

HemingwayDesign **NEW** masterplanning

Client: Wyre Forest District Council
May 2021



Kidderminster

Town Centre Vision

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1. Vision

By 2040 Kidderminster will be known as a purposeful, forward-thinking town centre. A sustainable place that celebrates its heritage and natural environment. An independent place that attracts entrepreneurs and creative thinking. A social place enlivened by its town centre living, public spaces, café culture and evening economy. An inclusive place that cares about the health, welfare and education of current and future generations. A friendly place that understands how to relax and enjoy life.

Kidderminster Town Centre Vision

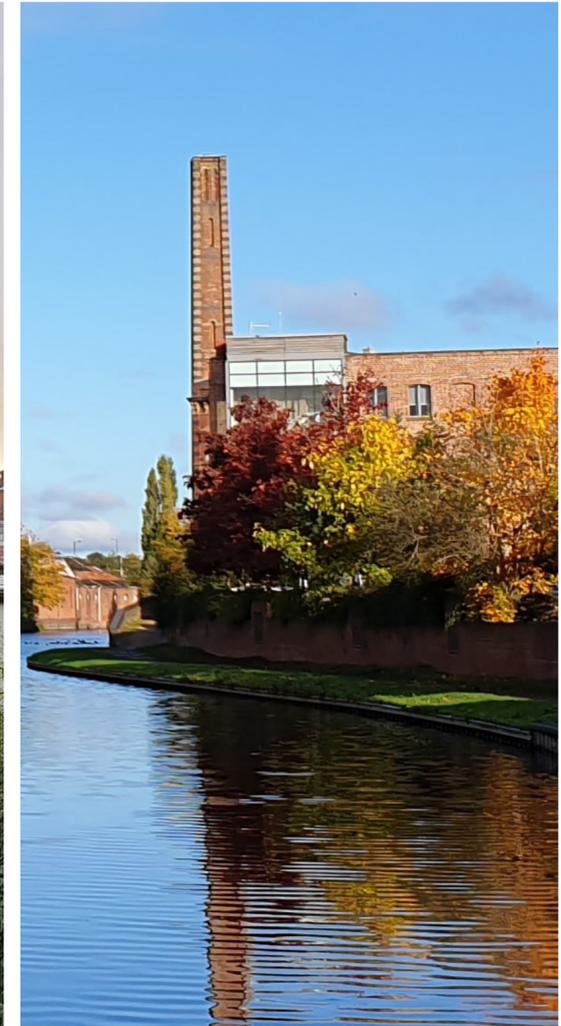
Town centres are changing. We have known this for some time, but the pace of change has accelerated and the need to respond is increasingly urgent.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Place:

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

People:

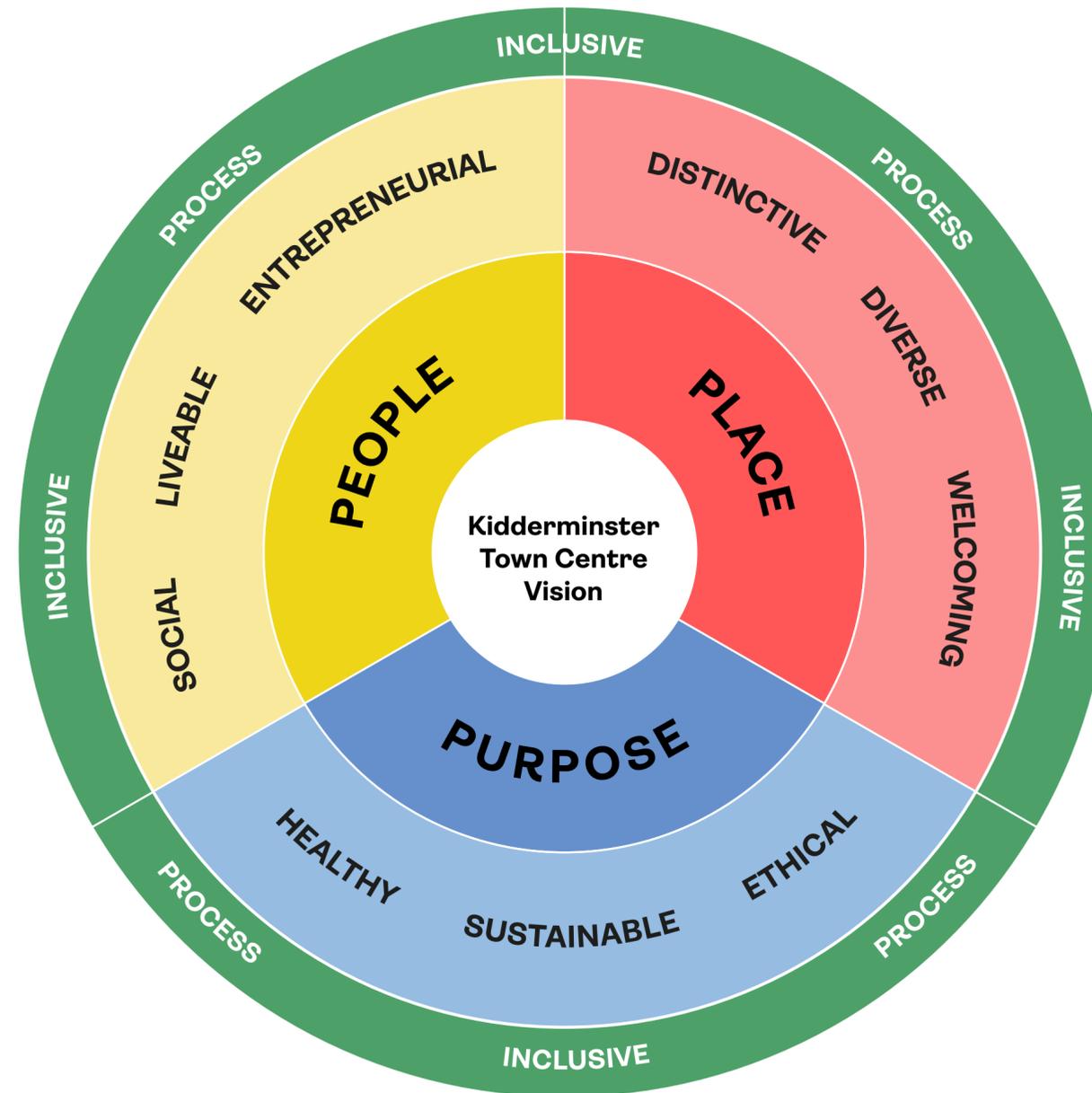
Town centres need to prioritise people. People focused environments encourage people to linger, to discover and to return.

Purpose:

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

Process:

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





2. Process

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

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



Process

Local Support

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



<https://www.hemingwaydesign.co.uk/vision-kidderminster-town-centre/>

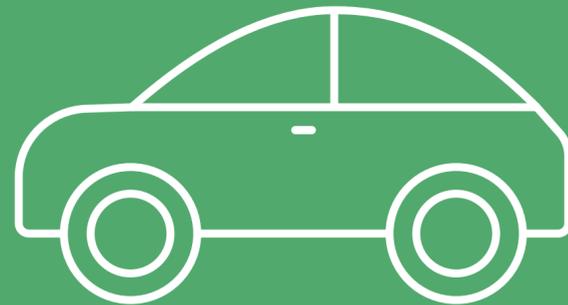
1,853 survey responses

Age breakdown

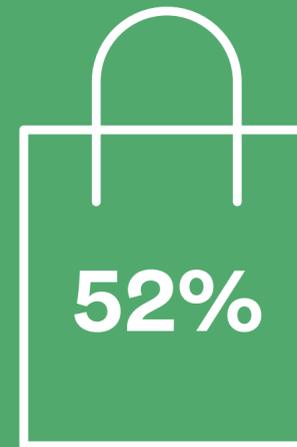
U25	11%
25-34	11%
35-44	16%
45-54	22%
55-64	19%
65+	21%



33% stay for more than 1 hour



73% travel by car



Only visit Weavers Wharf or a supermarket

Process

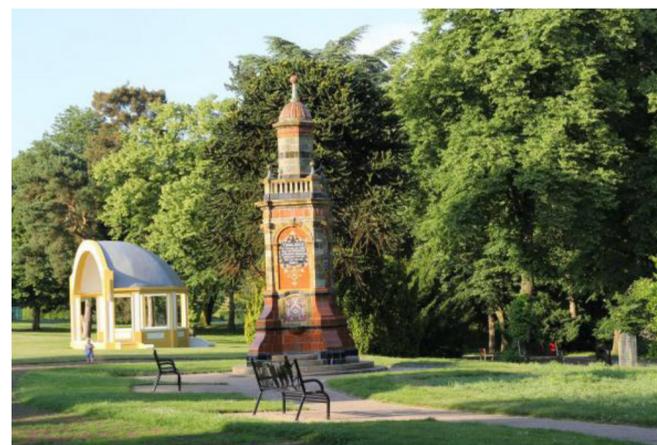
Local Assets

The Vision Process has identified those parts of Kidderminster town centre that local people value the most. This includes the canalside, the River Stour and the cluster of outdoor restaurants around Husum Bridge. It includes the market, independent shops, restaurants, and bars dotted around the town centre, with clusters on Worcester Street and Vicar Street. It includes civic assets such as the Town Hall, the library and the Museum of Carpet as well as Brinton Park.

The wider comments received also recognise the importance of improving neglected assets and bringing important buildings such as the Former Magistrates' Court, Slingfield Mill and Piano Building back into productive use.

The Vision then seeks to ensure that these assets of importance to local residents are celebrated and supported as part of the comprehensive strategy for Kidderminster.

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



Process

Local Priorities

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

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

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

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

97% of people supported change.

The top 6 local priorities for change were:



Process

Young People

Inclusive town centres recognise that not everyone has the same priorities. Young people in particular use town centres slightly differently, and have different priorities for change.

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

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

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

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



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

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

Process

Continuing Involvement

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

It is essential that younger generations feel involved and included in their town centre. Kidderminster will put in place specific mechanisms to involve young people and will start by seeking to engage Kidderminster College students in the co-design of new town centre public spaces.



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

- ↪ Pop up installations in community settings
- ↪ Travelling Urban Rooms
- ↪ Live builds with communities
- ↪ Immersive, interactive outdoor commissions
- ↪ Talks and debates
- ↪ And as part of artist's residencies.

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

3.Place

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

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

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



Place

Distinctive Kidderminster

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

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

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



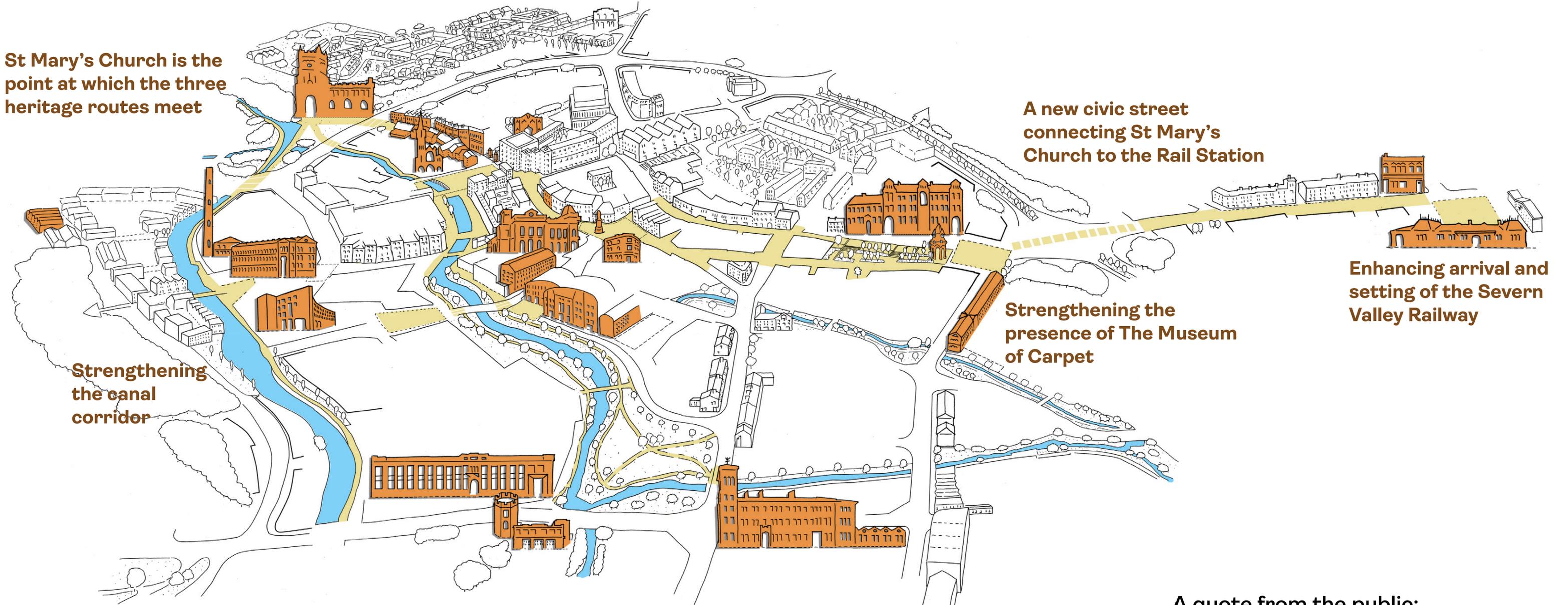
A quote from the public:
“Re-ignite Kidderminster’s heritage”

Kidderminster's identity is rooted in its manufacturing heritage, its waterfront and its natural setting.

The Vision makes historic buildings more prominent with interesting uses, distinctive public spaces and integrated pedestrian routes. The Vision enhances the urban qualities of the canal and the natural qualities of the river corridor.

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

Distinctive Kidderminster



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

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

Enhancing arrival and setting of the Severn Valley Railway

Strengthening the presence of The Museum of Carpet

Strengthening the canal corridor

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

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

Place

Key project: Heritage and the Public Realm

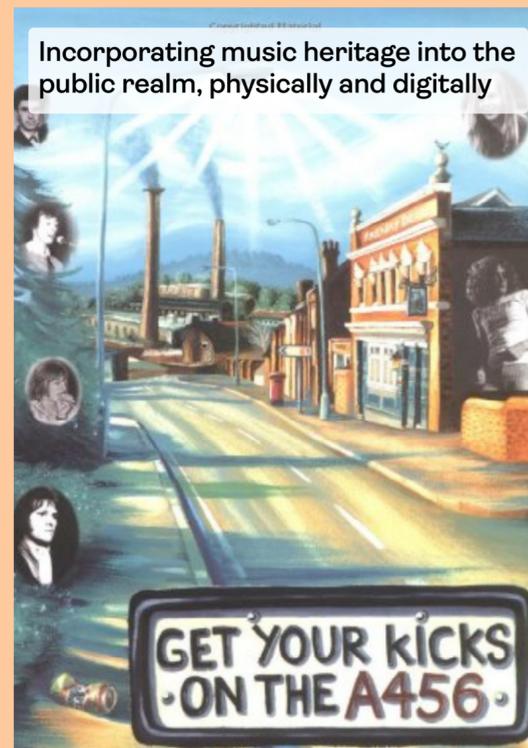
The Vision identifies opportunities to promote Kidderminster's Carpet Heritage across the town. It proposes new public spaces to enhance the setting of important heritage buildings and features, including a new space outside the Museum of Carpet and Former Magistrates' Court.

The potential also exists to incorporate Kidderminster's heritage into the design of the public realm, both physically and digitally, to create a stronger trail around the town centre. Integrating carpet and textile designs into the physical fabric of streets and spaces can bring the heritage to life in a different way. Individual streets can have their own unique carpet pattern, complemented by the street furniture and lighting. The temporary display of industrial machinery in public spaces can also help raise awareness of Kidderminster's carpet heritage.

A programme of coordinated public realm and lighting improvements would promote other elements of Kidderminster's heritage and create a safer and more inviting environment. A new square at the Rail Station recognises the importance of modern rail connections to Birmingham and the visitor and heritage value of the Severn Valley Railway. Celebrating the recently Grade II listed 'Retaining Wall with Sculptural Relief' by William Mitchell helps create a stronger sense of arrival for visitors, whilst the music heritage lends itself to audio-visual projects as well as distinctive street art.



Incorporating use of textile heritage into paving designs



Incorporating music heritage into the public realm, physically and digitally



Lighting heritage assets can entice people into the town centre



Grade II listed Retaining Wall with Sculptural Relief

Place

Diverse Kidderminster

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

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

The Vision supports new internal and external spaces for creative businesses, cultural activity and education. There is a particular focus on improved events and exhibition spaces within the Town Hall, Kidderminster College and the Museum of Carpet.

Priority: More local and independent cafés and restaurants



Bringing al fresco outdoor dining to the town centre



Bringing public amenity and artists together in temporary installations



Bringing a "festival vibe" to the town centre



Play can be architectural



Play can be simply fun



Sustainable actions can inspire and be inclusive

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

Place

Key project: Kidderminster Town Hall

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

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

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



Distinctive courtyard space at The Chubb Buildings, Wolverhampton

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

Place

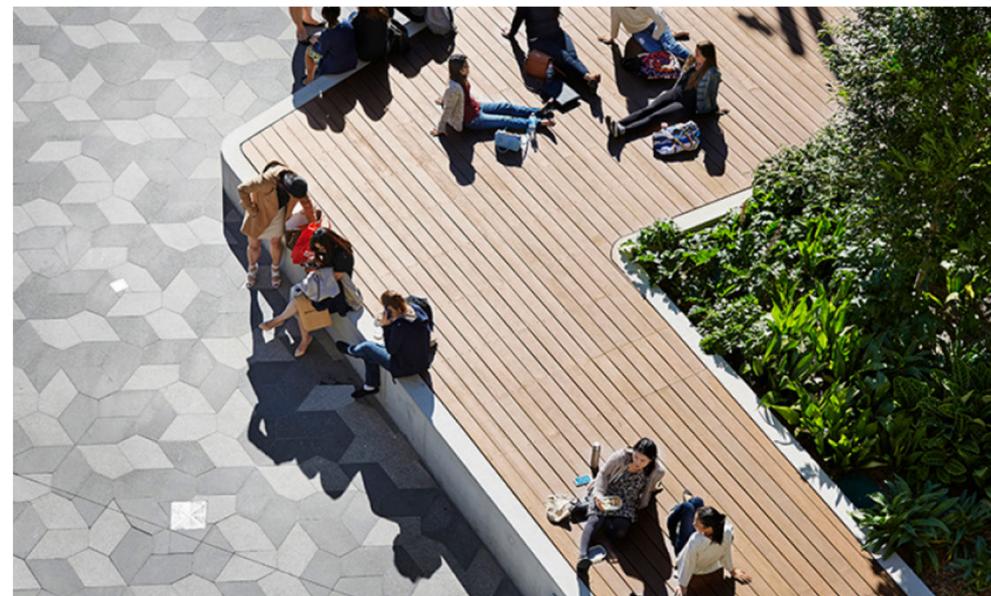
Welcoming Kidderminster

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

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

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

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



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

Place

Welcoming Kidderminster

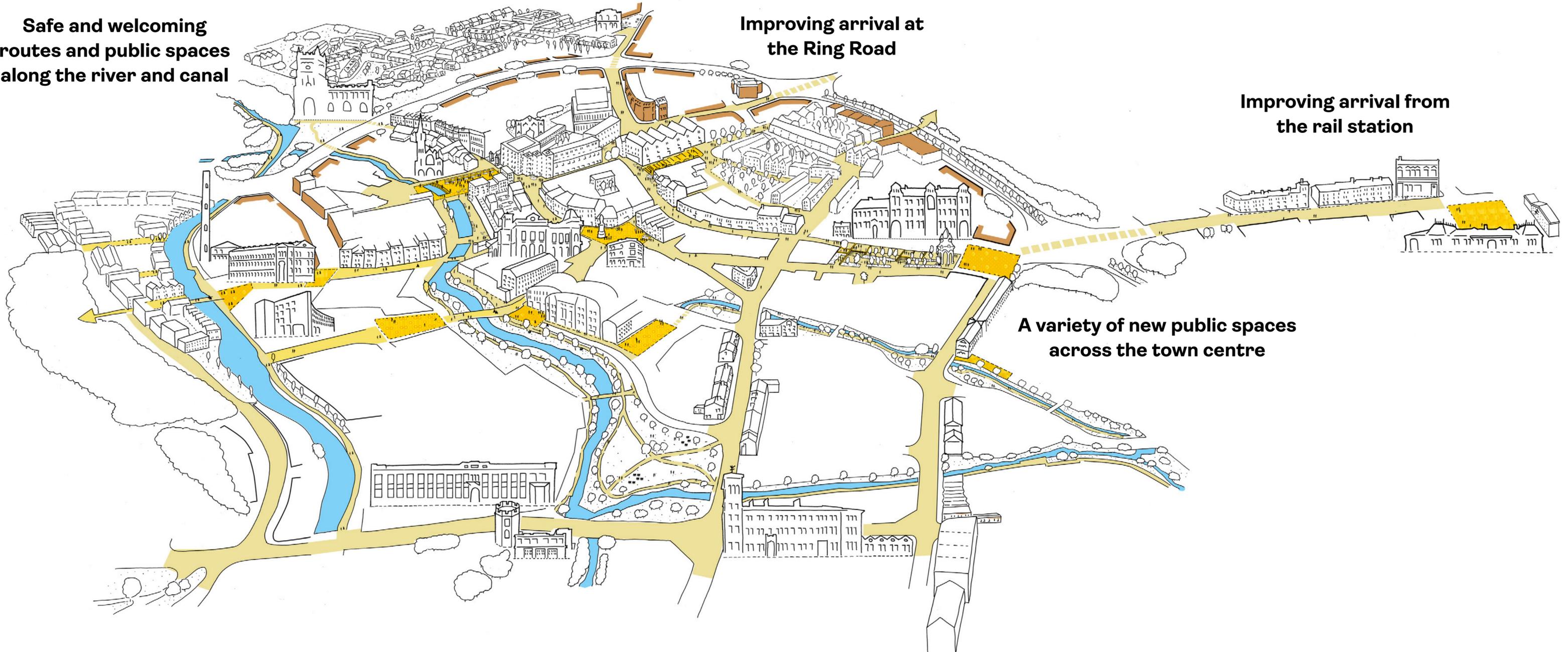
The Vision creates a variety of new pedestrian routes and new public spaces to help all people feel safe, comfortable and welcome in the town centre.

Safe and welcoming routes and public spaces along the river and canal

Improving arrival at the Ring Road

Improving arrival from the rail station

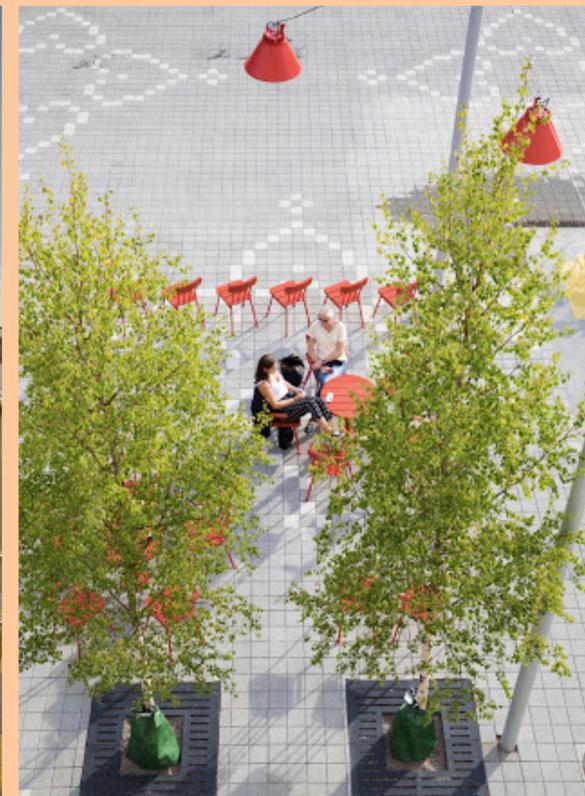
A variety of new public spaces across the town centre



Place

Key Project: The Bull Ring

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



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

Place

Key Project: Pop-up and Meanwhile

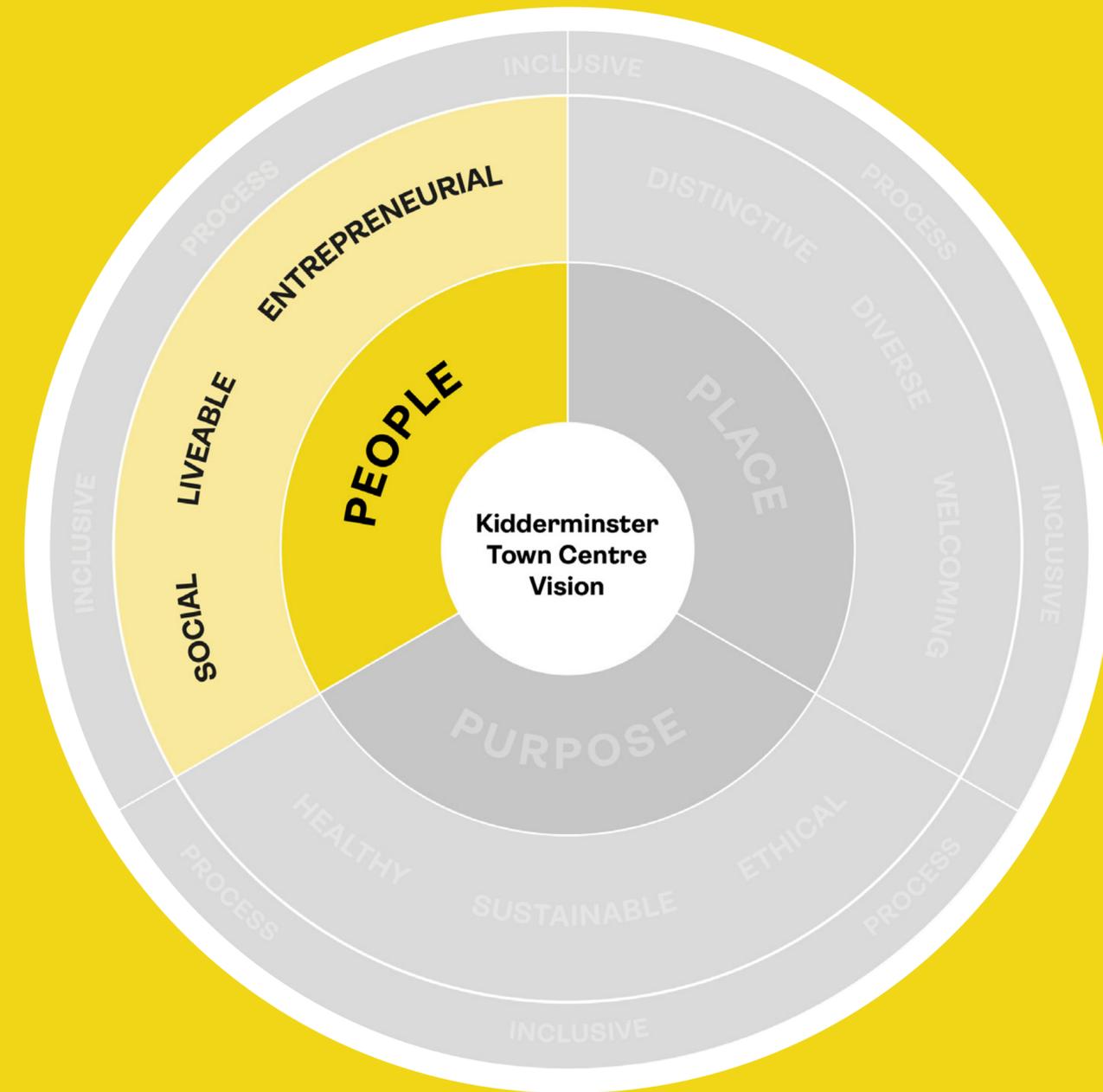
The Vision creates a 'guerrilla' quarter along the River Stour between the new Bull Ring and the bars and restaurants at Husum Bridge. Pop up stalls, street food, public art, events and 'meanwhile uses' will create an exciting riverfront connection at the heart of the town centre.



4. People

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

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



People

Liveable Kidderminster

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



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



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

A quote from the public:

“Be innovative and provide opportunities for co-living and home-working, alongside family housing”.

People

Liveable Kidderminster



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



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



At Port Loop, Birmingham, redevelopment of a former industrial site provides new and improved towpaths, residential including 2, 3 & 4 bedroom homes with parking and gardens, community, leisure and new green space. It is all being done with a nod to the area's industrial heritage which is reflected in the architectural character and is helping to bring people back to redundant industrial sites.

The public's *Number one housing priority is affordable homes for young people.*

A quote from the public:

“Provide more opportunities for people to work from home in Kidderminster”

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

People

Liveable Kidderminster

Churchfields Urban Village

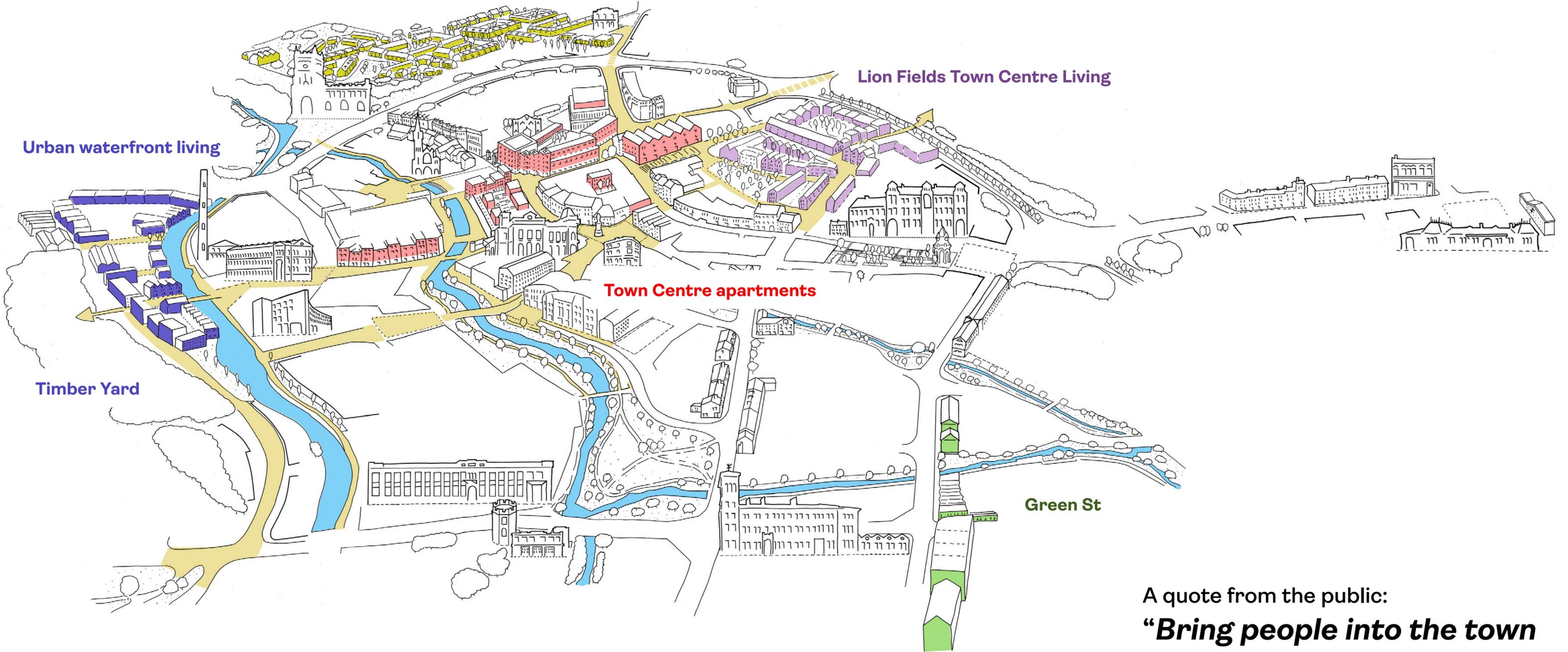
Lion Fields Town Centre Living

Urban waterfront living

Town Centre apartments

Timber Yard

Green St



A quote from the public:
“Bring people into the town centre with more housing – make it a community!”

People

Key Project: Lion Fields

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



Marmalade Lane



Dujardin Mews

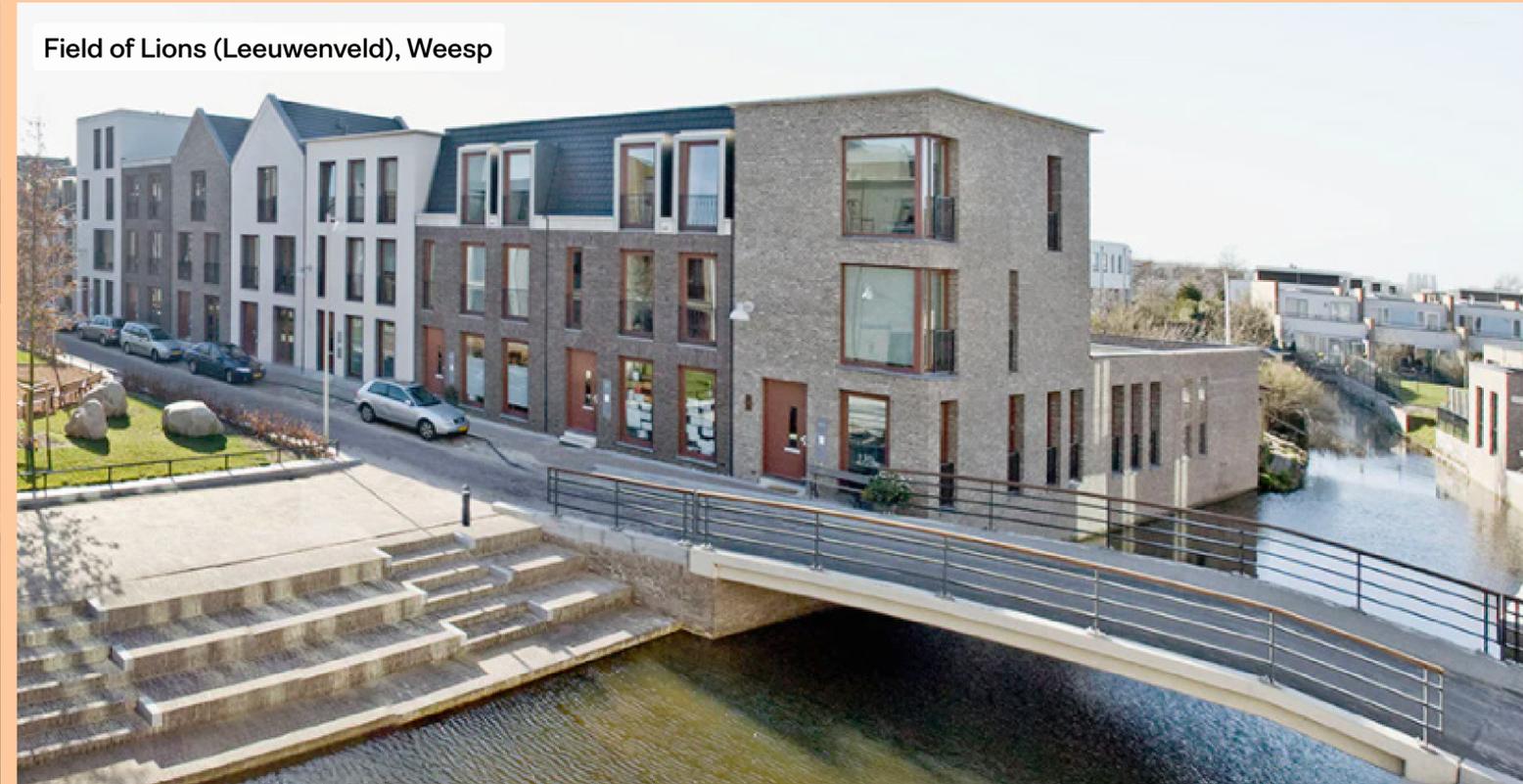
Priority: More people living in the town centre

People

Key Project: Timber Yard Waterfront Living

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

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



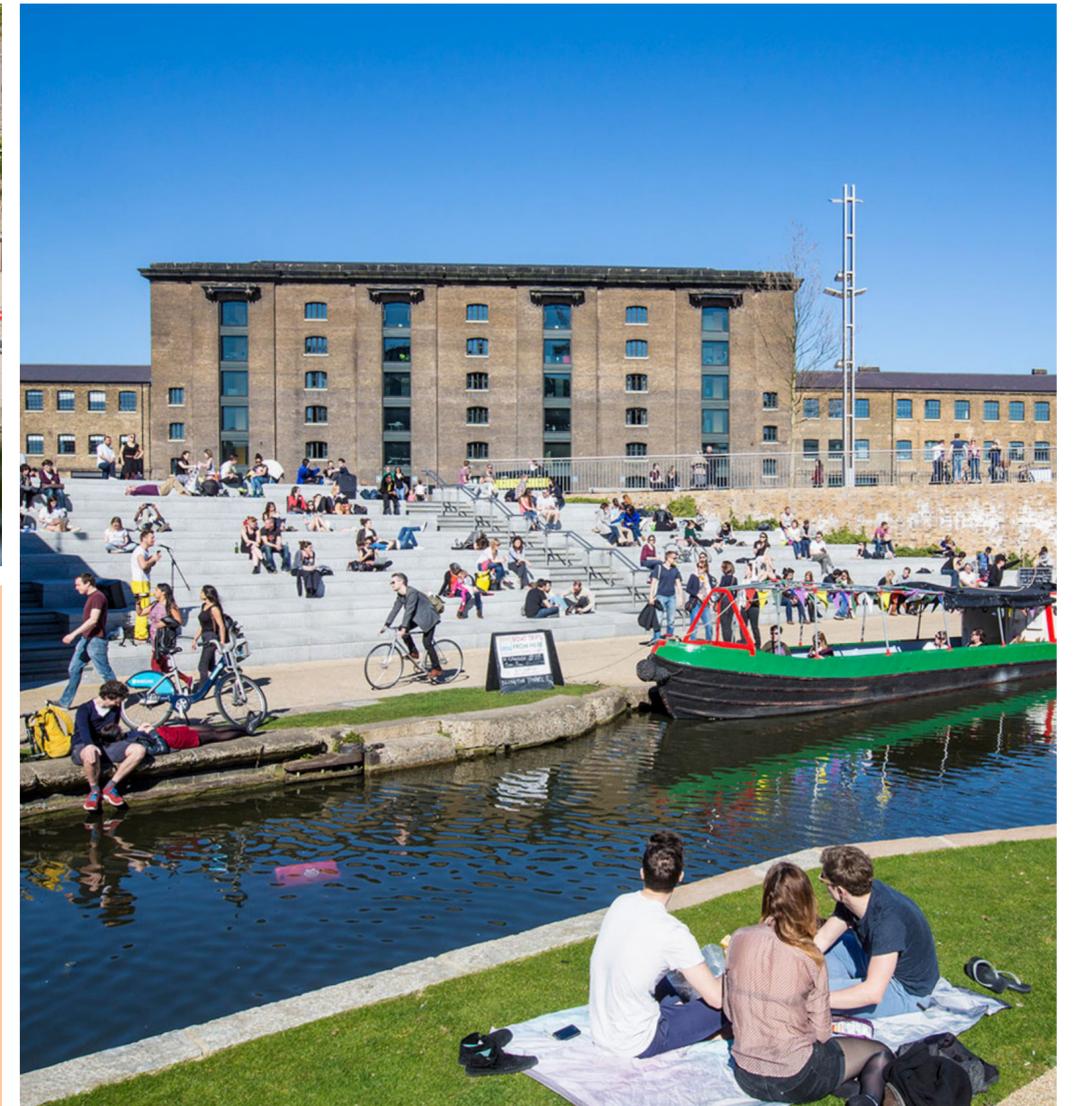
A quote from the public:
“Pack it full of people living and working there. A town centre full of people will make it a lot more vibrant and exciting place to be!”

People

Social Kidderminster

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

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



Priority: Better open public space to hold events and festivals



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

People

Key Project: Worcester Street Steps

The 'Worcester Street Steps' will create a new destination on Worcester Street, a space for residents and for those visiting the new town centre cinema and leisure attractions. It is part of a wider series of 'connectivity projects' to improve pedestrian routes across the town centre and to encourage visitors to explore Kidderminster's heritage and its independent businesses.



People

Entrepreneurial Kidderminster

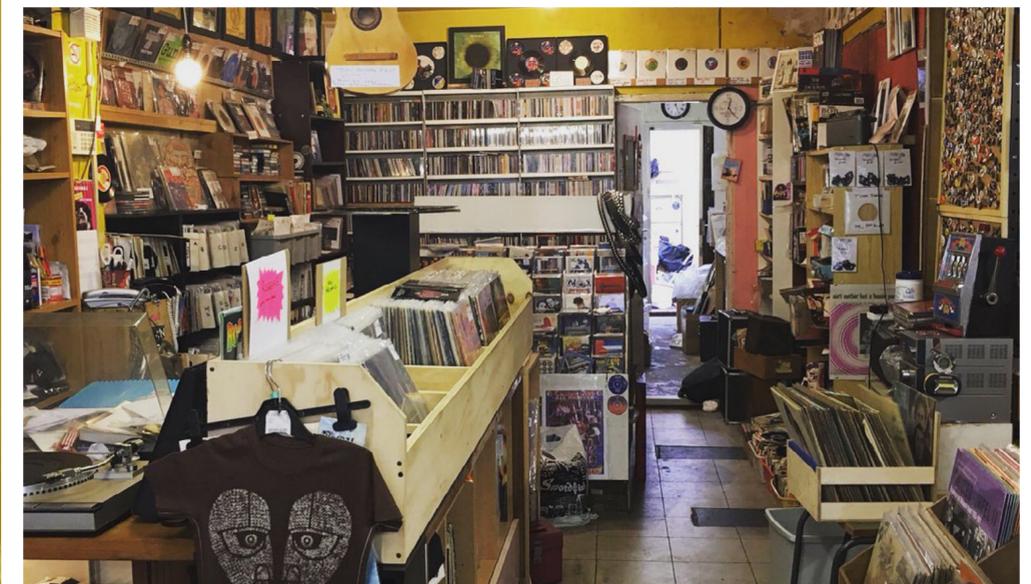
Successful town centres evolve. This means they are flexible enough to be able to respond to social and economic change in a way that makes the best use of their existing physical assets.

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

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



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



People

Entrepreneurial Kidderminster

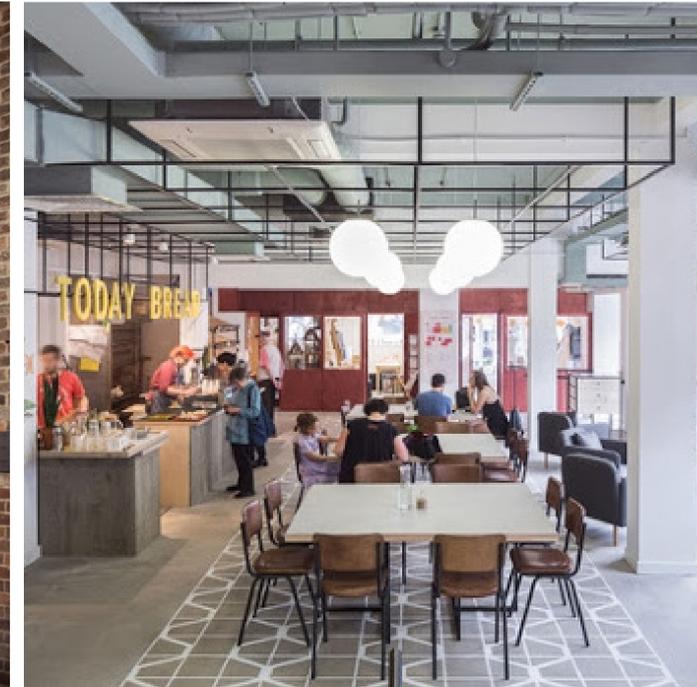
Swan Centre and Rowland Hill Centre

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

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

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

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



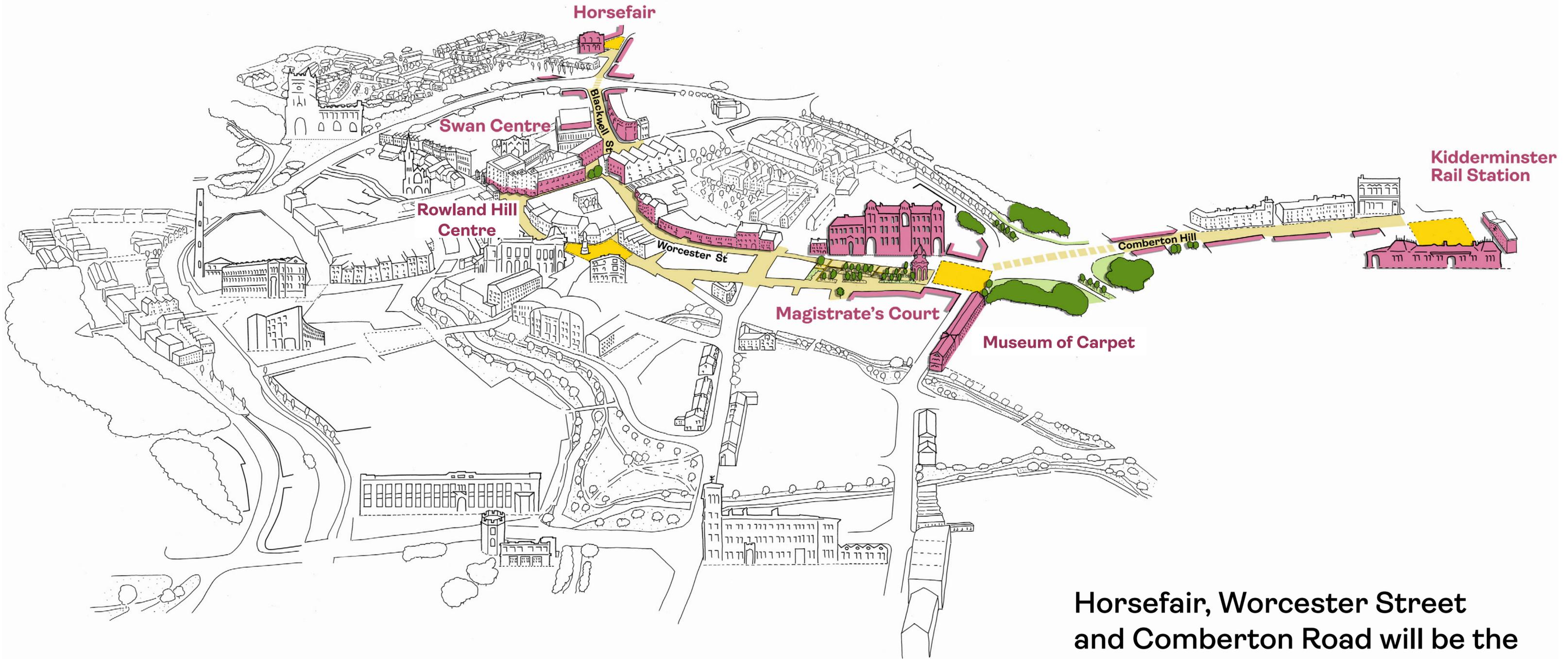
Central Parade, Walthamstow is former council office space on the High Street. It is currently being operated by a local community interest company as a mixed use creative hub, including a variety of retail, co-working, studio and exhibition space and a bakery-café. It also offers cultural events and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

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



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

Entrepreneurial Kidderminster



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

People

Key Project: Kidderminster Creative Hub

Former Magistrates' Court Building

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

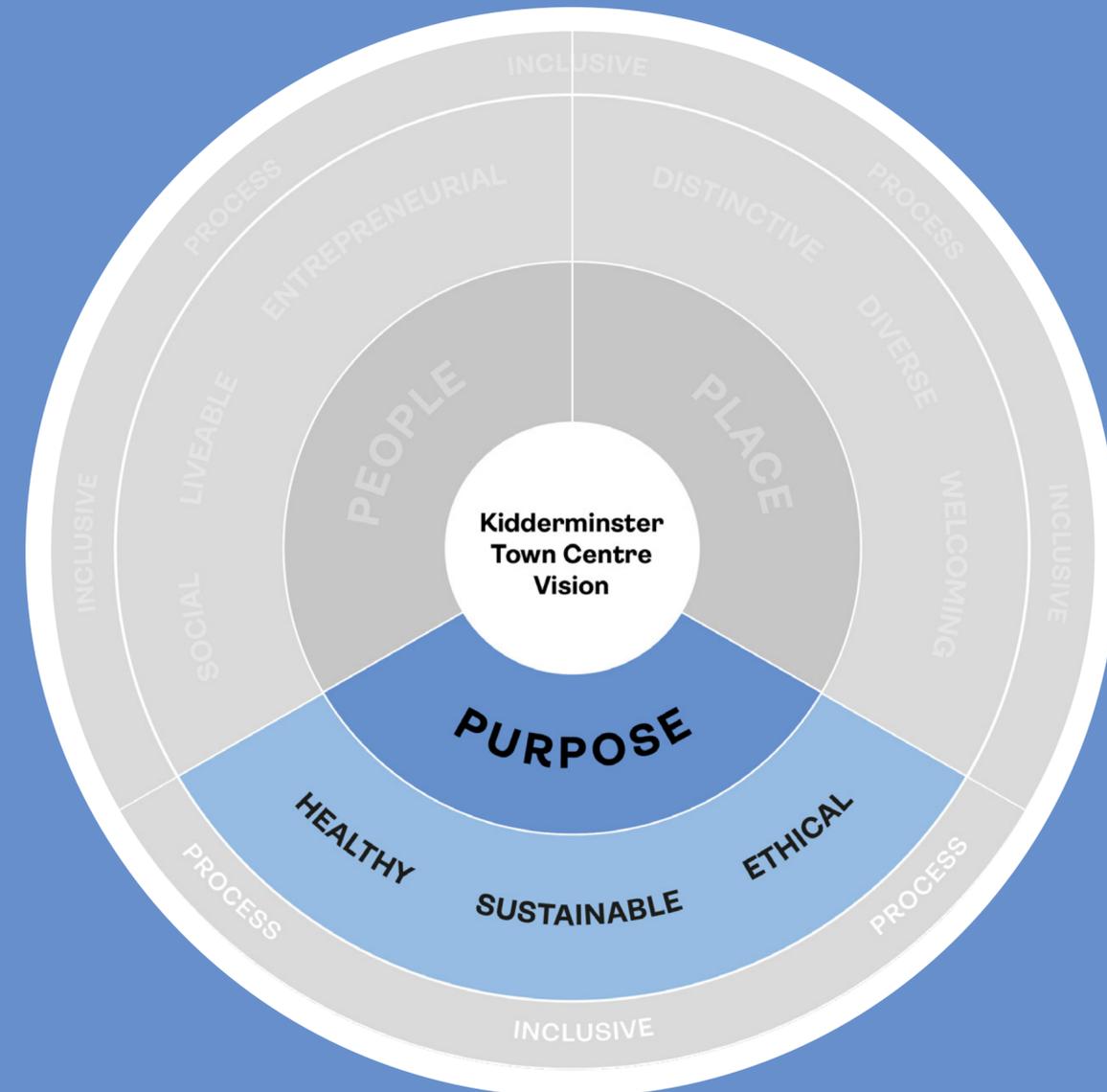
This re-purposing of buildings with a creative and independent focus will clearly respond to desires expressed in the survey and will help position Kidderminster as entrepreneurial and forward facing town. It is vital that the interiors, branding, and tone of voice do not feel 'council/public sector' and that there is an understanding of the creative demographic that needs to be attracted as well as their design-led non-corporate aesthetic.



5. Purpose

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

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



Purpose

Ethical Kidderminster

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

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

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

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

Kidderminster is demonstrating ethical “purpose” with its plans to enhance the civic and educational roles of the Town Hall and Kidderminster College and to turn the magnificent Former Magistrates’ Court into a town centre creative community beacon. The creative industries have been and continue to be at the forefront of town centre renaissances creating economic and social benefit. Together with key cultural, community and creative uses, including the Severn Valley Railway, the Museum of Carpet and St. Mary’s Church, these facilities will create a strong civic spine through the town centre.



Important cultural, creative and community uses, with an ethical focus, can form the basis of a strong ‘Civic Spine’ for Kidderminster town centre.

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

Purpose

A new civic street

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



Purpose

Key Project: Kidderminster College

Kidderminster College will play a key role in the long term success of the town centre. The Vision seeks to enhance its civic and its social presence. A south facing extension, new entrance and social space for students and visitors would help to achieve this.

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

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



Purpose

Healthy Kidderminster

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

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



A quote from the public:

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

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

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

Purpose

Key Project: Ring Road Arrival

Greening the Ring Road will improve arrival into the town centre for visitors and improve the quality of the physical environment for residents. It will also assist with improving air quality and tackling climate change.

The Vision seeks to reduce the separation between residential areas and the town centre created by the poor connections across the Ring Road. Revised junction layouts and new crossing facilities will ensure that key routes into town for those walking and cycling will be legible, convenient and enjoyable. Improved pedestrian crossings and removal of subways will make it significantly easier for residents to walk and cycle into the town centre.

Improvements will also focus on enhancing connections between the town centre and key destinations outside the Ring Road. Improving pedestrian and cycle routes from the rail station will help promote the town centre as a place to live and work as well as encouraging visits to the Severn Valley Railway and to independent businesses on Comberton Hill. To the north, improved crossings will encourage more visits to independent businesses at Horsefair and help to connect the canal locks and St Mary's Church with Church Street and Bull Ring.



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



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

Purpose

Sustainable

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

Prioritising walking and cycling, maximising town centre housing opportunities, and strengthening the role of the rail and bus stations will all help reduce the need to travel by car. In addition, the new pedestrian routes and public spaces provide an opportunity to address the lack of green space in the town centre. Priority is given to opening up new areas of the river and creating new green spaces, including a pedestrian route and riverside park in the heart of the town centre.

A sustainable town centre also makes the most of its existing buildings. A vacant building strategy has been commissioned, and Kidderminster will continue to explore ways in which its historical buildings can be brought back into productive use. As well as the former Magistrates' Court this will include key buildings such as Slingfield Mill and the Piano Building. It also includes potential repurposing of shopping centres and identifying long term productive roles, as well as short term meanwhile uses, for vacant shop units, particularly along Worcester Street.



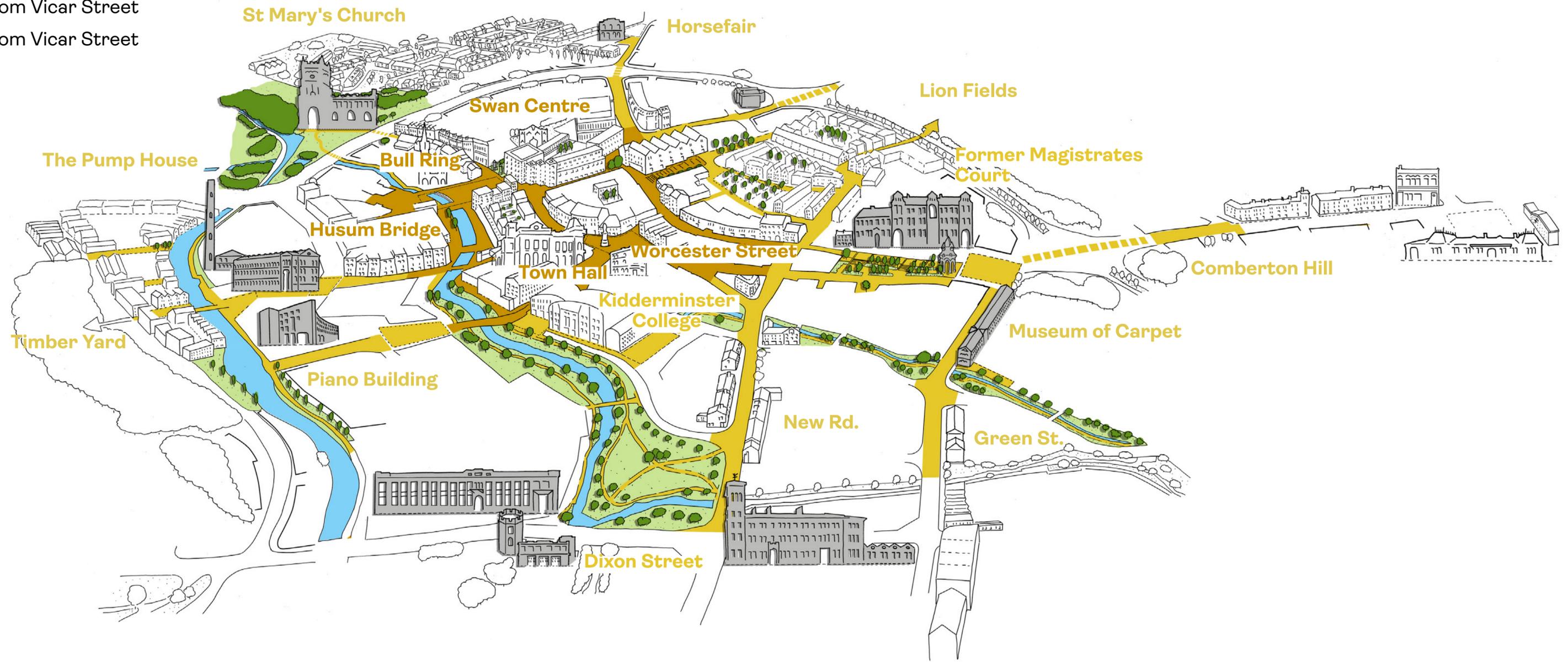
The Vision creates a compact and walkable town centre. The survey shows that people who walk and cycle visit the town centre more often and spend more. People who walk are more likely to visit local businesses and more likely to visit pubs, bars and restaurants in the evening. So walking is good for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

Purpose

Healthy Kidderminster

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

- 5 min walk from Vicar Street
- 2 min walk from Vicar Street



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

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

Purpose

Sustainable Kidderminster

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



Purpose

Key Project: Riverside Park

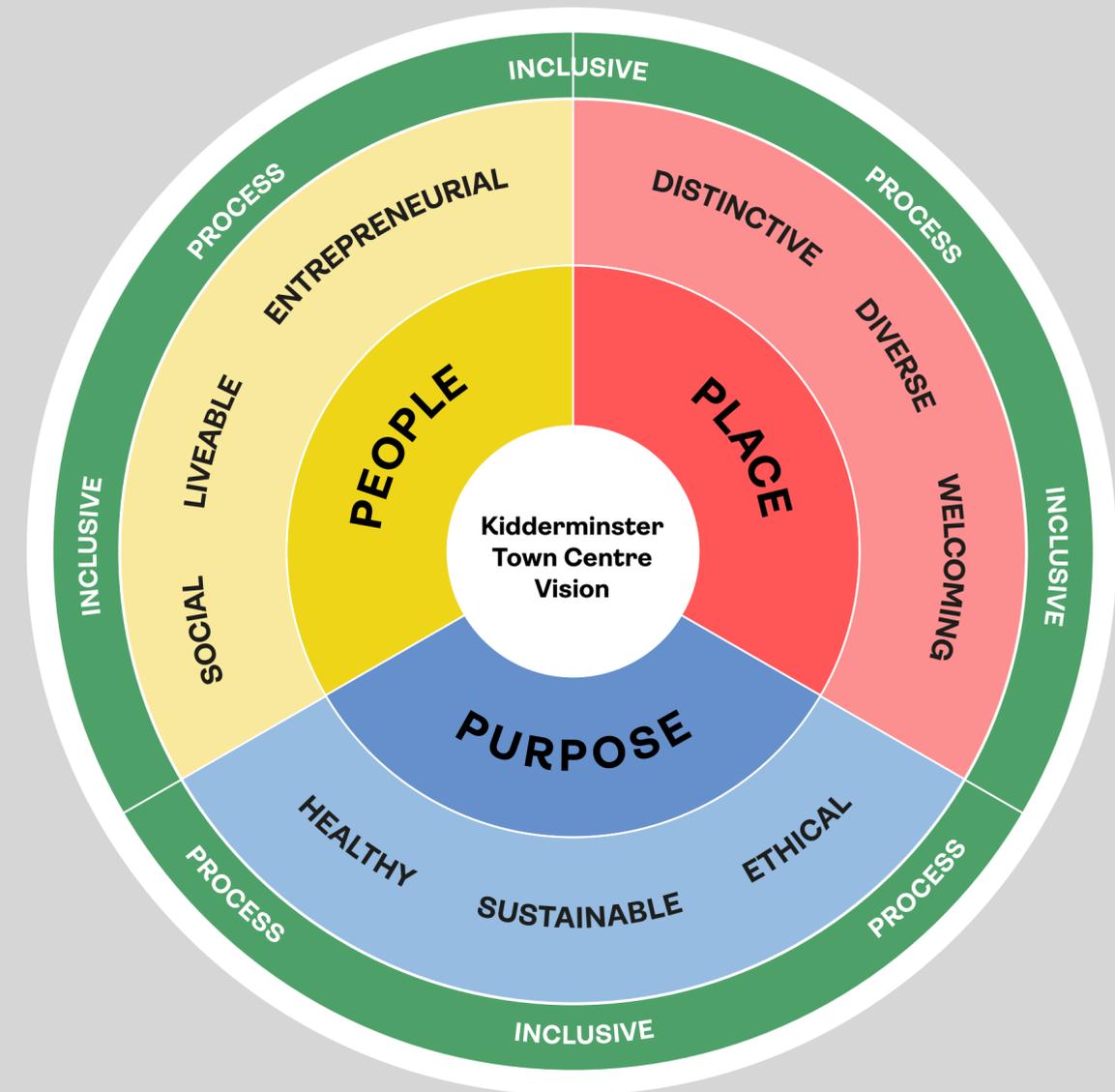
Decked car parking makes efficient use of space, creating opportunities for a larger riverside park, a place to relax and to celebrate the natural and built environment of Kidderminster.



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

6. Projects

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



Projects

The Kidderminster Vision

Kidderminster has secured over £20m from the Future High Streets Fund which will help start to deliver this Vision. Funding is allocated for the regeneration of the Former Magistrates' Court, for the new public space at the Bull Ring, for improvements to Worcester Street and to support strategic property acquisitions.

The Vision will also be used to support Kidderminster's bid to the Levelling Up Fund. Key projects could include the provision of new housing in the town centre, new uses for the Piano Building and connecting the Timber Yard site to Weavers Wharf across the canal.

These programmes will reinforce other proposals to enhance the town centre, including improvements to the Town Hall facilities, expansion of Kidderminster College and measures to improve walking and cycling into the town centre.

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

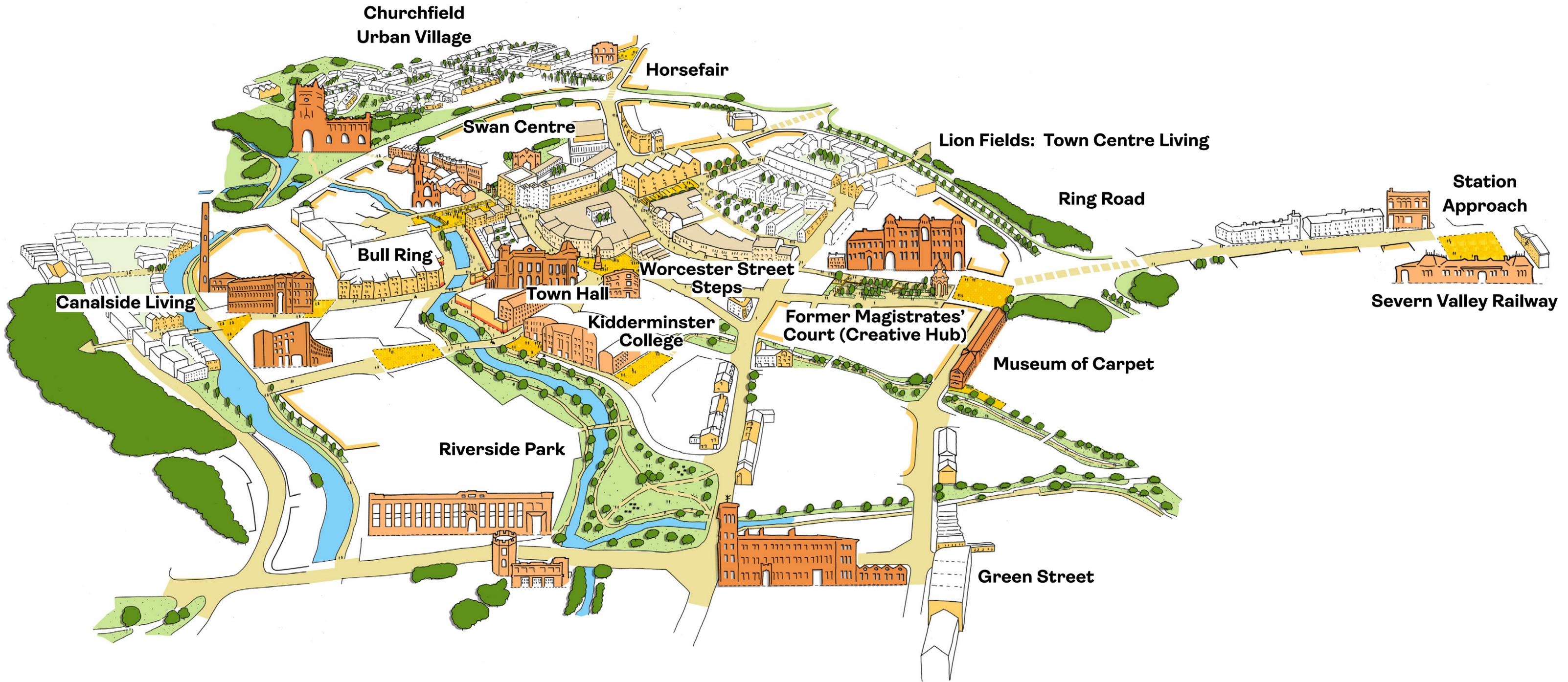
The Kidderminster Vision

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	KEY VISION PRINCIPLES
KIDDERMINSTER TOWN HALL	Enhancement of cultural and performance facilities within one of Kidderminster’s most important civic buildings (see page 21)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Ethical
HERITAGE AND THE PUBLIC REALM	Working with the Museum of Carpet and local artists to promote Kidderminster’s textile heritage through design of the public realm (see page 18)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Entrepreneurial, Healthy, Ethical
CREATIVE BUSINESS HUB	Renovation of the former Former Magistrates’ Court to create a focus for creative businesses in the town centre. (see page 41)	Distinctive, Diverse, Entrepreneurial, Ethical
CANALSIDE LIVING	Redevelopment of the Timber Yard to create a new residential quarter for Kidderminster along the canal (see page 33)	Distinctive, Diverse, Social, Liveable, Sustainable, Healthy, Ethical
CHURCHFIELD URBAN VILLAGE	Completion of the new residential quarter immediately north of the town centre(see page 28)	Distinctive, Diverse, Social, Liveable, Sustainable, Healthy
LION FIELDS	New mixed-use quarter, supporting new leisure and business development on Worcester Street and with potential for innovative new housing in the town centre (see page 32)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Sustainable, Healthy, Ethical
BULL RING	New public space, removing parking to enhance the setting of historic buildings and with possibilities to open up the river (see page 25)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Sustainable

The Kidderminster Vision

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	KEY VISION PRINCIPLES
POP UP AND MEANWHILE	Promoting temporary uses to support new businesses, attract visitors and reuse vacant properties (see page 26)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Entrepreneurial, Sustainable, Ethical
RIVERSIDE PARK	Public space along the river edge to create new pedestrian routes and more green space in the town centre. (see page 54)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Healthy, Sustainable, Ethical
WORCESTER STREET STEPS	A new public space linking Lion Fields to the town centre, and creating a visitor destination to support independent businesses on Worcester Street (see page 36)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Healthy
SHOPPING CENTRES	Repurposing the indoor shopping environment at Rowland Hill Centre and Swan Centre. Curating independent businesses and bringing opportunities for town centre living. (see page 38)	Distinctive, Diverse, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Sustainable, Ethical
THE RING ROAD	Improving arrival for visitors and creating stronger routes for pedestrians and cyclists to ensure The Ringway is not a barrier to visiting the town centre (see page 48)	Distinctive, Welcoming, Liveable, Healthy, Sustainable
STATION APPROACH	A new public square for this important civic area. Encouraging travel by rail and visits to the Severn Valley Railway and Museum, improving arrival and strengthening walking and cycling routes into the town centre (see page 18)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Liveable, Entrepreneurial, Healthy, Sustainable, Ethical
KIDDERMINSTER COLLEGE	A new entrance space and social space to recognise the importance of education and young people in the town centre, and the key civic role of the College (see page 46)	Distinctive, Diverse, Welcoming, Social, Entrepreneurial, Ethical

Projects Implementing the Vision



HemingwayDesign

NEW masterplanning



Wyre Forest
District Council