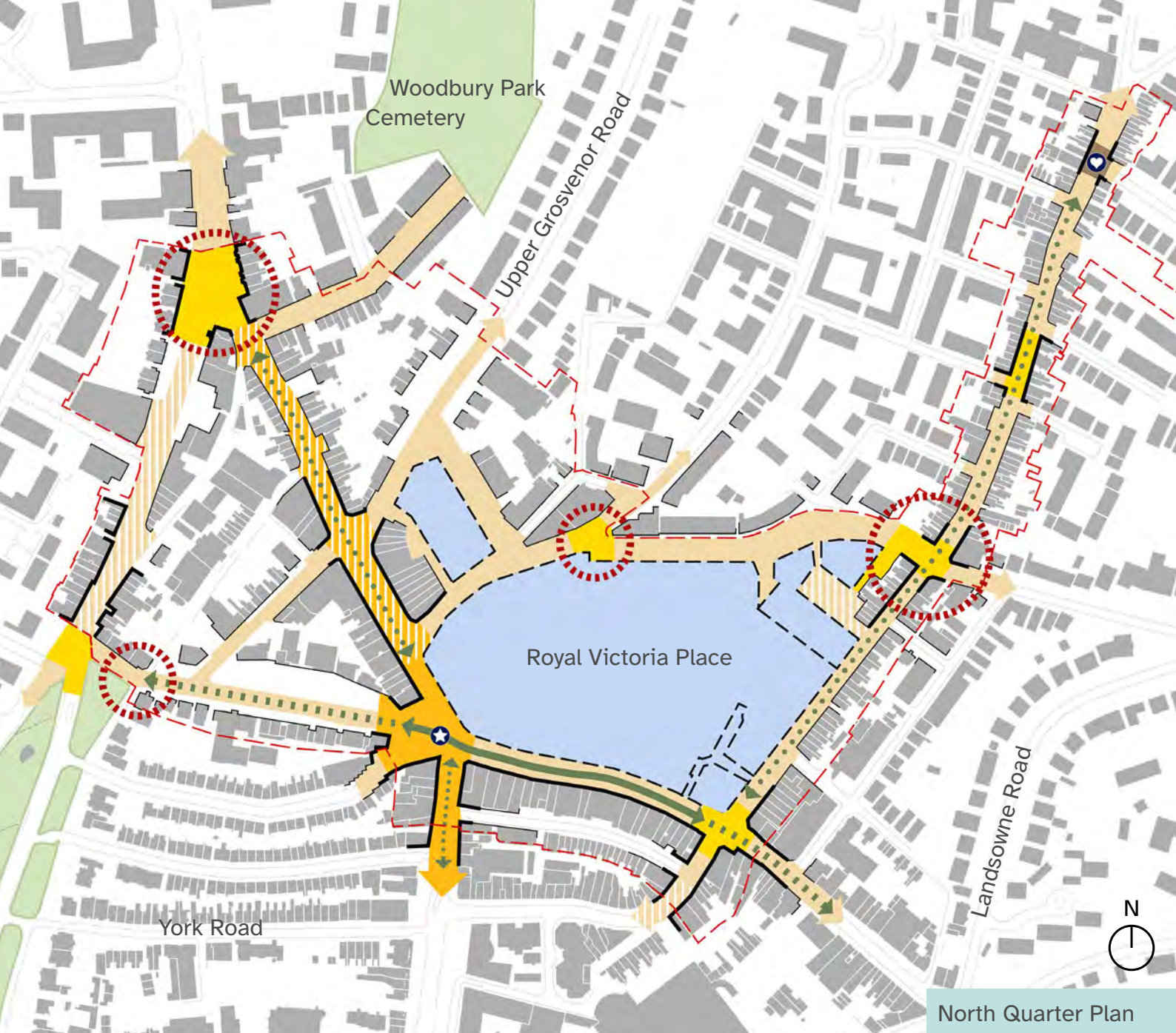
North Quarter Location Plan



An illustrative example of how the Grosvenor Road public realm could possibly be re-prioritised for pedestrians, cyclists and landscaping.



Cycle Lanes encourage users by providing safety and convenience within a town centre.



North Quarter Plan

North Quarter Plan Legend

- - Quarter boundary
- Opportunity for re-use / redevelopment
- Primary streets
- Secondary street and spaces
- Important green link between public open space and town centre
- Existing greenspace / park
- ● ● Nodal point - Existing gateway
- ★ Existing focal space
- ● ● Opportunity to introduce / enhance street trees, planting and pedestrian experience
- Opportunity to improve streetscape to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement
- Opportunity for redesign and improvements to junction to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity
- ♥ Opportunity for a new focal space

Grosvenor Road

Grosvenor Road is an important route through the North Quarter into the town that connects the A26 into the main shopping area. Highway improvements will strengthen this link into the heart of the town centre, and should include reducing the dominance of vehicles and buses, reducing the width of the vehicular route creating space for uses to 'spill out' onto the street (such as cafes and restaurants), introducing cycle lanes, greening the street(s), and removing street clutter.

Meadow Road

The opportunity to assess the towns wider parking strategy should be undertaken to explore the possible redevelopment of the Meadow Road Car Park. Transforming the existing vehicular dominated one way system into streets and uses focussed on people and place around Meadow Road / Goods Station Road and Upper Grosvenor Road. This could introduce town centre living, active modes of travel (mobility hub and cycle parking), a community hub (that integrates with local higher education uses, the Baptist Church and residential), and a mix of uses that could complement the night-time economy offer.



Creation of public spaces that prioritise active travel and create opportunities for markets / community events.

Camden Road

The diverse and characterful Camden Road has a strong sense of identity within the local community. Opportunities should be sought to support new and existing independent businesses to flourish. Future development should aim to create a variety of supporting uses and experiences to increase the area's appeal for different groups throughout the day and evening. Whilst public realm improvements should be explored, the built environment and limited street and pavement widths, place limits on what is possible here (for example re-routing traffic away from Camden Road would be difficult). However, de-cluttering, street greening, public art, signage and shopfront improvements would all assist in improving the area.

Calverley Road

Work should be undertaken in coordination with retailers and landlords to improve the retail experience along this key street. Improvements to shop fronts, entrances, signage, public realm materials, planting, and lighting will all help improve the visitor experience and enhance town centre footfall.



An opportunity to introduce a mix types of residential development of the highest quality into the town centre.

Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre

The Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre makes a significant contribution to the town centres' retail economy and urban structure. However, it is considered that this key site within the town centre could benefit from retail floorspace reduction, consolidation and partial re-purposing as part of a transformational vision for the town centre to include other new and alternative leisure and possibly residential uses. This alongside, improvements to the shopping centre entrances, shop front upgrades, rationalisation of vacant units and introduction of meanwhile / temporary uses in vacant units such as gallery space, artwork and installations will improve the visitor experience and enhance town centre footfall.

Town Centre Repurposing

Where the loss of town centre retail provision cannot be restored and where retail units are under-sized or redundant, opportunities should be prioritised to deliver a more diverse and sustainable town centre. The repurposing of out-dated built infrastructure should be prioritised through the provision of residential apartments above retail, and other suitable town centre



A chance to regenerate shop fronts to enhance character, setting, uses, and identity.

uses such as flexible workspace, creative hubs, galleries and hotels. This could take advantage of existing community spaces as well as creative hubs like the Camden Centre and Market Square.

Shopfront Regeneration

The regeneration process could include the production of a shop front design guide and street code, setting rules and guidance to rejuvenate the shop fronts, creating a consistent approach to signage, colour palette, and focusing on improving the collective retail and pedestrian experience.

Green Links to Historic Parks

There is potential to improve the visual and physical links between the town centre and surrounding historic parks. In particular there is the opportunity to improve wayfinding from the Lower Common, along Mount Ephraim Road and Calverley Road to Calverley Grounds.

The greening of these streets (street trees, planting, and sustainable urban drainage) would promote more sustainable movement, encourage a healthier and higher quality of life and provide opportunities to improve both biodiversity and drainage.



An opportunity to enhance existing and new green links between the historic parks.

East Quarter

Mount Pleasant Road & Crescent Road

The central part of the town centre will continue to provide a focal point for cultural, arts and civic events and uses, which are anchored by the Town Hall, the Amelia Scott, Trinity Theatre and Assembly Hall Theatre, helping to drive footfall outside of shopping hours.

This Quarter is at the heart of the town centre and acts as an important stepping stone between the north and south of the town. Regeneration should focus on public realm improvements to host the many events already taking place in the town, places for eating and drinking, the arts and culture with the purpose of reinforcing this area as the community focus for residents, visitors and workers alike.



East Quarter Location Plan



Installations within the paving that relate to the identity, character and history of the place, such as reference to the spa waters in any public realm works, and that can assist with wayfinding throughout the town centre.



East Quarter Plan

East Quarter Plan Legend

- - Quarter boundary
- Opportunity for re-use / redevelopment
- Primary streets
- Secondary street and spaces
- Important green link between public open space and town centre
- Existing greenspace / park
- Nodal point - Existing gateway
- 📍 Significant cultural building
- Opportunity to introduce / enhance street trees, planting and pedestrian experience
- The opportunity to improve street scape to improve pedestrian/cycle movement is extend further up to the north east
- Opportunity for redesign and improvements to junction to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity
- ♥ Opportunity for a new focal space
- Improvement to existing greenspace to increase biodiversity / new greenspace

Mount Pleasant Road Public Realm

A review and improvement of the public realm and streetscape in and around the Town Hall and Amelia Scott should be undertaken to further improve and prioritise the pedestrian experience and the civic character of this important area. Opportunities to give more significance to this space, to the 'square' opposite the war memorial, and to introduce complementary food and beverage, outdoor eating, leisure, art and culture opportunities should be prioritised to ensure the success of this central part of the town centre.

Crescent Road & Civic Way

Crescent Road is currently a busy thoroughfare designed to prioritise the car and its movement. Technical studies should be undertaken to widen footways, introduce a central pedestrian median or narrow the road and remove it altogether (subject to further review / study). The street should be transformed to introduce street trees, and reconfigure Civic Way as a pedestrian and bicycle shared space to better address the Assembly Hall Theatre creating space for people to congregate before or after an event.



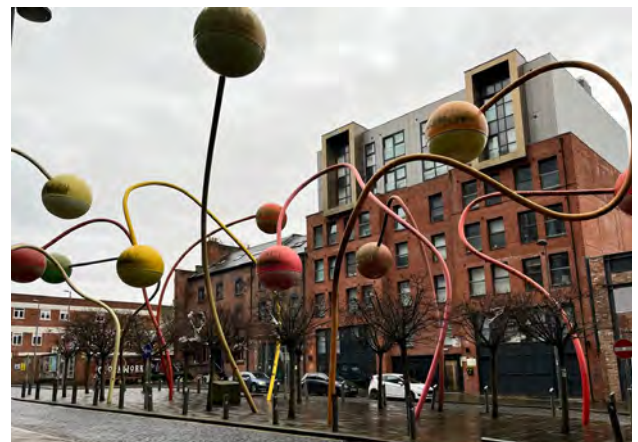
Interactive STEM Learning pop up events could be installed for short-term social purposes.

Monson Road

Monson Road is enclosed along the streets northern edge by a beautiful building facade that follows the alignment of the street. Technical studies should be undertaken to widen the footways, introduce street trees and planting.

Civic Complex

The re-purposing of the Civic Complex (including the Town Hall, Assembly Hall and Police Station) should be designed in coordination with public realm improvements to Mount Pleasant Road and Crescent Road. The re-purposing of this area provides an opportunity to further reinforce the civic status of the Quarter by creating a mixed use hub of creative and cultural activities supported by a night-time economy. Uses could include hotels, art gallery, community spaces for events, co-working space as well as residential.



Pop-up installations can enliven the public realm and create destination points.

Celebrating Heritage

There are a number of historic buildings with ornate, detailed facades throughout this Quarter. Existing heritage trails could be expanded to create a myriad of routes that reveal these assets and celebrate their history, and the residents who once lived there.

Redevelopment Sites

Working in close coordination with the land owners, technical studies should be undertaken to explore how any significant buildings within the East Quarter that are coming towards the end of their commercial life could come forward for redevelopment, including their reuse, reconfiguration and redevelopment. Opportunities for creating new connections and enhancements to the public spaces should be incorporated and prioritised.

Public Realm and Events

Improvements to the public realm should focus on creating adaptable and flexible public realm spaces that allow events to take place including markets, memorial services and pop-up events or stalls. These should be coordinated with other events across the town centre.



Creative drainage solutions can benefit the streetscape appearance and help to communicate historic spa town principles. ©St William.

Mount Pleasant Road and Church Road Junction

The crossing of Mount Pleasant Road and Crescent Road is a significant nodal point between the lower and upper parts of the town centre. Regeneration of the former ABC cinema site will provide frontage and activation of a significant corner of the node. Movement north-south through this junction should be reprioritised for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, through public realm and junction improvements, to create the impression of a continuation of Mount Pleasant Road rather than the A264 / Crescent Road dissecting the desire lines.

Former Cinema Site

A prominent site which has been vacant for many years and now has planning permission for extra care accommodation, ancillary facilities, commercial and other mixed sui generis floorspace such as food and drink establishments. This site will form an important focal point at the Mount Pleasant Road junction, and will help activate the western edge of Mount Pleasant Road south.



Street planting has environmental advantages and makes desirable places for social and businesses purposes. ©Neil Speakman.

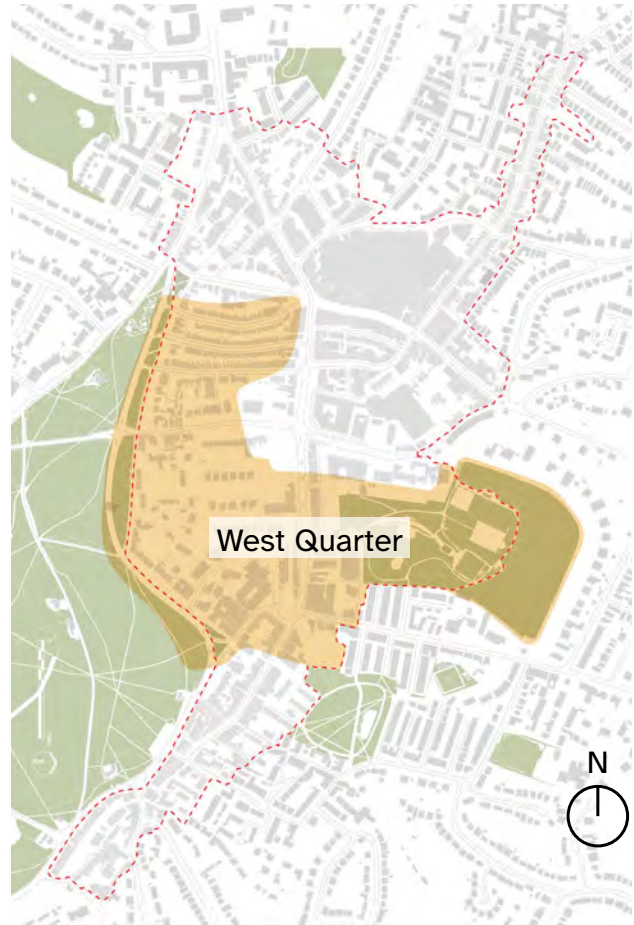
West Quarter

Train station and surrounds

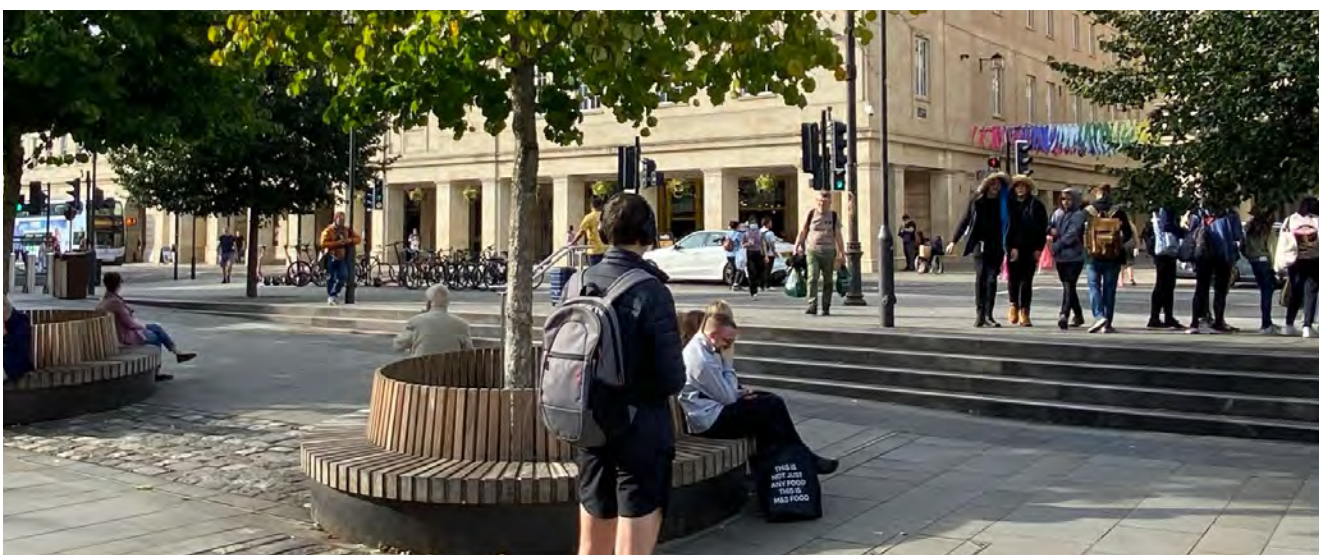
Tunbridge Wells Train Station is an important gateway for residents, visitors and people working in the town. The space around the station should create this sense of arrival.

There is an opportunity to create a new station square on Mount Pleasant Road, with the entrance to the station not dominated by taxis or buses and instead designed for people to gather or dwell before their onward journey. A destination in its own right. Public art, water features and lighting can create an attractive space that clearly expresses the Spa Town character and this crucial gateway.

The mix of uses and quality of the public realm should radiate from the station westwards to the Common and to Calverley Grounds to the east.



West Quarter Location Plan



Bath Spa Station, Brunel Square forecourt public realm area. A high quality arrival space with mature trees, planters, seating, high quality materials and retail space. Wayfinding provides clear direction to local destinations.



West Quarter Plan

West Quarter Plan Legend

- - Quarter boundary
- Opportunity for re-use / redevelopment
- Primary streets
- Secondary street and spaces
- Important green link between public open space and town centre
- Existing greenspace / park
- ■ ■ Nodal point - Existing gateway
- Opportunity for improvements to boundary of the Common with A26 to improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity
- ≡≡≡ Tunbridge Wells Train Station
- ● ● Opportunity to introduce / enhance street trees, planting and pedestrian experience
- Opportunity to improve streetscape to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement
- Opportunity for redesign and improvements to junction to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity
- Opportunity for a new focal space
- ≡≡≡ Improvement to existing greenspace to increase biodiversity / new greenspace
- Opportunity to adopt TFL liveable street principles
- Listed pavement route

Tunbridge Wells Train Station

There is a significant opportunity to transform the arrival experience at Tunbridge Wells Station that includes upgrading Mount Pleasant Road outside the station into a high quality shared surface that includes art work, water features, sculpture, seating, lighting and wayfinding that celebrates the Spa Town.

Further studies in collaboration with stakeholders and landowners should be undertaken to assess how the western side of the train station (accessed via Vale Road) could also work better by possibly accommodating the taxi drop-off, increasing cycle parking, footway widening and tree planting. Sustainable modes of travel associated with the station should become a priority.

Mount Pleasant Road (North)

Mount Pleasant is a characterful street defined by mature trees, steep topography and mostly higher end retailers. There are opportunities to increase the seating and landscaping along the street edge for people to stop, rest and enjoy the views, introduce a safe central median to assist people crossing the road and for the higher end retail characteristics of the street to be extended on both sides creating a distinct retail location at the heart of the town.



Public seating and tree planting creates places for events and people to socialise.

Mount Pleasant Road (South) / Vale Road

To the south of Mount Pleasant Road, the pedestrian experience along Vale Road (adjacent to and over the railway) needs to be redesigned to ensure crossings are well located, footways are widened and permeability follows desire lines to clearly link these routes rather than segregate. The roundabout should be removed and be replaced by traffic signals to slow traffic down and transform the public realm.

Lonsdale Gardens, Clarence Road and Surrounds

To the west of the station, the towns urban structure adopts a different character with residential streets accommodating a mix of uses including residential, offices, health care, nurseries and other businesses. Regeneration projects could focus on a mixed use walkable neighbourhood located within the town centre with good walking and cycling links to gain access to the wider town. There is the potential to consider reduced residential parking standards for new development considering the central location in the town and good access to bus services, walking and cycling routes.



Fencing with incorporated artwork visually enhances the streetscape.

London Road (A26)

The western edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells is characterised by Royal Tunbridge Wells Common, located a short walk from the town centre. Despite its adjacency, access is severed by London Road (A26), a busy A-road dominated by the car. Improvements should be focussed on changing the characteristics of the road (e.g., changing the colour of the road surface) so that it becomes a route within a landscape, adopting designated bicycle routes and introducing a number of pedestrian crossings and new wide pedestrian footways for all users (interventions subject to legal and landowner constraints). In addition, topographical level changes should be overcome by exemplar design to transform pedestrian and bicycle access.

Calverley Ground / Mount Pleasant Avenue

Improvements should be made to the entrance to Calverley Grounds from Mount Pleasant Road to make the park more visible. There is potential to transform Mount Pleasant Avenue Car Park into a mixed use development with Mount Pleasant Avenue transformed into a shared surface space with street trees and planting creating an inviting gateway with a pedestrian / green focused entrance into Calverley Grounds. Wayfinding could also make this entrance more obvious on Mount Pleasant Road.



Sustainable cycle storage throughout the town centre encourages the public to cycle.

Great Hall and Torrington Car Parks

Whilst any redevelopment of existing car parking provision must be in response to a conclusive town centre parking strategy, detailed studies should be explored to understand whether these sites would make a more valuable contribution to the town centre as alternative uses.

Great Hall Car Park - this building currently backs onto Calverley Grounds and blocks pedestrian access from Mount Pleasant Road through the Sainsbury's arcade. The introduction of different ground floor uses or an alternative building layout could extend the park into Mount Pleasant Road and contribute to the general public realm within the area and the sense of arrival at Tunbridge Wells Train Station.

Torrington Car Park - this building occupies a significant land parcel that constrains the area to the west of the station, dominating the urban environment and hindering connectivity. Its redevelopment could accommodate more beneficial uses for the town centre (residential or commercial) and contributing to the station environment (ground floor uses and the provision of more space), whilst recognising that the provision of some parking should be retained due to its importance as a car park serving commuters using the train station.



Rain garden attenuation, biodiversity, and landscaping benefits the area socially, environmentally and aesthetically.

South Quarter

High Street and The Pantiles

The High Street and the Pantiles are the predominant features that characterise this quarter. Interventions should celebrate the areas history, strengthen the retail environment, support local retailers, continue the success previous pilots have had with reducing the presence of the car and build on the character of the spa heritage of the area.

This area is an attractor of visitors, and residents alike. Future projects should enhance this quarter's sense of place including promoting events throughout the year, celebrating existing cultural and heritage assets such as the Spring, and the Forum, and improving connections and accessibility to the Common.



South Quarter Location Plan.



Pedestrianised streets can be a home to shops, restaurants and temporary markets.



Sculptural water feature in Sheffield demonstrates how water can be used as a feature to celebrate the Spa Town.



South Quarter Plan

South Quarter Plan Legend

- - Quarter boundary
- Opportunity for re-use / redevelopment
- Primary streets
- Secondary street and spaces
- Important green link between public open space and town centre
- Existing greenspace / park
- Nodal point - Existing gateway
- Opportunity for improvements to boundary of the Common with A26 to improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity
- ≡ Tunbridge Wells Train Station
- Opportunity to introduce / enhance street trees, planting and pedestrian experience
- Opportunity to improve streetscape to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement
- The opportunity to improve the pedestrian / cycle connectivity
- Opportunity for a new focal space
- Improvement to existing greenspace to increase biodiversity / new greenspace
- 📍 Significant cultural building

London Road and Frant Road

The South Quarter is characterised by the historic Pantiles, High Street and Common. The existing London Road (A26) corridor and adjacent Frant Road (A267) create a barrier between interest points and constrain pedestrian movement. Opportunities remain to transform the status of the road by embedding the street within its landscape setting by adopting a different coloured road surface, and activating shop fronts onto the A26 to engage with the Common frontage with the purpose of transforming the streets character into a 'street through a space', rather than a main road that buildings back on to.

The High Street

The High Street is well populated by independent and high-end retailers and benefits from a beautiful structure of unique historic buildings. The priority given to pedestrians by the introduction of a temporary highway pilot scheme that created more public space and provided outdoor seating and tables for retailers should be expanded with temporary interventions replaced by more permanent designs.



Festive and seasonal installations and lighting can add to the overall ambiance and serve as a form of public art.

The Pantiles

The heritage and cultural assets associated with the Pantiles should continue to be celebrated and revealed through public art, installations, way finding, advertisement of heritage trails, and events. Further consideration of how the spa heritage should be celebrated and expanded across the wider town centre should become a focus, along with the development of night-time economy.

Public Realm and Connectivity

Opportunities should prioritise the public realm by transforming vehicular dominated infrastructure - narrowing junction radii, removing roundabouts and guard rails, installing pedestrian crossings and bicycle lanes, making sure routes and crossing points follow desire lines for pedestrians and generally improving the pedestrian experience and overall connectivity.

Live Music

Pedestrian connections including crossings over the A26 to improve links to the Forum should be explored. Associated live music and other events / entertainment could be enhanced and further promoted across the town centre.



Tree pit detail with recessed natural stone paving to create a more visually appealing design.



The Pantiles Clock

THE
CAKE
SHED
TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The Pantiles

6. Quick Wins

While the masterplan sets out a vision for 2040 and includes longer-term, strategic projects, it is essential to focus on immediate, visible changes to keep momentum going and to maintain support for the overall vision. These “quick win” projects can help to generate a sense of progress and interest in the town centre, and can be implemented by a variety of stakeholders to revitalize the area and create a more vibrant, active environment.

There are many potential temporary projects that could be implemented in the town centre to bring about quick, visible changes and revitalize the particular area. Some examples of temporary projects could include:

- **Pop-up shops and markets** - Temporary stalls or store fronts featuring local vendors and artisans can help to bring new energy and activity to the town centre.
- **Temporary public art installations** - Displaying art installations in public spaces can help to beautify the town centre and draw attention to the area.
- **Community events and festivals** - Organising these can bring people together to enliven the town centre and create a sense of excitement and engagement.
- **Temporary green spaces and street typologies** - This can help local businesses and provide a place for people to relax, eat and drink outdoors. This could include installing planters, benches, and tables.
- **Meanwhile Uses** - Vacant retail units could be transitioned into temporary spaces used by local entrepreneurs, artists, or other organisations. This can improve the overall experience of the user by providing a variety of amenities and services that cater to the needs and interests of the local community.



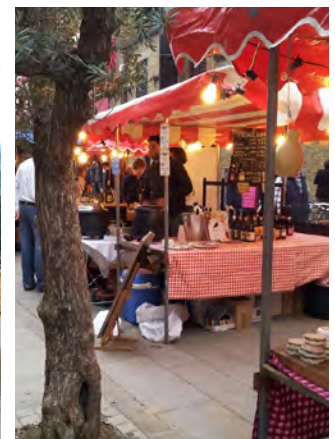
Regular events in the town centre. ©Ian Davis / LCQOB



Shop front improvements.



Temporary art installations.



Pop-up shops and markets.

Bringing it to Reality

Some of the proposed initiatives / projects identified in the Town Centre Study will be delivered by a number of Council departments and with other partner organisations alongside (or ahead of) the preparation of the final Town Centre Plan document itself.

The Council is currently reviewing its Economic Development Strategy and will be consulting on a new Strategy in 2023. The Strategy will set out key priorities and projects for a three-year period (2023 – 2026) and opportunities identified in the Town Centre Plan will be reflected in this document.

In addition, Royal Tunbridge Wells Together Business Improvement District (BID) is now in the final year of its first five-year term and will be preparing a new Business Plan for the second term ballot which will take place in early 2024. So, there is also potential for the BID and partners to lead on some of the opportunities identified in the study.

Other partners in the delivery of shorter-term projects include local businesses, event organisers, Creative Tunbridge Wells (strategic partnership for the creative economy) and Kent Highways.



Provide opportunities for meanwhile uses.

The following initiatives represent some quick wins that are already being, or will be, explored by the Council and partners:

- Meanwhile uses for vacant property, working with local landlords.
- Improvements to streetscene including parklets, planters and seating.
- Improved signage for pedestrians to assist navigation around the town.
- Shopfront improvement scheme.
- Support for businesses to reduce carbon emissions and make energy savings.
- Supporting and co-ordinating an annual events programme in the town centre.
- Farmers Market in the northern part of the town centre.
- Business support and training for retailers (e.g. social media marketing).
- Installation of footfall counters to provide information to businesses and partner organisations.
- New art installations (temporary or permanent).
- Cargo bike hire scheme for business deliveries and expansion of the Co-Wheels car club scheme.
- Promotion and marketing of the town centre to investors, residents and visitors from further afield to support a vibrant town centre

Possible funding sources for the above include: existing council budgets, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, RTWT BID, developer contributions.

Transport Roles and Responsibilities

The 2040 vision for the town centre set out in this plan states that: Walking, cycling, public transport and other forms of sustainable travel will be the natural transport choice and contribute to the transition to a low carbon economy and improvements in air quality.

Kent County Council (KCC) is the local highway authority for Tunbridge Wells borough, including the town centre. Therefore, all projects that have an impact on the highway (including pavements) require joint working and agreement with KCC. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) works in partnership with KCC at both a strategic level (e.g. for the Local Plan) and also on local schemes, for example Public Realm Phase 2 (Mount Pleasant Road) and High Street parklets and planters schemes in the town centre. KCC has also implemented a number of 20mph schemes in the town centre and surrounding residential areas recently, which have been widely supported by local residents.

Bus services in the borough are provided by large national companies and some much smaller local bus operators. Most bus services operate on a commercial basis with the remainder requiring local authority support (from KCC). Commercial services tend to operate six or seven days a week whilst supported services mostly operate on weekdays only.

The largest local bus provider in the borough is Arriva Kent & Surrey. Vehicles used on the local network include minibuses, full sized single-deck and double-deck vehicles. A large proportion of bus users in Tunbridge Wells are students attending the many secondary schools in the area. The grammar school system in Kent generates a large number of longer and more complex journeys and the 7 schools in the areas to the north and east of the town centre attract students from a wide geographical area across the county and from neighbouring authorities.

The rail station in the town centre is a key bus-rail interchange with a number of stops on either side of Mount Pleasant Road with services for passengers both north and southbound.

KCC's Public Transport Team works closely with local bus operators to seek to provide a good level of service for those living and working in the borough. KCC recently submitted their Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to the Department for Transport, bidding for funding to support services across the county. TWBC is represented at the West Kent Enhanced Partnership Group and the borough also organises the more focused Tunbridge Wells Local Bus Partnership Group as well as the Tunbridge Wells Public Transport Forum (attended by rail and bus operators).

Transport Projects for Town Centre

TWBC commissioned the preparation of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), that was published as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The LCWIP sets out a network of priority routes for pedestrians and cyclists into and around Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre (as well as in the wider borough). The Council works with KCC to bid for funding from Active Travel England's Capability Fund and Active Travel Fund to design and deliver improved infrastructure. Developer contributions are also negotiated to provide new infrastructure where appropriate.

TWBC owns 13 car parks in the town centre and manages the operations and charging regime for these. Work is underway to install electric vehicle charging in these car parks. TWBC also undertakes on-street parking enforcement in the town centre. TWBC has partnered with Co-Wheels to establish the very successful car club in the town centre, with an expansion planned in the near future.

The project list sets out a number of projects that are either being explored or are planned (depending on availability of funding) over the next 10 years.

Project - New cycle route between Langton Green / Rusthall and RTW Town Centre via the Commons (LCWIP Phase 1)

Timescale - Design 2023 / Delivery 2024-25

Delivery - Funding for design work received as part of Capability Fund

Project - Improved A26 Cycle Route between RTW and Tonbridge Town Centre (LCWIP Phase 2)

Timescale - Not known

Delivery - Future Active Travel, Fund Tranche, S106 funding

Project - A264 Pembury Road Cycle Route (LCWIP Phase 1)

Timescale - Not known

Delivery - Future Active Travel, Fund Tranche, S106 funding

Project - Walking Route improvements into RTW Town Centre (LCWIP Phase 1)

Timescale - Ongoing

Delivery - KCC Maintenance Budget, Future Active Travel, Fund Tranche

Project - Hawkenbury to town centre Cycle Route (LCWIP Phase 1)

Timescale - Not known

Delivery - Future Active Travel, Fund Tranche, S106 Funding

Project - Expansion of CoWheels Car Club – increased number of vehicles

Timescale - 2023

Delivery - S106 Funding

Project - Increased number of EV Charging Points in town centre Car Parks

Timescale - 2023-2024

Delivery - TWBC

Project - Explore options for additional bus layover spaces in town centre

Timescale - 2023

Delivery - TWBC, KCC

Project - Explore cargo bike scheme for business deliveries in town centre

Timescale - 2023-2025

Delivery - UKSPF

Project - Explore cargo bike scheme for business deliveries in town centre

Timescale - 2023-2025

Delivery - UKSPF

Project - Other BSIP Projects including:

- Exploration of options to provide DRT services
- Lower fares and more flexible ticketing, electronic and smart card ticketing
- Better integration with other modes of transport including rail and active travel
- Modern comfortable vehicles with a move to zero-carbon vehicles
- Traffic management measures that will aid reliability of buses on the network
- Improvements to bus stop facilities including passenger information
- Improved information for passengers planning journeys

Timescale - 2023-2040

Delivery - KCC Bus Service Improvement Plan

Project - Improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure on Mount Ephraim between Royal Chase and Grosvenor Road / A26 mini-roundabout

Timescale - 2023-2025

Delivery - S106 Funding

Project - Explore options for e-bike and / or e-scooter rental schemes in town centre

Timescale - 2023-2025

Delivery - To be confirmed



Example of a successful 'quick win' - the pilot scheme along the High Street, replacing parking spaces with planters, creating more space for pedestrians along the shop fronts and providing opportunities for cafes to spill out onto the street.

7. Identified Projects

This chapter summarises future project opportunities, which have been identified from two sources (shown below). It also suggests indicative timescales for delivery during the Local Plan period (up to 2040) and summarises possible due diligence, delivery, and funding initiatives that should be considered going forward. The project opportunities have been identified from the following:

- Project opportunities identified as part of the Tunbridge Wells Submission Local Plan Policy STR / RTW 2 and;
- Project opportunities identified as part of the Baseline Technical reports that inform the making of this document, (summarised within chapter 4 Masterplan Framework).

Where future project opportunities have been identified within the separate baseline technical studies set out previously under Section 3, a simple code has been adopted for each project, which references the document name, author, and the chapter source. This coding can be summarised as follows:

Transport & Carbon Baseline Report by City Science: [TCBR-\(CS\)-CHAP X.X](#).

Retail Study and Healthcheck by Knight Frank: [RSH-\(KF\)-CHAP X.X](#).

Stakeholder & Community Engagement Report by LDA Design: [SCER-\(LDA\)-CHAP X.X](#).

The sites and projects identified within this section will be the subject of further consideration through the ongoing work on the Town Centre Plan. This will include engagement with landowners, key stakeholders such as KCC Highways and other interest groups and the wider public as well as detailed design and feasibility work and technical studies as necessary.

North Quarter

Project Summary	Timescales	Due diligence, delivery and funding
<p>Royal Victoria Place</p> <p>The RVP could be improved by reducing retail floorspace, consolidating, and repurposing some areas for leisure or residential uses. Enhancements such as improving entrances, shop fronts, and repurposing vacant units for temporary uses like galleries and artwork could boost foot traffic. RSH-(KF)-CHAP 7.4. Section E, 10.2.4. & 10.2.5. and SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.13. & 3.1.7.</p>	0-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified as key site • Engagement with landowners, tenants and stakeholders including the centre manager • Detailed feasibility and viability studies and establishment of mix of uses appropriate • Detailed parking strategy required • TWBC/Private/S106
<p>Camden Square</p> <p>Area redevelopment to include town centre living and community focused spaces such as, creative hubs, galleries, and workshops. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 1.3. & 2.4.3.</p>	0-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with landowners, tenants and stakeholders to determine mix of uses appropriate. • Detailed feasibility/design • TWBC/Private
<p>Grosvenor Road</p> <p>Reduction of vehicular dominance and pedestrian prioritisations as well as general improvements to the streetscape. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.2.4., 2.2.6. & 2.3.6. and TCBR-(CS)-CHAP 5.2.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed feasibility and design in collaboration with KCC highways and other stakeholders including bus operators • TWBC/KCC/Section 106/BID/other funding opportunities
<p>Meadow Road Car Park</p> <p>Area redevelopment to include town centre living, night-time focused entertainment and a community and mobility hub. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.13. & 3.1.7.</p>	5-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed parking strategy required to inform future use • Detailed feasibility studies working with landowner to establish mix of uses appropriate • TWBC/Private/KCC

East Quarter

Project Summary	Timescales	Due diligence, delivery and funding
<p>AXA Health Building</p> <p>Area redevelopment to include town centre living, office units and Crescent Road / Civic Quarter gateway to Calverley Grounds. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 1.3.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with landowners and stakeholders Detailed feasibility/design TWBC/Private
<p>Civic Complex</p> <p>Re-purposing of the Civic Complex to further reinforce the status by creating a mixed use hub of co-working space, creative and cultural actives. Development should directly aspire for reconfiguration of the Civic Way Road into a pedestrian and bicycle shared space. SCER- (LDA)-CHAP 2.1.13. & 3.1.6.</p>	0-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with landowners and stakeholders of wider civic complex including the police and, KCC and TWBC Collaboration between KCC, Highways, bus operators and cycle groups. TWBC/KCC Highways/other funding opportunities
<p>Former Cinema Site</p> <p>Planning permission for extra care accommodation, ancillary facilities and other mixed sui generis floorspace such as food and drink establishments. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.13, & 3.1.7 and SH-(KF)-CHAP 8.3. & 10.2.10.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified as a key site Work with the landowners/ site promoters to ensure timely delivery of site which has long been vacant TWBC/Private
<p>Crescent Road Car Park</p> <p>Improve linkages to the town centre and routes to Calverley Grounds/Town Hall/ War memorial and Mount Pleasant Road.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed feasibility/design Engagement with stakeholders and businesses Detailed parking strategy required TWBC/KCC Highways Section 106

Project Summary	Timescales	Due diligence, delivery and funding
<p>Mount Pleasant Road North</p> <p>Improvement of the existing public realm and streetscape around the Town Hall. The public realm is to be focused on adaptable and flexible spaces that can accommodate markets, memorial services, pop-up events and stalls. TCBR- (CS)-CHAP 5.2. and SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.3.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed feasibility/design • Engagement with local businesses and stakeholders including KCC Highways and bus operators • TWBC/KCC Highways • Private/Section 106/BID/ other funding opportunities
<p>Monson Road</p> <p>Improvements to the streetscape, shop fronts and planting as well as temporary markets. EWS (LDA)/CHAP 2.1.13.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed design • Engagement with local business and stakeholders • TWBC/KCC Highways • Section 106/BID/Other funding opportunities

West Quarter

Project Summary	Timescales	Due diligence, delivery and funding
<p>Grove Hill Corner Site</p> <p>Area development to include town centre living with public access to Grove Park. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.3.3.</p>	0-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with landowners to determine interest for redevelopment – Network Rail and stakeholders including KCC Highways • Detailed design/feasibility • TWBC/private
<p>Great Hall Car Park</p> <p>Introduction of different ground floor use or alternative layout to enhance Calverley Grounds gateway. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 1.4. & 2.3.3.</p>	0-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed parking strategy required to inform future use • Engagement with landowners to determine interest for redevelopment and mix of uses appropriate • Detailed design/feasibility • TWBC/private

Project Summary	Timescales	Due diligence, delivery and funding
<p>Mount Pleasant Avenue</p> <p>Mount Pleasant Avenue to be transformed by a mixed use development and a more visible, appropriate, and inviting gateway into Calverley Grounds. SCER -(LDA)-CHAP 2.3.7.</p>	0-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed parking strategy required to inform future use • Engagement with landowners to determine interest for redevelopment/appropriate mix of uses • Detailed design/feasibility • TWBC/private
<p>Mount Pleasant House and Southern Buildings</p> <p>Area redevelopment to include town centre living with retail & leisure dedicated ground floor. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.4.6. and RSH-(KF)-CHAP 8.3.8.</p>	0-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with landowners to determine interest for redevelopment and mix of uses appropriate • Detailed design/feasibility • TWBC/private
<p>Mount Pleasant Road (South) / Vale Road</p> <p>Vale Road junction to be redesigned to accommodate better placed crossings, widened footways and activate linkage to the High Street & The Pantiles. TCBR-(CS)-CHAP 5.2. and SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.5. & 2.2.4.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed design/feasibility • Engagement with landowners and businesses • TWBC/KCC highways • Section 106/BID/Other funding opportunities
<p>Tunbridge Wells Train Station and Surrounding area including Torrington Car Park</p> <p>Improvements to the arrival experience by upgrading the public realm and streetscapes by introducing art work, sculpture, way finding and lighting. TCBR- (CS)-CHAP 5.2. and SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.3.4. & 3.1.6.</p> <p>Area redevelopment to accommodate further town centre living & commercial use as well as to contribute to the station environment. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.13. & 2.4.4.</p>	5-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with landowners and stakeholders , in particular Network Rail and KCC Highways • Detailed parking strategy required to inform future use • Detailed design/feasibility to establish appropriate mix of uses • TWBC/private/other funding opportunities

South Quarter

Project Summary	Timescales	Due diligence, delivery and funding
<p>Auction House</p> <p>Planning permission has been granted and implemented for change of use to commercial with a possibility for a more comprehensive future scheme subject to heritage constraints.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with landowners • Detailed parking strategy required • Detailed design/feasibility/Heritage assessment • Private/TWBC
<p>London Road (A26)</p> <p>Road to accommodate further landscaping buffers, safe pedestrian crossings to the Common, and bicycle routes. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.10 & 2.3.7.</p>	0-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed design/movement study • Engagement with key stakeholders including KCC Highways/Bus operators and cycle groups • TWBC/KCC/Section 106/Other funding opportunities
<p>The High Street</p> <p>Existing temporary street interventions and pedestrian priority to be made permanent. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 3.1.6. and RSH-(KF)-CHAP 1.6.5.</p>	0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with stakeholders and businesses including KCC Highways • TWBC/KCC Highways • Section 106/BID/Other funding opportunities
<p>The Pantiles</p> <p>Heritage and cultural assets to be showcased and celebrated further through public art, installations, heritage trails, events etc.. SCER-(LDA)-CHAP 2.1.2. & 3.1.3.</p>	0-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further scoping to plan varied event festival programme • Engagement with local businesses and stakeholders • TWBC/Visit Kent • TWBC/Section 106/BID/Other funding opportunities

8. Making it Happen

This document and the principles within it have established a number of site-wide and specific ambitions that will influence the look and feel of the town up to 2040. To ensure they are delivered, the next stage of the process will include the making of a Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan, that includes a Vision and Masterplan, identified development sites in collaboration with landowners and stakeholders, ambitious planning policies and a delivery strategy that will steer development within the town over the plan period.

Development Proposals

The Development Proposals outlined in Chapter 4.0 Masterplan Framework, have been informed by the Town Centre Retail Study and Healthcheck prepared by Knight Frank (September 2022), the Transport and Carbon Baseline Report (prepared by City Science (November 2022), and recommendations from public consultation and engagement workshops summarised in the Town Centre Study Engagement Workshop Summary prepared by LDA Design (January 2023).

These proposals represent the vision and ambition for the town centre, and will require technical, delivery and financial strategies for delivery. As such, given the scale and complexity of some of them, not all will be deliverable during the Local Plan period (up to 2040).

Delivery Mechanisms

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council should take a proactive approach to working with developers in order to deliver the types of development that the town needs, whilst achieving a step up in design quality. A range of mechanisms should be investigated to help achieve and streamline this process, including the use of public / private partnership approaches.

Governance

The implementation of the Town Centre Plan will require strong collaboration working across a wide range of stakeholders and delivery bodies. Given the wide variety of key stakeholders involved, it is recommended that a more focussed town centre Partnership is established working in association with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. This Partnership would help to ensure transparent joined up working between key players, acting as both a consultation portal for the big moves but also ensuring that agendas are joined up and working towards a common goal.

Project Funding

Project funding could come from a variety of sources, including Homes England, exploring grants for town centre improvements from Historic England and section 106 contributions from developments across the wider town. A more carefully aligned strategy to secure funding should be prepared as part of the making of the Town Centre Plan.

Future Actions

The preparation of a Town Centre Plan will necessitate implementing a number of technical design feasibility exercises and establishing project ambitions and aspirations early on in the process. Whilst these are wide-ranging, they could include the following actions:

Public Realm & Movement Strategy

Building on the work set out in this document and historic projects already undertaken by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, a comprehensive Public Realm and Movement Strategy should be undertaken for the town centre. The purpose would be to develop design interventions that will enhance the quality of movement for pedestrian and cyclists, minimise the impact of the motor car and develop opportunities for public realm enhancements, street-greening (green landscapes, planting, and street tree planting) and interventions to better the retail environment (outdoor Food & Beverage Services and associated seating).

The delivery of these proposals will require partnerships between Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council and will involve key stakeholders such as transport operators, local businesses as well as a variety of private sector parties. This would resolve major issues such as the movement of buses within the High Street, dramatically improve pedestrian accessibility, and promote bicycle use across the town centre.

Design Quality

Engaging with the private sector to set out the opportunity for investment in the town centre, setting the quality benchmark and building confidence in the direction of travel.

Car Parking Strategy

A Car Parking Strategy should be undertaken with a focus on establishing how parking can be consolidated with the aim of minimising congestion and contributing to the Carbon Neutral agenda. The strategy should seek to improve the quality of the public realm, and unlock future development opportunities for liveable streets and town centre living.

Development Briefs, Policies and Masterplans

These should be developed as necessary for significant mixed-use regeneration projects such as opportunities to deliver new town centre living opportunities, repurposing redundant parts of Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre, and the possible delivery of a new bus station and travel hub to promote active travel and reduce car use. These should be accompanied by assertive delivery strategies leveraging the potential for public sector investment to achieve site assembly and infrastructure transformation.

Heritage Trail

The preparation of a study to develop a comprehensive Heritage Trail across the town centre should be prioritised with a focus on connecting the heritage assets associated with the historic High Street and Pantiles, with the northern parts of the town. The aim is to celebrate the Spa Town character, the everyday lives of those who lived there historically, and creatively communicate the towns past.

Carbon Neutral Developments

Exploring opportunities for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to set a new benchmark for carbon neutral developments should be prioritised to inspire the private sector to follow suit.

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