



EAST GRINSTEAD

Town Centre Improvement Plan

January 2026

East Grinstead Town Centre Improvement Plan

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Aerial photo of East Grinstead

01 Introduction

East Grinstead is a unique and historic town with significant cultural heritage, situated at the edge of West Sussex and the wider South East region. Over recent years, the town centre has faced mounting challenges related to changing retail patterns, traffic congestion, fragmented public realm, and a gradual erosion of civic identity. In response, Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), in collaboration with East Grinstead Town Council (EGTC) and the East Grinstead Business Association (EGBA), commissioned dwg. to develop a comprehensive East Grinstead Town Centre Improvement Plan.

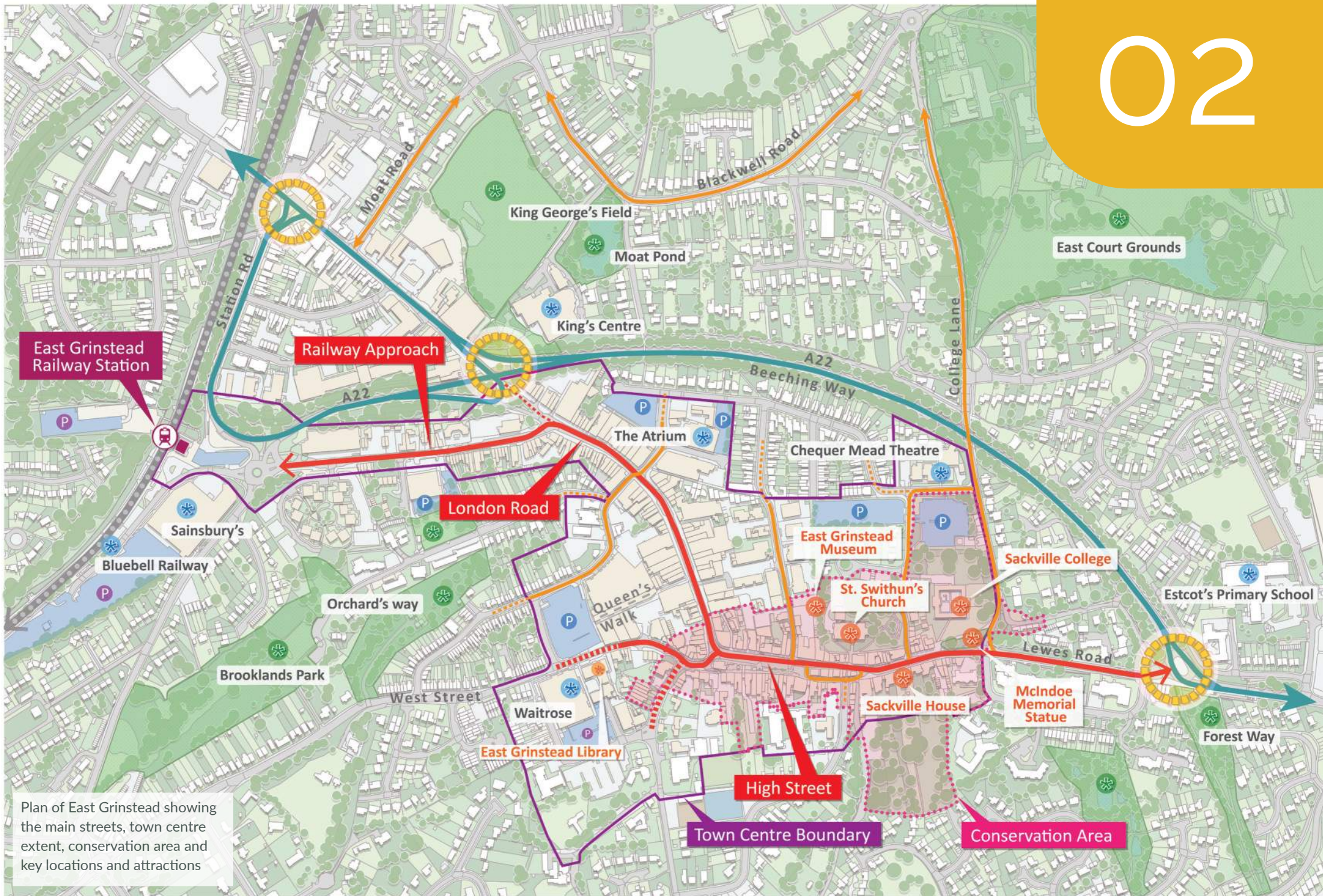
dwg., working in collaboration with Urban Flow, brings extensive experience in town centre regeneration, placemaking and public realm strategy, with a strong track record of delivering strategic frameworks that balance design quality, economic vitality and community needs. Their appointment reflects a proven ability to work collaboratively with local authorities and communities to unlock place potential and deliver practical, place-led improvements.

The aim of the study is to provide a clear and deliverable framework that guides investment, enhances the quality of place, and ensures East Grinstead can thrive in the long term. It is not solely a council-led document; it is intended for everyone with a stake in the town—residents, businesses,

landowners, community organisations, schools, transport operators and visitors—so that effort and investment can be aligned. In doing so, it looks ahead to emerging devolution arrangements and the establishment of a new strategic authority, helping to ensure the town is well positioned as priorities and funding decisions are set at a wider scale. By defining clear ambitions and interventions in advance, the plan enables East Grinstead to respond proactively to future funding opportunities and supports more effective allocation of investment as it becomes available.

This Improvement Plan has been shaped by the objectives outlined in MSDC's original project brief (November 2025), which emphasised the need for town-wide strategic thinking, identification of early delivery opportunities, and the establishment of a phased pathway to long-term enhancement. It builds upon the ambitions set out in the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (2016), MSDC's Sustainable Economy Strategy, and other relevant infrastructure plans, while responding to development pressures emerging across the wider region. The plan recognises the importance of East Grinstead's distinctive character and strong community identity, while addressing broader changes in mobility, retail, the economy and climate.

The Improvement Plan aligns with and supports the policy framework of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex District Plan, and relevant county and national strategies relating to town centre vitality, transport, environment and sustainable placemaking. It translates these policies into a coherent, place-based vision for East Grinstead, ensuring that future investment proposals are locally grounded, spatially responsive and consistent with wider strategic ambitions.



Plan of East Grinstead showing the main streets, town centre extent, conservation area and key locations and attractions

02 Purpose of the Report

Objectives

The East Grinstead Town Centre Improvement Plan has been developed as a strategic framework to actively guide, coordinate and enable positive change across the town centre. It is not a prescriptive design or implementation document, but a clear and purposeful foundation for future delivery. The primary objectives are to:

- Establish a clear, shared and compelling vision for the future of East Grinstead town centre that responds to its unique heritage, context, challenges and opportunities.
- Translate that vision into a coherent set of themes, guiding principles and potential interventions that directly inform decision-making and investment.
- Define a spatial framework and illustrative direction that prioritises people, improves accessibility and movement, and supports a high-quality public realm over the short, medium and long term.
- Strengthen the vitality, attractiveness and resilience of the town centre by supporting footfall, dwell time and a positive environment for businesses and activity.
- Build and maintain a shared sense of purpose among stakeholders, aligning public, private and

community sectors around clear and achievable priorities.

- Position East Grinstead to respond proactively to external investment and funding opportunities with a robust, evidence-based and deliverable set of projects.
- Enable joined-up working across departments and levels of government, ensuring interventions are coordinated, sustainable and capable of being delivered in phases.

Intended Outcomes

The report aims to serve as a live and flexible reference point for future investment and decision-making. The intended outcomes include:

- A shared and community-supported roadmap for improvement that reflects the views of residents, businesses and stakeholders through extensive engagement.
- A categorised and prioritised list of studies and projects to shape the town centre's evolution over time.
- A town centre-wide structure that enables targeted interventions in key locations such as Railway Approach, Queens Walk, London Road, and the High Street.

- A more coherent, legible and enjoyable journey from the railway station to the town centre and key destinations, strengthening the 'station to statue' route as a welcoming, accessible and high quality walking experience.
- A clear rationale for early-stage "quick win" improvements alongside more complex medium- and long-term aspirations.
- A robust and credible evidence base to support future applications for funding, partnership development, and political advocacy.
- A framework that helps position East Grinstead positively within emerging devolution arrangements and the establishment of a new strategic authority, providing clear guidance and principles to shape the town's future.
- A practical, accessible document that can be used by all partners involved in East Grinstead—including councils, businesses, landowners, community organisations and other stakeholders—to take forward projects collaboratively, not solely by the local authority.
- A document that aligns with and supports delivery of strategic policy ambitions at the neighbourhood, district and county level—while remaining locally tailored and pragmatic.

EAST GRINSTEAD Town Centre Improvement Plan

The project
We are developing a Town Centre Improvement Plan for East Grinstead. The aim is to identify practical, deliverable ways to enhance the town centre - making it more welcoming, accessible and vibrant for everyone who lives, works or visits here. This includes improving the quality of public spaces, how people move around the town, and the overall experience of the high street and surrounding areas. The plan will provide a clear set of priorities and actions to guide future investment and support the town's long-term vitality. This is a strategy to identify where and how the town centre could be improved. The aim is to be ready with clear priorities and actions to support any future bids or funding opportunities arise.

Public Engagement Process
This is the first of two phases of public engagement and consultation. The first phase (September 2022) from residents, business of East Grinstead town is planned for October 2022. We will return with draft proposals and seek your views on these.

Who We Are
Working in partnership with East Grinstead Town Council (EGTC) and East Grinstead Business Association (EGBA). Mid Sussex District Council has commissioned consultants (dwg) to provide design and planning expertise. They are working in partnership with Urban Flow, a specialist transport and movement consultancy. Together, we bring experience in town centre regeneration, public realm strategies, and sustainable transport planning.

Programme
The project is being delivered over the coming months, with the following key steps:

- September 2022: Finalise the project and commission consultants (dwg) to provide design and planning expertise.
- October 2022: Develop a draft proposal and seek your views on these.
- November 2022: Finalise the proposal and seek your views on these.

EAST GRINSTEAD Town Centre Improvement Plan

Town Centre Wide General Diagram

What We
We understand that our town centre has been on that work - not start improvements.

Key concerns previously:

- Lack of clear signage and navigation
- Poor pedestrian routes
- Traffic-dominated streets
- Anti-social behaviour
- The need to raise the kerb
- Insufficient opportunities for people to walk
- Paved areas with too many steps
- Cafes for a joined-up street
- Interest in reviewing the town centre
- A desire to attract more people

EAST GRINSTEAD Town Centre Improvement Plan

Pedestrian Movement in the Town Core

What makes a good town street? It's not just about good shops, but friendly, seating, information and signage, quality surfacing...

EAST GRINSTEAD Town Centre Improvement Plan

Aerial View of East Grinstead

What makes East Grinstead a great place to live, work, study and visit?

EAST GRINSTEAD Town Centre Improvement Plan

Main Issues in the Town Centre

These images highlight some of the key challenges identified in East Grinstead's town centre, including access, public space quality, signage, and safety. They help illustrate what both working well today - and where improvements could make the biggest difference.

Are there enough pedestrian crossings, could they be improved?	Can visibility be better?	Can it be better for signage to be improved?	Could the footpaths be better lit at night?
Are the footpaths comfortable for all users?	Is there enough seating?	Can improvements be made to better link different areas?	Is anything clear from the street (car parks)?

Main Opportunities in the Town Centre

These images show potential for improvement - better connections, more walking spaces, and stronger identity. They also highlight what already works well - elements that give the town character, contribute to a sense of place, and can be built upon and enhanced as part of future improvement efforts.

How do we build on the existing character of the high street?	Can we add more vegetation and trees?	Could the carriageway be improved?	Could street trees be introduced along London Road?
Can the seating for everyone be improved?	Is there any parking opportunities on the high street?	Can we provide further outdoor seating opportunities?	Is there an opportunity to introduce more trees between lanes?

flow dwg.

EAST GRINSTEAD | Town Centre Improvement Plan

Public Engagement | Feedback Survey

QUESTION 1: What is good about East Grinstead's Town Centre?

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QUESTION 2: What doesn't work in East Grinstead's Town Centre?

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QUESTION 3: What improvements would you like to see?

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Other comments:

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Tell us about yourself:

Where do you live?

Do you work in East Grinstead? Yes No

How do you usually travel to East Grinstead? Bicycle Bus Car Train Walk Other

What is your age range? 25 and under 26 to 65 Over 65

You can email your thoughts to streets@studiodwg.com

Some of the boards and feedback questionnaires used for community engagement

03 Engagement

The Process Undertaken

The East Grinstead Town Centre Improvement Plan has been underpinned by a robust and inclusive programme of engagement. Recognising the importance of local knowledge and lived experience, the project team sought to ensure that a diverse range of voices helped shape the plan from its earliest stages.

The engagement process included targeted meetings with key stakeholders and representatives, including local business leaders, community groups, councillors, and infrastructure bodies. These conversations were essential in building an understanding of existing challenges, aspirations, and opportunities.

Alongside these stakeholder meetings, two public engagement events were held at an accessible location in the town. These drop-in sessions were publicised locally and online, inviting residents, business owners, and visitors to share their views, discuss the proposals, and explore the role of the town centre in the future of East Grinstead. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback through conversation, interactive maps, comment cards, and online feedback.

In order to engage with younger people and ensure that the next generation of residents was represented, two bespoke sessions were held at local schools -

one primary and one secondary. These workshops invited selected groups of students to share their perspectives on the town centre, including what they value, what they would change, and how they use the space. Their insights offered valuable perspectives on the town's future identity and potential.

Crucially, engagement has been a two-way process. Each round of conversations has been used to listen, reflect, and refine the direction of the plan. Feedback received directly influenced the shaping of priorities, spatial strategies, and project proposals, helping to ensure that the improvement plan is grounded in what matters most to local people. This has strengthened the plan's credibility and relevance, making it a more powerful tool to guide change and secure future investment.



03 Engagement

Engagement Priorities and Suggestions from the Community

1. Broad support for town centre investment and change

- Clear appetite from local residents and stakeholders for a more strategic and ambitious approach to revitalising the town centre.
- People expressed optimism that a joined-up plan could deliver long-term benefit, especially if linked to funding and phased delivery.
- Many were pleased to see a fresh approach that could bring momentum to long-standing issues.

2. Desire to reduce car dominance and improve pedestrian experience

- Widespread support for reducing vehicle dominance in the town centre, particularly along London Road and the High Street.
- Many people called for more pedestrian-friendly spaces, safer crossings, and reduced traffic speed – especially in key shopping and civic areas.
- Some suggestions included partial or timed pedestrianisation and improved cycling links.

3. Public realm should reflect heritage and be better maintained

- Strong agreement that East Grinstead’s rich heritage should be celebrated more visibly through its public realm.
- Requests included heritage signage, traditional materials, better lighting, and spaces that complement the town’s historic fabric.
- Several responses raised concerns about litter, untidy planting, and poorly maintained public areas detracting from the town’s character.

4. High Street and London Road require targeted improvements

- Many participants identified these two streets as central to the town’s identity but in need of focused attention.
- Concerns were raised around empty units, untidy frontages, poor surfacing and inadequate crossings.
- The potential for targeted public realm upgrades and shopfront improvements was seen as essential to restoring civic pride.

5. Queens Walk is a priority for renewal

- Queens Walk was one of the most frequently mentioned locations requiring investment.
- It was described as “uninviting”, “dated” and “a missed opportunity” given its central location.
- Suggestions included shopfront refurbishment, improved lighting, better access, and signage to draw people in from London Road.

6. Railway Approach needs comprehensive treatment

- Seen as a key arrival point that fails to provide a positive first impression.
- Calls for clearer pedestrian routes from the station, better surfacing and crossings, and public realm that reflects the town’s character.
- The area was also seen as a missed opportunity for wayfinding, interpretation and better integration with nearby shops and services.

7. Parking requires further consideration

- Parking was a divisive topic, with a mix of views – some prioritising ease of access and others concerned about traffic and oversupply.
- There was consensus that further analysis is needed to understand current usage and future capacity, particularly for short-stay needs and

03 Engagement

visitor access.

- Better parking management, clearer signage, and consistency in pricing and policy were frequently mentioned.
8. Better maintenance of streets and spaces across the town
- A recurring theme was the general upkeep of public areas – poor surfacing, weeds, graffiti, and inconsistent cleaning were all raised.
 - Residents felt that small, visible improvements in maintenance would make a big difference to perceptions of the town.
 - Several people cited areas like Queens Walk, Brooklands Way, and parts of London Road as needing regular upkeep.
9. Improved wayfinding and signage needed throughout
- Many participants reported difficulties navigating the town, suggesting the current provision is not sufficiently visible, intuitive, or well-located.
 - Additional directional signage may be required at key points such as car parks, the station, and along routes connecting major destinations like the High Street and Bluebell Railway.

- There was a clear view that the existing signage system is not working as effectively as intended, and that improvements are needed to strengthen legibility, reinforce key routes, and introduce complementary measures such as digital tools or heritage trails.
10. Ongoing, transparent community engagement is expected
- There was strong appreciation for being consulted, but a clear expectation that engagement should continue beyond the current plan.
 - Respondents wanted to see visible progress, regular updates, and a sense that their feedback is being acted upon.
 - The involvement of schools was especially welcomed, and seen as a model for inclusive, cross-generational engagement.



What do you like most about the town centre?

*Heritage character
Community pride
Existing events
Atmosphere
Existing planting and flowers
Independent shops
Walkable scale
Station proximity
Hospitality, café culture & outdoor dining*



What do you dislike most about the town centre?

*Parking costs, durations & enforcement
Traffic dominance & speeding
Unsafe or inconvenient crossings
Vacant & low-quality shops
Unattractive gateways (Railway Approach, London Road)
Poor maintenance & uneven pavements
Lack of safe cycling links & facilities
Queens Walk feeling unsafe & uninviting*



What improvements would you like to see?

*Cheaper or short-stay parking
Slower traffic speeds
Pedestrian-friendly High Street
Public realm upgrades
More greening in the town centre
Activation of Queens Walk
Safe cycling routes
More variety in shops & pop-ups
Street trees, planting, markets, music & events*

03 Engagement

Feedback from Schools

As part of the engagement process, sessions were held with two local schools - one primary and one secondary - to capture the views of younger residents. These students offered fresh and creative ideas while echoing many of the concerns raised by the wider community.

Students expressed a clear wish to see a more vibrant and engaging town centre. They suggested more art and colour throughout the town, particularly through school-led projects or community use of vacant shopfronts. They wanted more trees and better maintenance, especially during autumn when leaves make surfaces slippery. They also highlighted the need for improved outdoor spaces, noting there is currently little for young people to do in the town centre.

There was strong concern about the dominance of cars and its impact on safety and experience. The students called for more pedestrian crossings, safer walking routes, and suggested that cars should be kept in car parks rather than parked along streets. Uneven pavements, dirty or damaged seating, and the overall lack of accessible and enjoyable public space were all flagged as needing attention.

Importantly, the students showed a strong appreciation for East Grinstead's historic character, noting the beauty of its buildings. One group referenced East Grinstead's wartime legacy as "the town that doesn't stare" a phrase that recalls the community's proud history of inclusion and care, particularly through the support of patients at the Queen Victoria Hospital. Their comments highlight the opportunity to build on this identity. By strengthening heritage interpretation and connecting the town's past with its future, through art, signage, storytelling and inclusive design. East Grinstead can reinforce its unique identity in a way that resonates with all generations.

Engagement Conclusions

The East Grinstead engagement process revealed a community that is deeply proud of its town centre and enthusiastic about its future. Across residents, businesses, schools, and stakeholders, there is a shared desire for positive change. People want a centre that is calmer, greener and easier to navigate, where walking and cycling are natural choices, and short-stay parking supports local trade.

There is strong appetite for vibrant public life: more markets, cultural events, creative uses of space, planting and inclusive places that feel welcoming to all ages. Above all, people value the unique character of East Grinstead and want to see its heritage celebrated - not frozen in time, but used as the foundation for a thriving, distinctive town centre that looks confidently to the future.



Graphic showing the conclusion following the engagement process

Community Aspirations

The development of this Improvement Plan has been shaped by a collaborative process with the community, stakeholders and local authorities. A shared vision has emerged through this dialogue, focusing on the unique qualities of East Grinstead and how the town centre can evolve to meet future needs while celebrating its heritage and civic identity.

The shared vision for East Grinstead sets out a future in which the town centre is vibrant, attractive and welcoming – a place that encourages people to meet, dwell, explore, shop and enjoy. At its heart is a commitment to creating a more inclusive and connected environment, with improved pedestrian experiences and stronger links across the town. There is also a desire to better reflect East Grinstead's unique character and rich history in the public realm, ensuring that future improvements serve local people first while also enhancing the experience for visitors.



The 10 key themes and projects areas informing the improvement plan

The following Vision Statement has been developed as a synthesis of extensive engagement, stakeholder collaboration, and strategic analysis. It reflects the ambitions of local residents, community groups, businesses, and civic partners, as well as the principles set out in local and regional planning policy. Framed through dialogue, consultation events, and a review of the town's opportunities and challenges, this vision sets a clear direction for the future of East Grinstead town centre and underpins the recommendations that follow.

Vision Statement

To create a town centre that is vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming - where heritage is celebrated, public spaces invite activity and enjoyment, streets prioritise people over traffic, and the needs of both residents and visitors are supported by a thriving mix of uses and experiences.

The guiding principles presented below are grounded in local engagement, policy priorities and established

placemaking best practice. They reflect the values and ambitions that people repeatedly voiced throughout the project, from making streets more accessible and welcoming, to celebrating local heritage and identity. Collectively, the principles support a holistic approach to town centre renewal, covering themes such as walkability, active travel, public realm quality, social inclusion, local economy, environmental sustainability, and long-term stewardship. They are intended to shape all future projects and decisions, ensuring that East Grinstead evolves in a way that is coherent, resilient, and people-first.



Celebrate Heritage & Local Identity



Create a High Quality Public Realm



Introduce & Strengthen Green Infrastructure



Make Better Use of Public Realm



Improve Access & Wayfinding



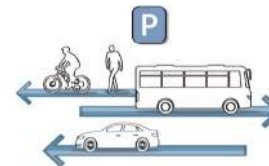
Calm Traffic & Prioritise People



Support the Local Economy



Promote Inclusive & Accessible Design



Improve Parking & Access



Deliver a Forward Thinking & Community Informed Plan

05 Design Approach and Components

05

A successful town centre must be both welcoming and functional – a place that people want to be in, spend time in, and move through easily. The design approach for the East Grinstead Town Centre Improvement Plan is rooted in delivering a town centre that is attractive, functional and resilient. It draws on best practice in urban design and placemaking, balanced with ambition and a strong understanding of how spaces are used in reality, reflecting the combined experience of dwg. and Urban Flow in delivering town centre strategies and public realm frameworks across a range of comparable places.

As part of this work, the team has undertaken a comprehensive review of the existing town centre, examining streets, spaces and movement patterns in detail. This has included analysis of bus routes, bus movements and usage, alongside wider traffic flows and pedestrian behaviour. Each street has been considered to understand its role, character and capacity for change, and to test how adjustments to layout or traffic movement could improve safety, accessibility and the overall town centre experience. The implications of change, both within the town centre and on surrounding streets, have been considered to inform realistic and deliverable outcomes.

The design thinking behind this plan recognises that lasting impact will only be achieved through interventions that are well considered, practical and inclusive, with attention to materials, access, movement, heritage, maintenance and future adaptability. This evidence-led and place-specific approach ensures that the Improvement Plan is both aspirational and grounded in how East Grinstead functions day to day.

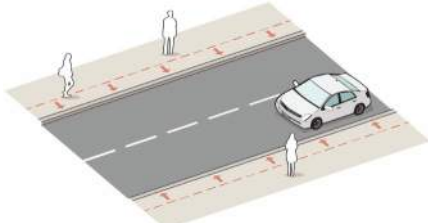
While the concept of full pedestrianisation has been raised historically, it is not considered appropriate or viable for East Grinstead at this stage. The town centre's street network performs a critical functional role, supporting local businesses, servicing, public transport, emergency access and day-to-day movement for residents and visitors. The complete removal of traffic would be likely to result in negative knock-on impacts on surrounding streets, introduce new congestion pressures elsewhere, and require levels of infrastructure change that would be disruptive and potentially cost prohibitive.

Rather than pursuing full pedestrianisation, this Improvement Plan advocates a more realistic and effective approach—one that reduces vehicle dominance, calms traffic, and rebalances street space to prioritise pedestrians while retaining necessary access. By promoting greater sharing of space,

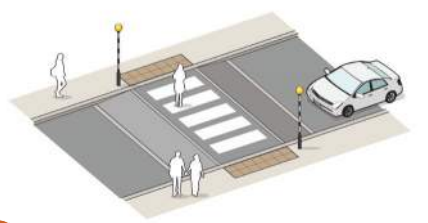
improved crossings, and more people-focused street design, the plan seeks to achieve a safer, more welcoming and more enjoyable town centre without undermining its functionality or vitality. Over time, this could support interventions such as timed vehicle access and filtered permeability, helping to create a more people-focused town centre without displacing problems elsewhere.

A number of physical components and design strategies have been identified across the town centre to shape a more attractive, functional and inclusive place. Together, they represent a set of placemaking principles and design thinking that provide clear guidance on how streets and spaces should evolve over time. The following 12 components address themes such as accessibility, greenery, lighting, materials, seating, movement and wayfinding. They are intended to guide consistent, high-quality interventions across different project areas, whether applied individually or in combination. This flexible approach ensures that all public realm improvements support broader placemaking goals, including economic vitality, sustainability and long-term maintenance, while remaining people-focused and deliverable at varying scales and timelines.

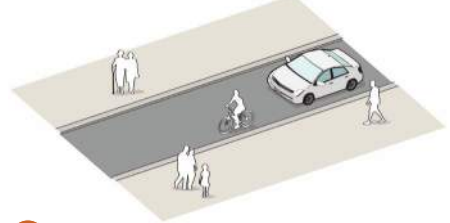
05 Design Approach and Components



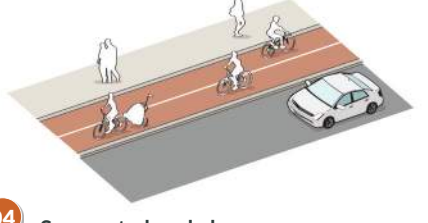
01 Road tightening for traffic calming
 Traffic calming measure that encourages vehicles to reduce their speed and gives more space to pedestrians.



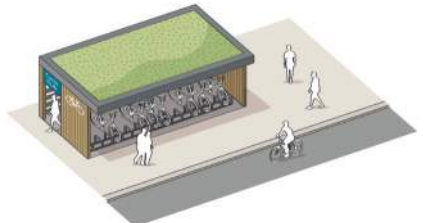
02 Zebra crossings on raised table
 Regular crossing points which makes it easier and more comfortable to walk around the town, also helps slow down traffic speeds.



03 Pedestrian friendly one way street
 Where possible removing traffic which provides more space for pedestrians and businesses.



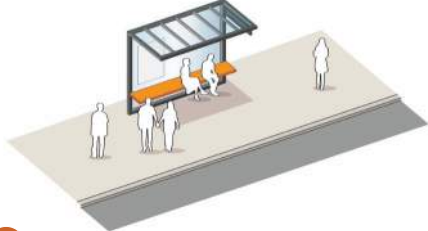
04 Segregated cycle lane
 Where possible providing a safe and dedicated space for cyclists.



05 Cycle hub
 Provision of a central facility to park cycles whilst within the town centre.



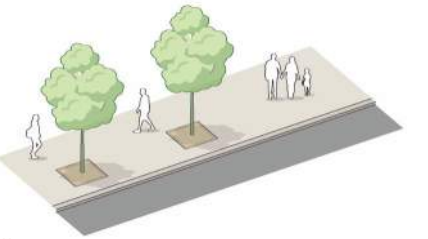
06 Bus kerbs and levels
 Ensuring the pavement levels are at the correct height to easily board and alight buses in the town centre.



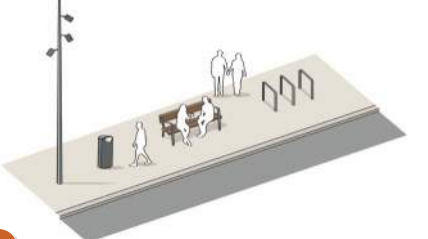
07 Upgrade to bus facilities
 Improving the bus stops and shelters to encourage more use of the bus infrastructure.



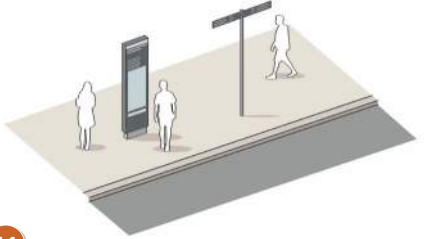
08 Planting & Vegetation
 Introducing more planting and vegetation where appropriate along streets and in spaces.



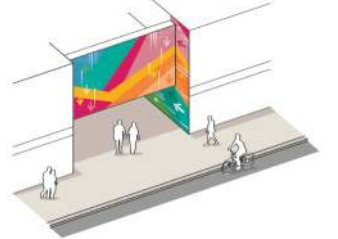
09 Street trees
 Adding in appropriate tree species to the town streets to improve the street scene both visually and environmentally.



10 Coordinated furniture palette
 Recognising a range of street furniture to be used throughout the town centre and positioned so not to impede movement.



11 Wayfinding
 Building on the existing signs to ensure all the key places are legible and providing information and interpretation.



12 Art & Murals
 Using art to enliven blank walls and facades and placing sculptures in key spaces to provide identity and link to culture.

06 Conclusions and Recommendations

06

This chapter brings together the vision, priorities, and actions that form the East Grinstead Town Centre Improvement Plan. It is structured to offer a practical and place-based summary of the proposals, making it easier for decision-makers, funders, and the community to understand and support delivery.

Each area of focus includes a clearly articulated vision and ambition, followed by recommended studies, projects, and other supporting actions. All proposed interventions are categorised by timeframe, using the following structure:

Studies Required: More detailed feasibility studies will be required to fully test and support the delivery of some medium- and long-term design aspirations. These are highlighted separately, as there may be opportunities to progress them at an early stage to help prepare for future implementation.

Quick wins: lower-cost, high-impact projects that can be delivered promptly with minimal disruption. These can happen immediately and are not subject to further studies.

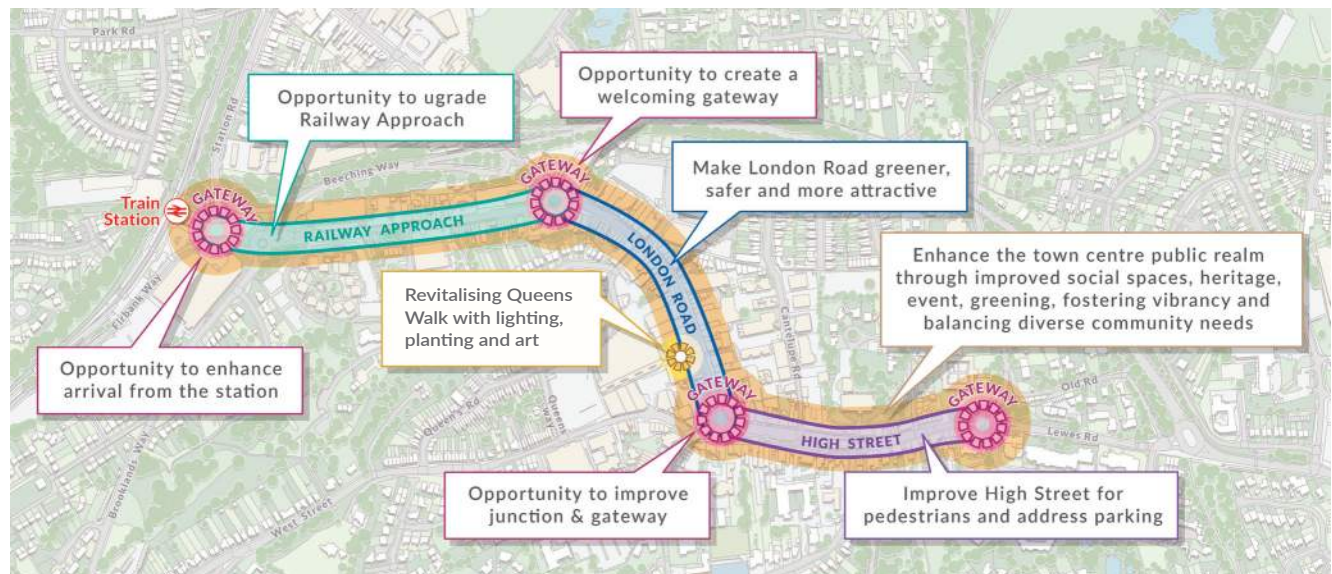
Medium-term projects: initiatives that require more planning, funding or coordination, typically deliverable within a few years.

Long-term plans: more complex or strategic transformations, likely to follow feasibility studies or major investment opportunities.

The recommendations are organised under five four geographic and thematic areas:

1. **Railway Approach:** Focuses on enhancing the arrival experience and connections between the railway station and the town centre.
2. **London Road and Queens Walk:** Aims to transform this key retail and pedestrian corridor into a more functional, attractive and economically vibrant area.
3. **High Street:** Concentrates on safeguarding and enhancing East Grinstead's historic centre.
4. **Town centre-wide:** Interventions, specific components and standalone projects which capture a combination of strategic actions that apply across the entire town centre, alongside site-specific or thematic initiatives that support the wider strategy.

Plan showing the key intervention areas that will help improve the town centre





How can we improve important links and arrival points in the town?



How do we build on the existing character of the High Street?



Could the carriageway be narrowed?



Can the setting for heritage assets be improved?



Could street trees be introduced along London Road?



Can we promote further outdoor dining opportunities?

A selection of messages and questions that were discussed during the engagement process



Can we add more vegetation and colour?



Is there an opportunity to introduce shared space between users?



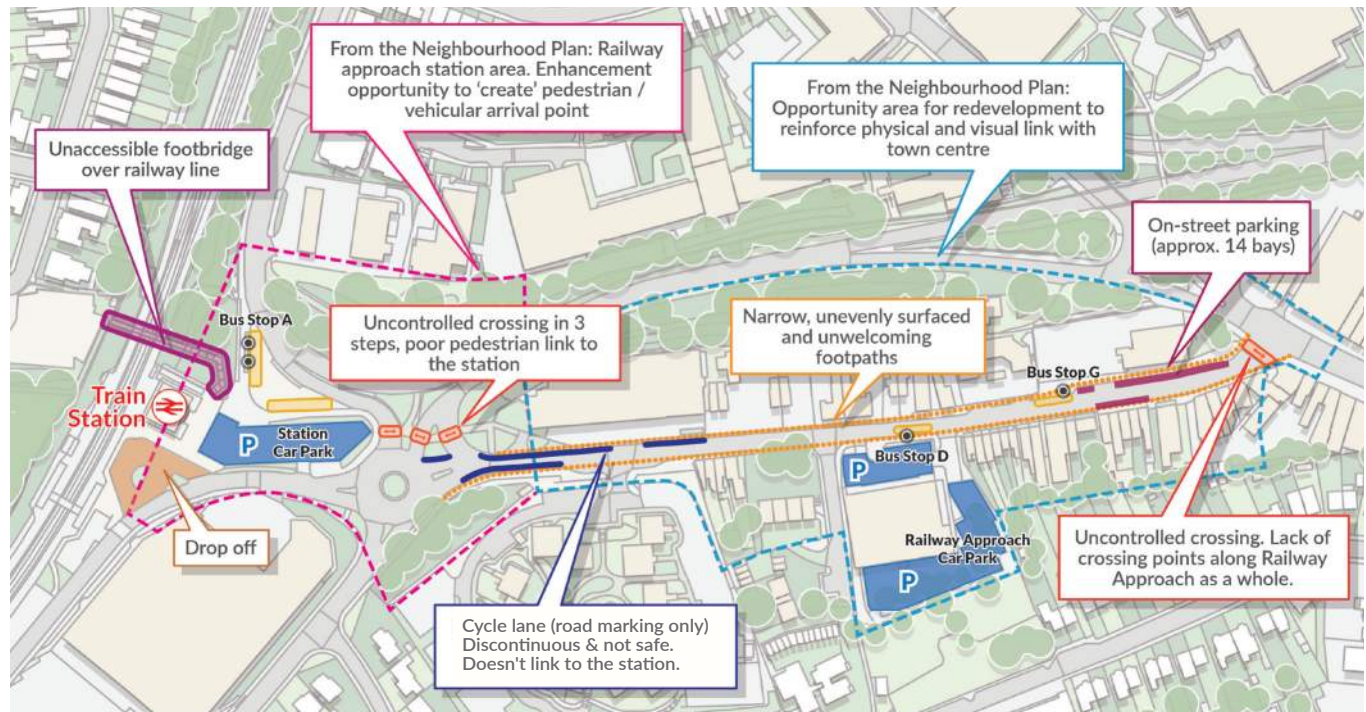
Is this type of parking appropriate on the High Street?

6.1 Railway Approach

Vision and Ambition

Railway Approach forms a key gateway into East Grinstead, linking the mainline station and Bluebell Railway to the town centre. The ambition is to transform this corridor into a safer, more attractive and more welcoming arrival route. The street should better reflect the town's identity, support sustainable travel modes, and offer an improved experience for all users—residents, commuters, visitors and businesses alike.

A revitalised Railway Approach should prioritise pedestrian movement and legibility, improve lighting and public realm quality, and provide clearer visual and physical links between the station and town centre. The goal is to calm traffic, address longstanding issues of clutter and poor maintenance, and support local business growth through targeted shopfront enhancements. Ultimately, this route should become a more coherent and appealing entrance to East Grinstead, encouraging greater footfall and extending the character of the town into the station area.



Analysis plan including the existing situation and key observations

6.1 Railway Approach

Studies Required

To support delivery of this vision, the following studies are proposed:

One-Way System Feasibility Study

Investigate the viability of introducing a one-way westbound traffic flow along Railway Approach, including traffic modelling to assess implications for congestion, vehicle access, and potential benefits for pedestrian and cycle improvements. Consider wider knock-on impacts on surrounding roads and junctions.

Access Through Station Car Park Feasibility

Explore potential for new pedestrian connections between the mainline station, car park, and Railway Approach. This includes identifying land ownerships, operational constraints, and physical design options to improve permeability and create a more direct link into the town.

Crossing Strategy Review

Assess current pedestrian crossings on and near Railway Approach, particularly the key junctions at Sainsbury's, the mainline station, and the Bluebell Railway. This study should identify missing crossings or unsafe crossing conditions, and propose clear, accessible routes with formal crossing infrastructure.

Quick Wins

These are lower-cost, high-impact interventions that can be delivered within a short timeframe and without major disruption:

Improved Wayfinding to the Town Centre

Install new /relocate existing pedestrian signage between the station, Bluebell Railway, and the town centre to improve first impressions, legibility and encourage movement.

Tidy-Up of Bin Storage and Litter Hotspots

Address immediate issues of litter and poor-quality bin storage, especially at Station Road and lower Railway Approach

Shopfront and Building Frontage Improvements

Implement an immediate programme of coordinated cleaning, repainting and minor repairs to shopfronts and vacant units to achieve a quick visual uplift. This should form the first phase of a longer-term approach to improving building frontages, reducing visual clutter and supporting higher-quality, more vibrant commercial activity across the town centre.

Lighting Enhancements

Replace or upgrade lighting in areas with poor visibility to improve safety and comfort for pedestrians, particularly during winter evenings.



6.1 Railway Approach

Medium-Term Projects

These require more planning, budget, or coordination but could be delivered in the next phase of implementation:

Streetscape Upgrade

Undertake wider public realm enhancements to Railway Approach, including paving, planting, lighting, furniture and decluttering, to establish a unified street character.

Formal Pedestrian Crossings at Key Locations

Deliver new, safe and accessible crossings at conflict points, particularly linking the mainline station with Station approach, considering the removal of the left hand turn into Railway approach from Beeching way.

Artwork or Gateway Features at Station Entrance

Introduce public art and murals to enhance the arrival experience and reinforce the identity of East Grinstead.

Long-Term Plans

These are more ambitious and dependent on feasibility, modelling, and stakeholder agreement:

Introduce One-Way System (Westbound)

Following a detailed transport and movement assessment, convert Railway Approach to one-way westbound traffic, with dedicated new space for pedestrians and cyclists.

New Access Through Station Car Park

Following ownership, operational, and physical feasibility, provide a direct and legible pedestrian route through the station car park toward Railway Approach.

Integrated Transport Gateway Strategy

Coordinate public realm, signage, public transport information and infrastructure around the station as a cohesive gateway to the town.



Two-way cycle lane



Rain gardens / green verges



Upgraded bus facility

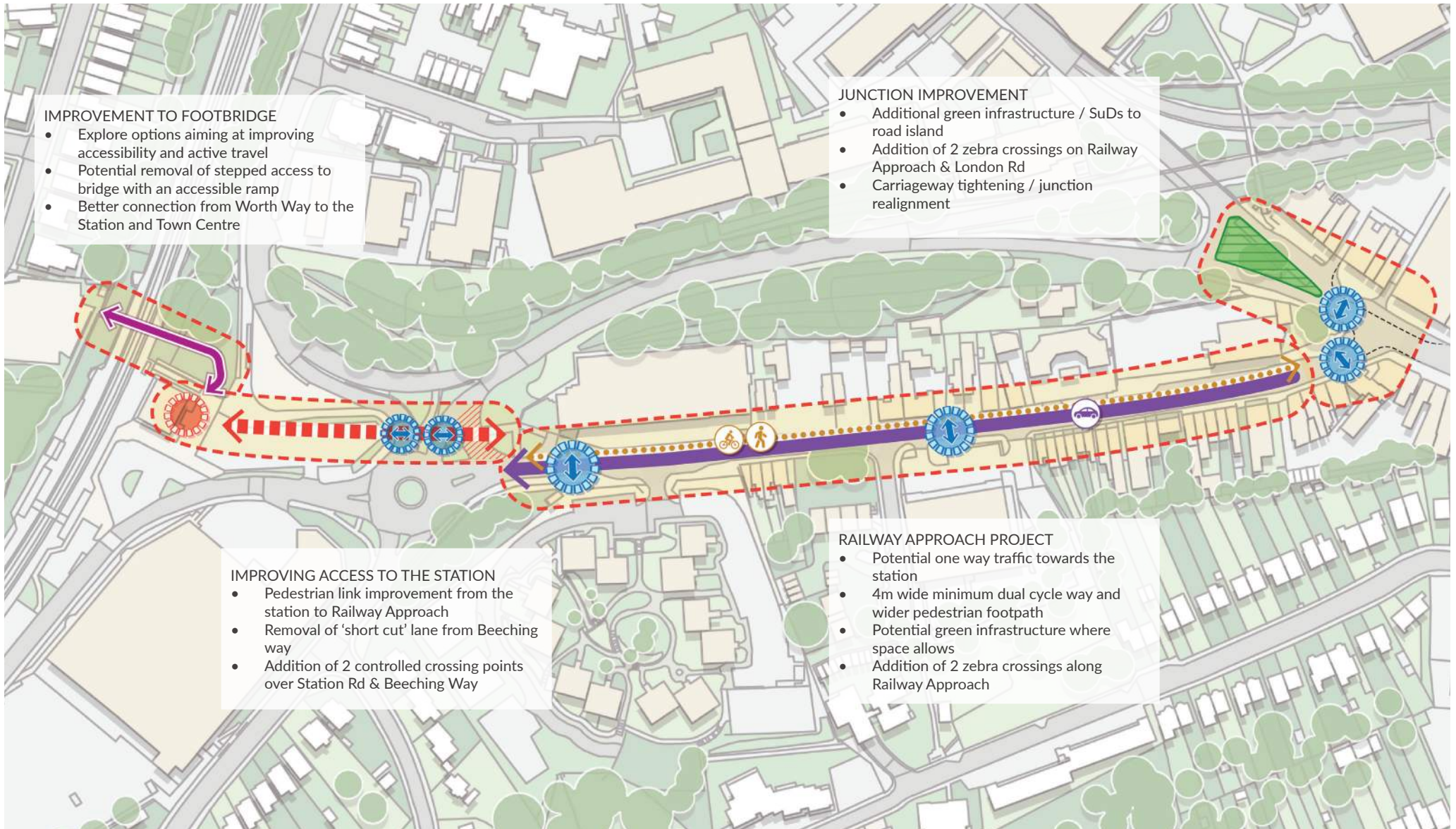


Trees & Planting



Zebra crossing

6.1 Railway Approach



Opportunities plan indicating key interventions

6.2 London Road and Queens Walk

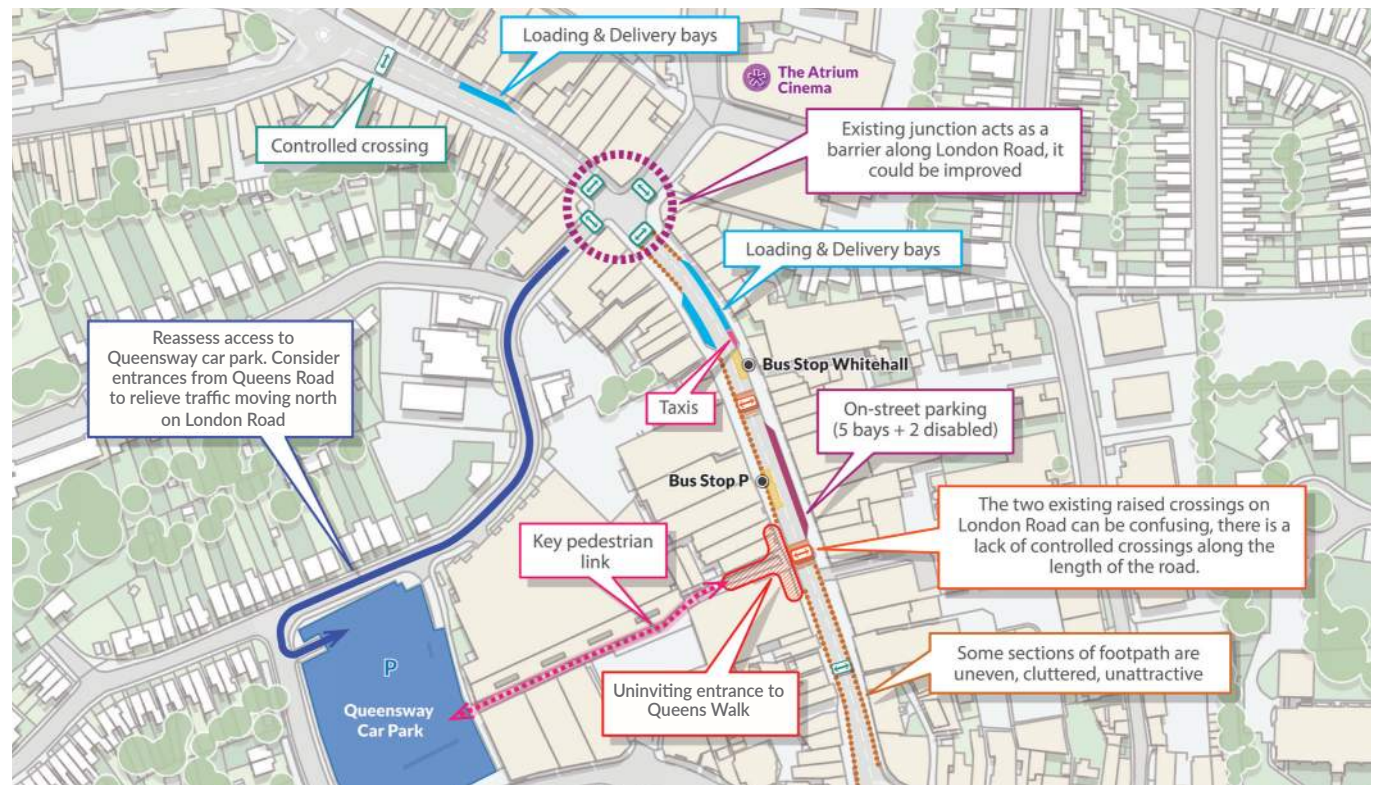
Vision and Ambition

London Road and Queens Walk are central to the town's day-to-day activity and public image. London Road functions as a key retail spine, with independent shops and multiples as well as being a major through-route, while Queens Walk has the potential to become a vibrant, characterful lane along its whole length—supporting independent businesses, pop-ups, and public art. It also provides the main pedestrian link to Queensway Car Park, one of the most well-used in East Grinstead, making it a crucial route into the town centre that must feel safe, welcoming, and of high quality.

The shared ambition for this area is to elevate the quality and attractiveness of both streets, creating a more comfortable, pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages people to dwell, shop, and return. London Road should function more like a town centre high street—with calmer traffic, enhanced crossings, rationalised bus and loading infrastructure, and better paving and planting.

It is also essential to improve the connection between London Road and the High Street, potentially by providing or relocating a formal pedestrian crossing at the southern end of London Road. This would help knit the two key parts of the town centre together and strengthen east-west pedestrian movement.

The eastern end of Queens Walk requires a comprehensive reimagining to unlock its full potential as a lively pedestrian passageway and connection to London Road. Together, the two streets should work in tandem to support the economic vitality of the town, create a stronger link between the High Street and Station, and offer a more inclusive and enjoyable experience for all.



Analysis plan including the existing situation and key observations

6.2 London Road and Queens Walk

Studies Required

London Road Street Feasibility Study

Examine and survey the street layout, pavement widths, informal crossing points, bus stop and loading bay positions. Identify opportunities for widening footways, improving crossings, reallocating space, and introducing planting without compromising necessary vehicle access.

Shopfront and Vacant Unit Assessment

Conduct an audit of building condition, occupancy, and use across both streets. Highlight opportunities for façade improvement, signage upgrades, pop-up uses or creative activations of vacant units (e.g., through art or short-term lets).

Market and Activation Feasibility Study

Explore options for expanding the Farmers' Market or introducing new pop-up or rotating retail and arts uses—particularly in Queens Walk. Assess licensing, logistics, access, and space suitability.

Traffic and Junction Study (London Road / Moat Road)

Assess vehicle flow, permitted turning movements, pedestrian safety and priority at key junctions along London Road, including Moat Road and the junction with Queen's Road. The study should review whether

current turning restrictions into Queen's Road remain appropriate, and explore opportunities to improve permeability and provide more direct access to Queen's Road Car Park.

Quick Wins

Queens Walk Refresh and Activation

Deliver an immediate visual and functional uplift to the eastern end of Queens Walk through a deep clean, lighting repairs, bin rationalisation, and targeted planting or art installations. This quick win should improve its presence from London Road, strengthen connections to the newer streetscape to the west, and begin to reposition Queens Walk as a more active, attractive and usable pedestrian route, while setting the foundation for longer-term renewal and programming.

Improved Signage and Entrances to Queens Walk

Highlight and improve access points from London Road and connection to King Street. Add signs to direct people toward public toilets and station, improving visibility and navigability.

Pop-Up Activation and Murals

Introduce temporary murals, interactive installations, or retail pop-ups in empty units or wall spaces,



Existing raised crossings could be upgraded to zebra crossings



The entrance to Queens Walk could be improved with murals, wayfinding, planting or lighting

The carriageway could be narrowed where possible to increase footpath width, comfort and improve the streetscape



Trees and planting could be added where space allows



The access, entrance and movement on Queensway Car Park could be reassessed

6.2 London Road and Queens Walk

especially in Queens Walk. Collaborate with local artists and schools where possible.

Upgrade Existing Raised Crossings to Zebras on London Road

Convert the two existing raised crossing platforms on London Road into formal zebra crossings to improve pedestrian safety and priority. This would offer a quick, visible improvement and address frequent concerns about unclear crossing points and driver behaviour.

Improved Enforcement of On Street Parking on London Road

Increase enforcement of existing parking restrictions to address indiscriminate stopping on double yellow lines, which currently disrupts traffic flow and creates congestion. Clearer enforcement would improve vehicle movement along London Road and encourage greater use of nearby car parks.

Medium-Term Projects

Redesign of London Road Street Layout

Undertake a feasibility-led redesign of London Road's layout to improve pedestrian experience, support sustainable travel, and enhance placemaking. This would consider narrowing the carriageway, widening

pavements, introducing street trees, rationalising parking and loading, and improving overall legibility. The study should identify an optimum street configuration and set out a phasing strategy, enabling delivery in stages aligned with available funding and minimising disruption. The redesign should improve safety, support footfall, and link better to the High Street, Station Approach, and Queens Walk.

Shopfront Improvements and Activation of Vacant Units

Deliver a coordinated programme of shopfront enhancements to uplift the appearance and character of London Road and Queens Walk. This may include repainting, new signage, façade improvements, and support for temporary uses such as pop-up shops or arts installations. Vacant units could be activated with murals, window vinyls, or community-driven projects to reduce visual blight, support local enterprise, and create a more engaging streetscape.

Queens Walk Upgrade (Eastern end)

Redesign surfacing, lighting, seating, planting and bin storage. Consider design details that reflect East Grinstead's identity and create a distinctive linear space with new character and function.

Rationalise Bus Stop and Loading Bay Layout

Reorganise the layout to reduce clutter, avoid

pedestrian pinch points, and ensure that bus stops and loading bays do not disrupt walking routes or sightlines.

Expanded Market and Event Infrastructure

Provide infrastructure to support regular or seasonal events, including electricity, anchor points and waste management, particularly focused on Queens Walk and adjacent spaces.

Long-Term Plans

Delivery of Comprehensive London Road Public Realm Scheme

Subject to feasibility and detailed design, implement a full public realm upgrade of London Road as a cohesive and transformative package. This should build on the redesign proposals to deliver widened pavements, reconfigured carriageway space, integrated street trees and landscaping, high-quality materials, coordinated lighting, and decluttered public realm. The scheme should prioritise pedestrians while maintaining essential vehicle movements, aiming to support a vibrant, walkable high street. It should also strengthen physical and visual connections with Station Approach, Queens Walk and the High Street, helping to tie together the town centre more coherently.

6.2 London Road and Queens Walk

Permanent Market or Arts Space in Queens Walk

Establish Queens Walk as a location for a small-scale covered market or arts space, which could host local traders, food vendors or cultural programming.

Integrated Lighting and Public Safety Strategy

Roll out upgraded lighting throughout London Road and Queens Walk that enhances safety, improves visibility and supports extended use of the area into the evening.



Tightened carriageway



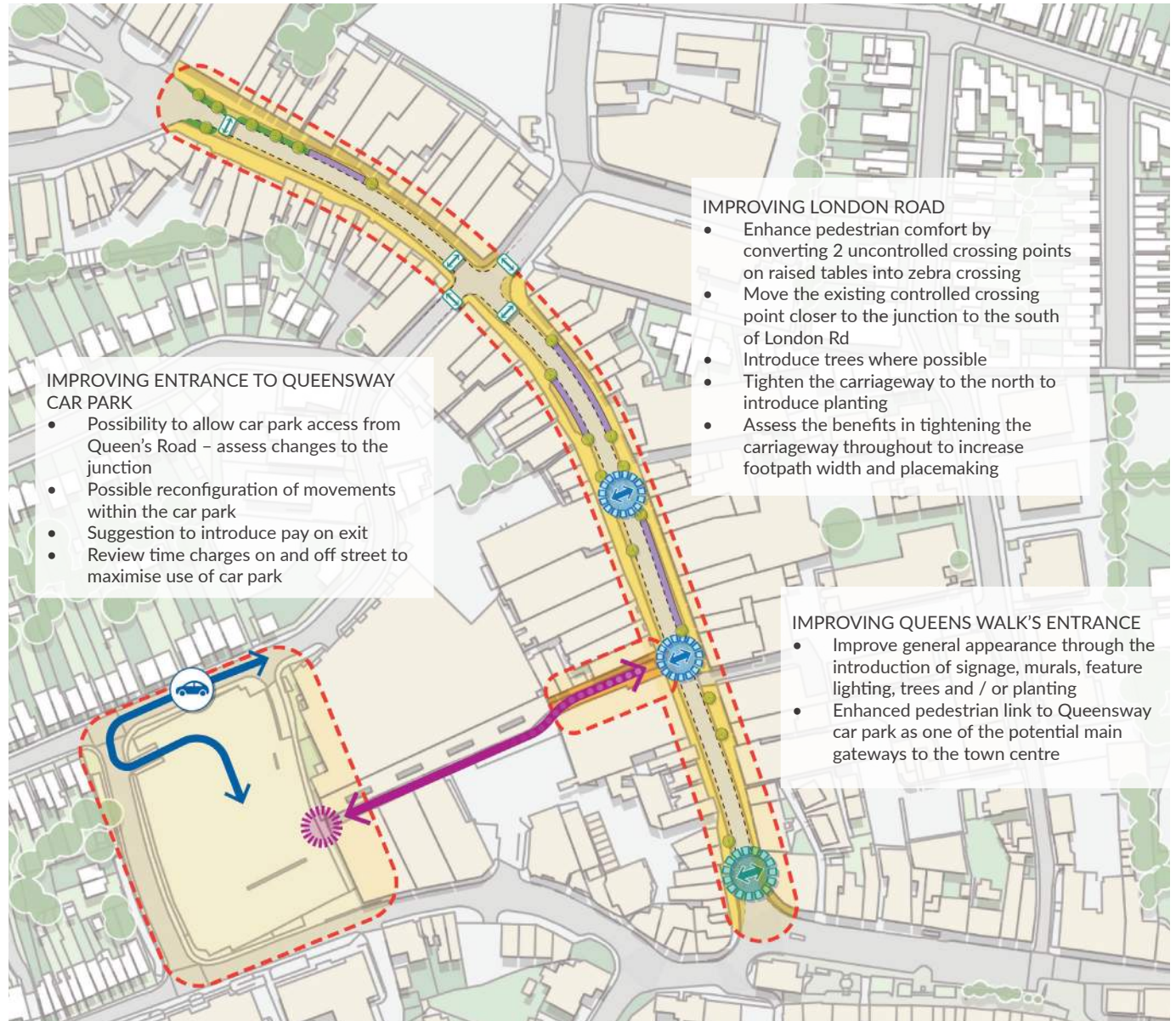
Street trees



Murals & Wayfinding



Planting & Rain gardens



Opportunities plan indicating key interventions

6.3 High Street

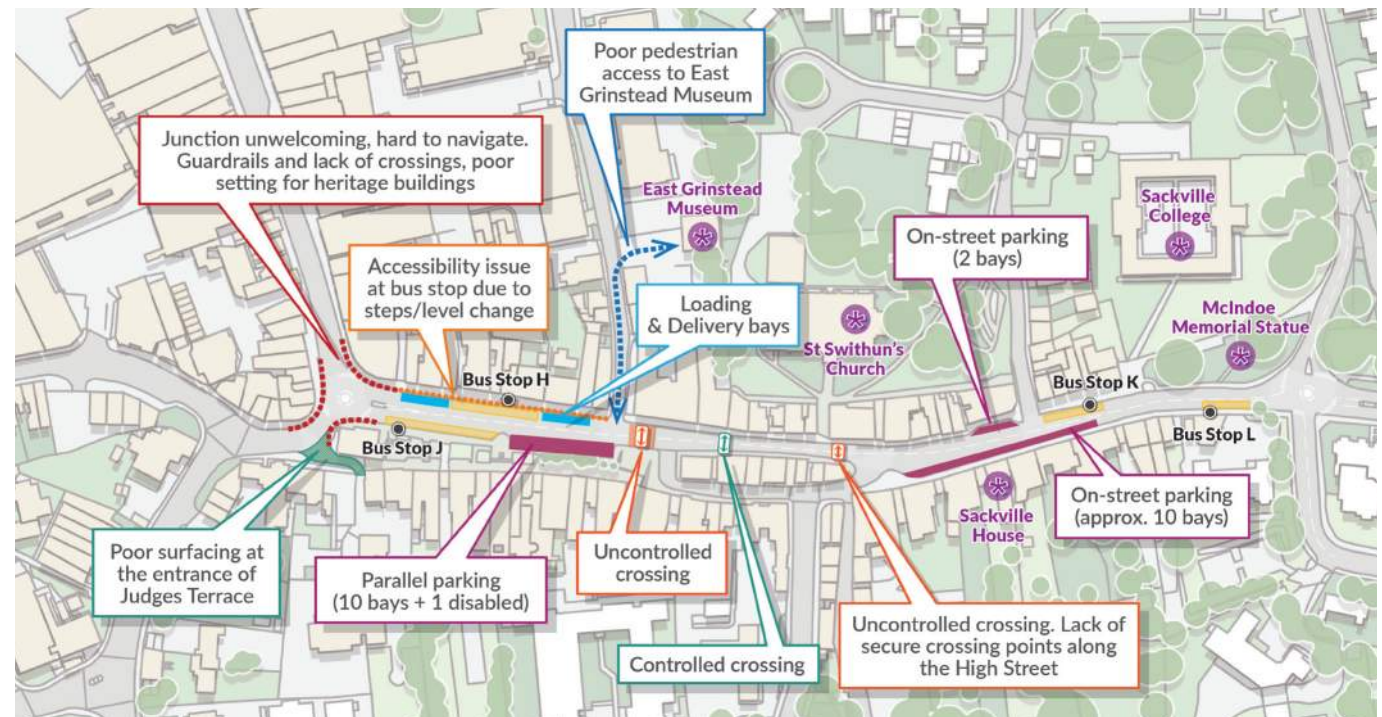
Vision and Ambition

The historic High Street lies at the heart of East Grinstead and is one of the town's most distinctive and well-loved places. Home to the UK's longest continuous run of timber-framed buildings, the High Street is rich in architectural character and local heritage. However, it faces significant challenges, from traffic dominance and visual clutter to accessibility issues and sections of underwhelming public realm.

The ambition is to enhance the High Street's historic identity while improving its function and experience for everyday users. The vision prioritises a more welcoming, pedestrian-oriented environment that supports independent businesses, celebrates heritage, and provides a safer, cleaner and more vibrant setting for people to dwell, shop, visit and enjoy.

To support movement and improve safety, it is also important to introduce improved pedestrian crossing points at the western end of the High Street, where current provision is lacking. This will help strengthen connections with London Road and West Street and encourage a more joined-up and accessible town centre.

A well-managed approach to vehicle access, better integration with adjacent streets, and clearer interpretation of heritage assets will be key to securing the High Street's long-term future as a civic and cultural centrepiece.



Analysis plan including the existing situation and key observations

6.3 High Street

Studies Required

Conservation-Led Public Realm Strategy

Develop a heritage-sensitive public realm strategy for the High Street that enhances its historic character while improving accessibility and usability. The strategy should address the unique topography and level changes between upper and lower pavements, identifying opportunities to make these transitions more accessible and welcoming. It should also set design principles for future materials, lighting, planting, and street furniture that respect the conservation area while enhancing the experience of all users.

High Street Traffic and Access Assessment

Undertake a comprehensive study of vehicle access, traffic circulation, and public transport along the High Street. The assessment should explore the feasibility and implications of introducing a timed vehicle access scheme to prioritise pedestrian movement. It should also examine the operation of bus services, including the potential to convert existing bus stands into shorter on-street stops. This change could reduce the need for large lay-bys, allowing more space for wider footpaths, landscaping, and public realm improvements. The study should also consider connections to London Road, impacts on side streets, and opportunities for phased implementation.

High Street Public Space and Event Use Study

Assess how existing public spaces along the High Street can better support community events and activities. This should include analysis of the infrastructure currently in place, feasibility of road closures (e.g. for markets or cultural events), identification of additional space requirements, and recommendations for optimising key locations. The study should define what constitutes an ideal public event space and where improvements or interventions could unlock new opportunities.

On Street Parking Impact Study

Evaluate the current use and value of short-stay parking bays, and explore potential reallocation or reduction to improve footway width, reduce visual clutter, or support more pedestrian-focused activity.

High Street Heritage Interpretation Strategy

Develop an approach to interpret and celebrate the High Street's unique heritage as part of a wider town-wide trail. This should include signage, plaques, storytelling elements, digital interpretation (e.g. QR codes), and connections to key local narratives and historic sites—such as the Martyrs Memorial, McIndoe, Sackville College, and Middle Row. The framework should be designed to enhance the visitor experience and contribute to East Grinstead's profile as a heritage-led destination.



6.3 High Street

Quick Wins

Cleanup of Heritage Settings and Reduction of Clutter

Undertake targeted clean-up and management of key heritage settings, including the War Memorial, Water Fountain, and areas behind Middle Row. This should include a review of unnecessary street furniture, poor-quality bins, and visual clutter. In particular, the roundabout at the junction of London Road contains excessive guard railing which should be assessed for potential removal or replacement to improve visual amenity and heritage character.

Improved Wayfinding and Heritage Interpretation

Install updated heritage markers and orientation signage at key points including Middle Row, St Swithun's Church, McIndoe statue, and entry routes.

Initial Accessibility Improvements

Identify and address small-scale interventions—such as resurfacing or bus stop access to improve movement and access between the carriageway and pavement levels.

Medium-Term Projects

Redesigned Streetscape Based on Heritage and User Needs

Building on the outcomes of initial conservation-led studies and access assessments, develop and deliver a redesigned High Street layout that reallocates space in favour of pedestrians. The proposal should reduce the dominance of traffic, expand pedestrian areas, and introduce coherent materials, lighting, planting, and street furniture that reflect the town's historic character. An assessment should also be made as to whether delivery can be phased or staged to align with future funding opportunities, enabling incremental improvements that contribute to a cohesive long-term vision.

New Zebra Crossing Outside The Crown

Provide a new zebra crossing near The Crown pub, at the end of Cantelupe Road, to offer a safe and accessible crossing point, upgrading the existing nearby crossing facilities. This location experiences high footfall and significant pedestrian movement across the street, particularly at busy times. A formalised crossing here would reduce conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, improve safety, and support a more walkable and connected town centre environment.

Decluttering and Bin Management behind Middle Row

Resolve issues of visual clutter and poor servicing behind the Middle Row buildings, with better waste storage and improved surface treatments.

Long-Term Plans

Deliver Redesigned Streetscape and Timed Vehicle Access Scheme

Implement the full transformation of the High Street, reallocating road space to prioritise pedestrians, activity and placemaking over vehicular use. Based on prior design and feasibility work, this scheme would reduce traffic dominance, introduce consistent materials and public realm improvements, and create a safer, more welcoming environment. The proposal includes a Timed Vehicle Access Scheme to manage vehicle flow allowing controlled access for buses, deliveries and emergency vehicles while minimising impacts on surrounding areas.

Establish the High Street as a Destination Heritage Experience

Deliver the full heritage interpretation strategy, transforming the High Street into a nationally recognised cultural destination. This would include integrated signage, storytelling, visitor trails and markers celebrating local history and identity.

Create a Pedestrian-Friendly Heritage Quarter

Explore the transformation of the heritage quarter to establish a shared space or pedestrian-priority area linking the High Street with key cultural assets including the museum, St Swithun's Church, and

6.3 High Street

Sackville College. This long-term vision would enhance the connectivity, visibility, and usability of this important cluster of historic buildings. The study should assess current traffic circulation and road hierarchy to understand the feasibility of reprioritising space, potentially restricting or redirecting vehicle access to create a safer, more attractive and unified public realm that celebrates East Grinstead's unique heritage.



Spaces to dwell



Enhanced Public Realm



Zebra crossing



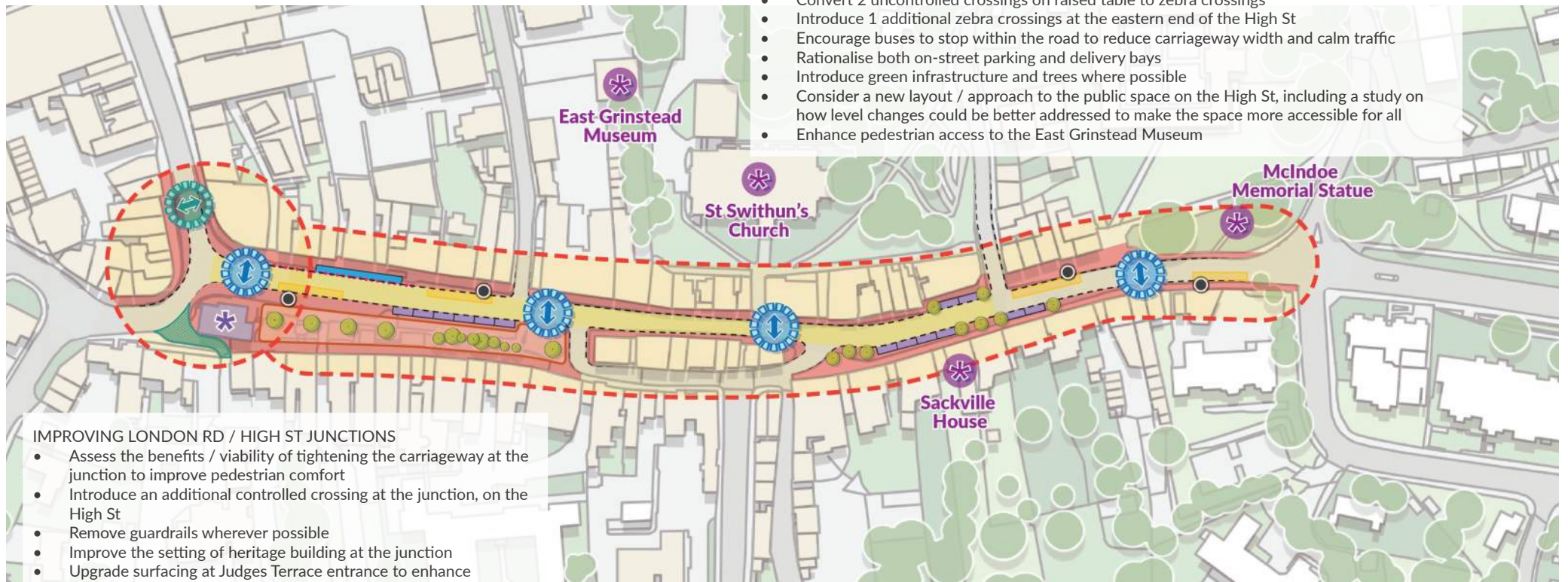
Spaces for events



Outdoor dining

GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HIGH STREET

- Convert 2 uncontrolled crossings on raised table to zebra crossings
- Introduce 1 additional zebra crossings at the eastern end of the High St
- Encourage buses to stop within the road to reduce carriageway width and calm traffic
- Rationalise both on-street parking and delivery bays
- Introduce green infrastructure and trees where possible
- Consider a new layout / approach to the public space on the High St, including a study on how level changes could be better addressed to make the space more accessible for all
- Enhance pedestrian access to the East Grinstead Museum



IMPROVING LONDON RD / HIGH ST JUNCTIONS

- Assess the benefits / viability of tightening the carriageway at the junction to improve pedestrian comfort
- Introduce an additional controlled crossing at the junction, on the High St
- Remove guardrails wherever possible
- Improve the setting of heritage building at the junction
- Upgrade surfacing at Judges Terrace entrance to enhance pedestrian comfort and accessibility

Opportunities plan indicating key interventions

6.4 Town Centre Wide

Town centre-wide interventions, specific components and standalone projects capture a combination of strategic actions that apply across the whole of East Grinstead's town centre, alongside more focused, site-specific or thematic initiatives that support delivery of the wider vision. These projects address cross-cutting issues such as movement, accessibility, identity, maintenance and activation, and help unlock additional value beyond the individual character areas. While not tied to a single geographic zone, they are fundamental to creating a coherent, well-functioning and attractive town centre, responding directly to issues and opportunities identified through engagement, stakeholder input and on-the-ground analysis.

Projects

Wayfinding and Signage

Develop and deliver a coordinated town centre wayfinding and signage project that improves legibility, ease of movement and visitor experience across East Grinstead. This project will build on the existing totem signage system and involve a comprehensive review of current signage to assess location, hierarchy, consistency and visual communication, with particular focus on key arrival points, pedestrian corridors, car parks and main approach roads. The outcome will be a clear and integrated signage network that helps people orient themselves quickly and move confidently through the town centre.

New and enhanced signage should be introduced where gaps are identified, prioritising the station, main car parks, busy pedestrian routes and key junctions. Signage will promote and connect important destinations including the Museum, Queen's Walk, the Bluebell Railway, public toilets and heritage landmarks, reinforcing the town's identity and supporting both residents and first-time visitors. As part of this project, the visibility and awareness of public toilets—particularly at Queens Walk and Elizabeth Place—should be improved through clearer signage and consistent branding, ensuring essential facilities are easy to find and fully integrated into the wider wayfinding strategy.

Parking Management and Access Improvement Project

Deliver a coordinated parking management and access improvement project for East Grinstead town centre, addressing both on-street and off-street parking. This project will examine capacity, usage patterns, pricing, time limits, enforcement practices and overall ease of use, with the aim of optimising how parking supports town centre vitality. Particular attention should be given to the role of short-stay parking, its location, and how it supports local businesses and everyday trips.

The project should aim to improve the user experience of town centre car parks by addressing accessibility, legibility and wayfinding, including clearer routes from car parks into the town centre. Consideration should be given to payment methods, signage, layout and the potential use of technology such as pay-on-exit systems.

6.4 Town Centre Wide

Traffic and Movement Optimisation Project

Deliver a coordinated traffic and movement optimisation project to better understand and improve how people and vehicles move through the town centre. This project will analyse circulation patterns, congestion points and conflict areas, identifying opportunities to reduce car dominance while supporting walking, cycling and public transport.

The project should include a detailed review of bus routes, stop locations, waiting arrangements and operational requirements, alongside assessment of potential changes such as access restrictions, filtered permeability or one-way systems. Targeted traffic and movement surveys will inform the work, capturing current flows, turning movements and user behaviour. This evidence will underpin practical interventions that improve safety, accessibility and town centre function, while carefully considering impacts on surrounding streets and the needs of different users.

Heritage Trail and Interpretation Project

Deliver a coordinated heritage trail that celebrates and promotes East Grinstead's historic character, linking key sites across the town centre into a coherent and engaging visitor experience. The High Street's exceptional concentration of timber-framed buildings, alongside assets such as Middle Row, Sackville

College, St Swithun's Church, the McIndoe memorial and the Museum, provides a strong foundation for a clearly defined heritage route.

The project would combine physical interpretation (plaques, markers and signage) with contemporary tools such as digital interpretation, smart wayfinding and app- or web-based guides. Integrated with wider public realm improvements, the trail would strengthen local identity, improve legibility, support tourism and help present East Grinstead as a distinctive heritage destination.

Maintenance and Management Programme

Deliver a coordinated maintenance and management programme to improve the ongoing care, presentation and stewardship of the town centre's public realm. This project should address litter management, bin storage, vegetation clearance, lighting, surfacing and the reduction of unnecessary street clutter, ensuring streets and spaces remain clean, safe and welcoming.

A regular, funded maintenance regime for street trees and planting should form a core part of this programme, with early action focused on locations where overgrown or poorly maintained greenery detracts from the town centre environment.

The programme should also explore longer-term stewardship models, including the potential role of a

Business Improvement District (BID), to involve local businesses and stakeholders in maintaining a high-quality town centre that supports economic vitality, biodiversity and civic pride.

Accessibility Enhancement

Undertake a town centre-wide accessibility review based on universal design principles, assessing pavement widths and surfaces, kerb heights, gradients, crossings, seating, inclusive wayfinding, and access to bus stops and shelters. This will identify barriers and opportunities to improve comfort, safety and inclusivity for all users.

Deliver additional safe and accessible pedestrian crossings at key conflict points across the town centre, particularly where pedestrian desire lines are not currently supported. New crossings should help create a coherent, inclusive walking network and improve access to key destinations while reinforcing a pedestrian-first environment.

As part of this programme, upgrade the existing uncontrolled pedestrian crossing outside Chequer Mead Theatre to a signal-controlled crossing. This will address safety concerns for vulnerable users, particularly during evening events and periods of low visibility, and improve confidence and accessibility at this important cultural destination.

6.4 Town Centre Wide

Bus Routing and Waiting Environment Improvements

Deliver a coordinated programme to review and improve bus routing, stop locations, and passenger waiting environments across the town centre. This project will respond to public feedback about the amount of space taken up by bus stands—particularly on the High Street—by exploring options to relocate, consolidate or redesign stops to reduce physical and visual impact. It will also address underutilised stops, improve safety and comfort, and upgrade shelters, signage and visibility to encourage greater use of public transport while supporting a more people-focused street environment.

Town Centre-Wide Lighting Improvements

Implement a town centre-wide lighting improvement project to enhance safety, comfort and visual quality across streets and public spaces. This will involve reviewing existing lighting provision to identify where upgrades, replacements or rationalisation are required, particularly along key routes and in areas with poor evening visibility. The project will establish consistent principles for energy-efficient, well-designed and heritage-sensitive lighting that supports both everyday use and evening activity, and can be delivered incrementally or alongside wider public realm works.

Rationalised Bin Storage and Visual Clutter Reduction

Deliver targeted projects to reduce visual clutter and improve the quality of the town centre environment. This will include rationalising waste storage, introducing integrated and screened bin facilities in key locations such as Queen’s Walk, and removing or consolidating unnecessary street furniture. The project will address issues such as excessive railings, bollards, posts and outdated signage, helping to open up streets and spaces, improve pedestrian movement and accessibility, and create a cleaner, more attractive and welcoming town centre.

Station-Town Centre Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity Improvements

Develop and deliver a project to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the railway station and the town centre. This will involve exploring, testing and refining a range of design options to enhance route legibility, safety, continuity and crossing provision for both walkers and cyclists. The project should consider how streets, junctions and public spaces can better support active travel, reduce conflicts with vehicles and create a more intuitive and attractive journey into the town centre.

As part of this work, the role of East Grinstead within the Avenue Verte (London-Paris cycle route) should be reviewed and strengthened, ensuring the town

centre is clearly integrated into this international corridor. Improvements should help position East Grinstead as a welcoming, legible and convenient stop for cyclists, with clear routes, signage and connections to key destinations and facilities.

Shopfront and Vacant Space Regeneration Project

Deliver a coordinated programme to regenerate shopfronts and activate vacant or underused buildings across the town centre. The project should identify priority frontages and long-term vacant sites that would benefit most from refurbishment, meanwhile use or reactivation, focusing on improving visual quality, supporting footfall and strengthening the overall perception of a vibrant town centre.

This should include assessment of ownership, constraints and delivery mechanisms, alongside opportunities for coordinated funding, incentives and partnership working with landlords, businesses and community organisations. Potential uses may include pop-up retail, arts and cultural activity, workspace, community uses or longer-term redevelopment, depending on location and feasibility.

As part of early delivery, partner with local schools, artists and arts organisations to introduce murals, window vinyls and temporary installations on vacant shopfronts. These interventions should reduce visual blight, support placemaking, and help signal positive

6.4 Town Centre Wide

change while longer-term solutions are developed.

Event Infrastructure

Develop and deliver a coordinated programme of event-support infrastructure to enable a wider range of community, cultural and commercial activities across the town centre. This project should identify spatial and operational requirements for hosting events, including power supply, loading arrangements, temporary road closures and storage needs.

Infrastructure such as electricity points, display plinths and flexible bases should be introduced in strategic locations including London Road, Queens Walk and the High Street. By reducing barriers to delivery and improving consistency, this project will support markets, exhibitions, performances and seasonal events throughout the year, strengthening the town centre's vibrancy and economic activity.

Greening Interventions

Deliver localised greening projects such as street trees, planters and rain gardens – particularly in areas with limited greenery. These interventions should be designed with maintenance in mind and contribute to environmental sustainability and visual quality.

Public Art Installations

Commission public artworks at key arrival points (e.g. Station Approach, Queens Walk) or within key nodes

in the town centre to create memorable landmarks, improve character, and showcase East Grinstead's creative and cultural identity.

New Arrival Signage Promoting Heritage High Street

Install attractive gateway signage at key arrival points into East Grinstead that clearly promotes the town's historic High Street. These signs should highlight its heritage value, such as being home to the UK's longest continuous run of timber-framed buildings, and help influence visitor decisions to stop, explore, and support the local economy. Signage should be consistent with the wider town centre wayfinding strategy and reflect a unified identity.

Strategic Delivery and Funding

With a wide range of ideas and proposals now clearly defined, attention must turn to how these improvements can be delivered. Funding is likely to come forward incrementally, through central government programmes, district or county-level initiatives, private development contributions, or community-led funding streams.

As such, a phased and flexible approach will be needed. Quick wins can help to build early confidence and signal progress, while medium-term actions should be scoped and prepared to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise. Long-term aspirations must remain visible, with early preparatory work (such as feasibility studies and design frameworks) ensuring the town is ready to deliver when the moment comes.

Projects should be prioritised strategically—focusing on maximum impact, alignment with the shared vision, and readiness for delivery. Where early success is achieved, this can help unlock future investment: success breeds confidence, and confidence attracts funding.

Building on Momentum

This Improvement Plan represents a major step forward in shaping a more coherent, attractive and sustainable future for East Grinstead town centre. It builds on extensive consultation, shared visioning and strategic thinking, and now provides a strong platform for coordinated action and long-term investment.

To maintain momentum, it is essential that the conversations, collaboration and partnerships established through the development of this plan continue. East Grinstead Town Council, Mid Sussex District Council, the East Grinstead Business Association and key partners, including West Sussex County Council, should work together to sustain an ongoing dialogue and coordination group that can guide priorities, champion delivery and respond to emerging opportunities. This collaborative approach will be particularly important as local government arrangements evolve, with emerging devolution proposals and the establishment of a new strategic authority shaping future funding, governance and decision-making at a wider scale. The Improvement Plan positions East Grinstead strongly within this changing context, with clear ambitions and priorities already defined.

Building on momentum also requires a positive and proactive narrative for the town centre. East Grinstead should be consistently talked up as a place of quality, character and opportunity—by councils, businesses, community groups and partners alike. There is scope to develop initiatives such as town centre ambassadors, local champions or coordinated stewardship roles that help welcome visitors, promote events, support businesses and reinforce pride in place. Alongside this, continued engagement with residents, businesses, schools and young people will be essential as individual projects progress, ensuring the shared vision remains relevant, inclusive and widely supported to prioritise and champion the delivery of individual projects.

Continued Community Engagement

The people of East Grinstead have actively contributed to the plan's development through public engagement, targeted stakeholder conversations, and sessions with local schools. This strong foundation of local involvement must now evolve into a long-term commitment to continued engagement.

As individual projects progress, from feasibility and design to implementation, there must be open channels for feedback and collaboration. Whether through events, online platforms, exhibitions or pilot projects, ensuring that local voices continue to shape change will be vital to delivering a town centre that works for all.

School Engagement Follow-Through

The engagement of school-aged children and young people during the consultation process was a vital part of shaping a more inclusive and forward-looking Improvement Plan. The input received from local primary and secondary students offered unique and thoughtful perspectives on how the town centre could evolve to better serve future generations. Their suggestions highlighted a desire for more colour, creativity, safety, and social spaces—elements that should be embedded in the delivery of future projects.

Building on this momentum, it is essential that youth engagement becomes a lasting element of the town centre's ongoing development. Future project design and delivery should continue to involve schools and young people—not just through consultation, but through active participation. Opportunities might include:

- Co-creation of public art and murals
- Student-designed wayfinding or interpretive signage
- Youth-led events or markets
- Collaboration with schools on storytelling and heritage trails
- Participation in planting schemes and greening initiatives

This not only fosters a stronger sense of ownership among younger residents, but also ensures that the evolving town centre reflects a wider diversity of needs, creativity and voices. Embedding school and youth engagement into implementation processes will help East Grinstead grow in a way that is inclusive, imaginative, and future-ready.



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