
RUGBY TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM MASTERPLAN

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Document Control

<u>Rev</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Prepared</u>	<u>Checked</u>
05	19/03/2025	Public Issue	EY	MF

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Brief in brief

This document has been prepared to set out a clear vision for Rugby. Analysing the key opportunities to identify **a shortlist of priority projects** that would help revitalise the wider town centre over the next 10-15 years.

Why does Rugby need a Town Centre Master Plan?

Rugby is one of the fastest growing boroughs in Warwickshire and the UK, with major new housing, retail and employment developments driving growth and investment. We have a rising population, set to reach 130,000 in the next 10 years. Rugby town is the main urban area within the borough and has a large rural hinterland of which approximately half is covered by the designated West Midlands Green Belt.

Rugby Borough Council's new Corporate Strategy sets out ambitious plans to build a better, greener, fairer borough over the next decade.

A key mechanism to helping achieve the Council's strategy is through good design and providing a high-quality public realm within Rugby town centre that enables economic growth.

By commissioning this Town Centre Public Realm Masterplan, Rugby Borough Council seeks to ensure the town centre is better connected to its existing and future communities. It also seeks to introduce greener streets and deliver innovative designs for residential development, supported by and sat within high quality and accessible open spaces and public realm.

The Masterplan also prioritises climate change adaptation and resilience by integrating green and blue infrastructure, sustainable transportation, and energy-efficient technologies. This will ensure the development of a vibrant, sustainable, and climate-resilient community that can thrive in the face of environmental challenges.

The Public Realm Masterplan will promote sustainable transport solutions and clear, structured planning to deliver safe, well-balanced streets with green spaces and parks for play encouraging walking and cycling. A high-quality public realm, with quality places around key junction gateways, parks, spaces, and local civic centres where the community comes together, will be the focus.

This will be underpinned by an integrated approach to green and blue infrastructure through the introduction of more trees and planting, and through clever water management with sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) features.

The Public Realm Masterplan will provide clear priorities for improvements and direction for future developments within Rugby town centre and will be a tool that can be used to engage directly with relevant stakeholders and provide evidence of need when negotiating with developers over contributions.



Rugby Station

Benn Hall

Caldecott Park

Rugby Borough Council

Railway Terrace

North Street

Old Market Place

St Andrew's Church

Church St.

Clock Tower

Clifton Road

Rugby Central Mall

Market Place

Corporation Street (A426)

St Andrew's Gardens

Sheep Street

High Street

Laurence Sheriff Street

Rugby School

Rugby Town Centre and Surroundings (Aerial view - Google Earth, 2023)

Policy Context and Best Practice

Rugby Town Centre faces many challenges, including the climate crisis, economic issues and demographic change to name a few.

The notion of 'place' enables these challenges to be considered with a holistic approach, bringing together national policy and local solutions to deliver outcomes that are greater than the sum of their parts.

The National Planning Policy Framework (updated 30th July 2024) highlights the importance of sustainable development to protect and enhance the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as people's quality of life. Public realm is key to this. Rugby Borough Council's ambitions for the town centre are clearly laid out in many of their plans and policies, including but not limited to:

The Local Plan

Its spatial vision, with a goal of 2031 for a revitalised town centre, and Policy GP1 Securing Sustainable Development, focussing on protecting and enhancing the town's natural environment with the creation of a strategic green infrastructure network.

RBC's Corporate Strategy 2025-2035

Aiming for 'the growth of businesses, places to thrive and individuals to prosper' through good design and high-quality public realm. A focus on climate, economy, health & communities, and organisation.

Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans

The central zone of the Conservation Area is within the projected extent of the medieval settlement of Rugby. The conservation appraisal identifies opportunities for enhancement of the town centre such as removing clutter and pedestrianising of Regent Street.

Rugby's Climate Emergency declaration

Announced by the Council in 2019 the climate change strategy includes a goal to be a net zero Council by 2030 and a net zero borough by 2050.

Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

With continuing development of housing and employment sites, and good levels of active travel already, Rugby remains a key focus for future walking and cycling investment. The LCWIP identifies potential active travel zones and strategic links through programmed and potential routes.

The Rugby Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (2022)

Building on the movement, public realm and open space, land use and development frameworks within this strategy piece to shift towards a more sustainable town centre.

The Public Realm Masterplan builds on these plans, policies and frameworks with a focus on celebrating Rugby's more unique qualities to accelerate delivery of improvements to the town centre to help it thrive and become a more socially and environmentally sustainable place.

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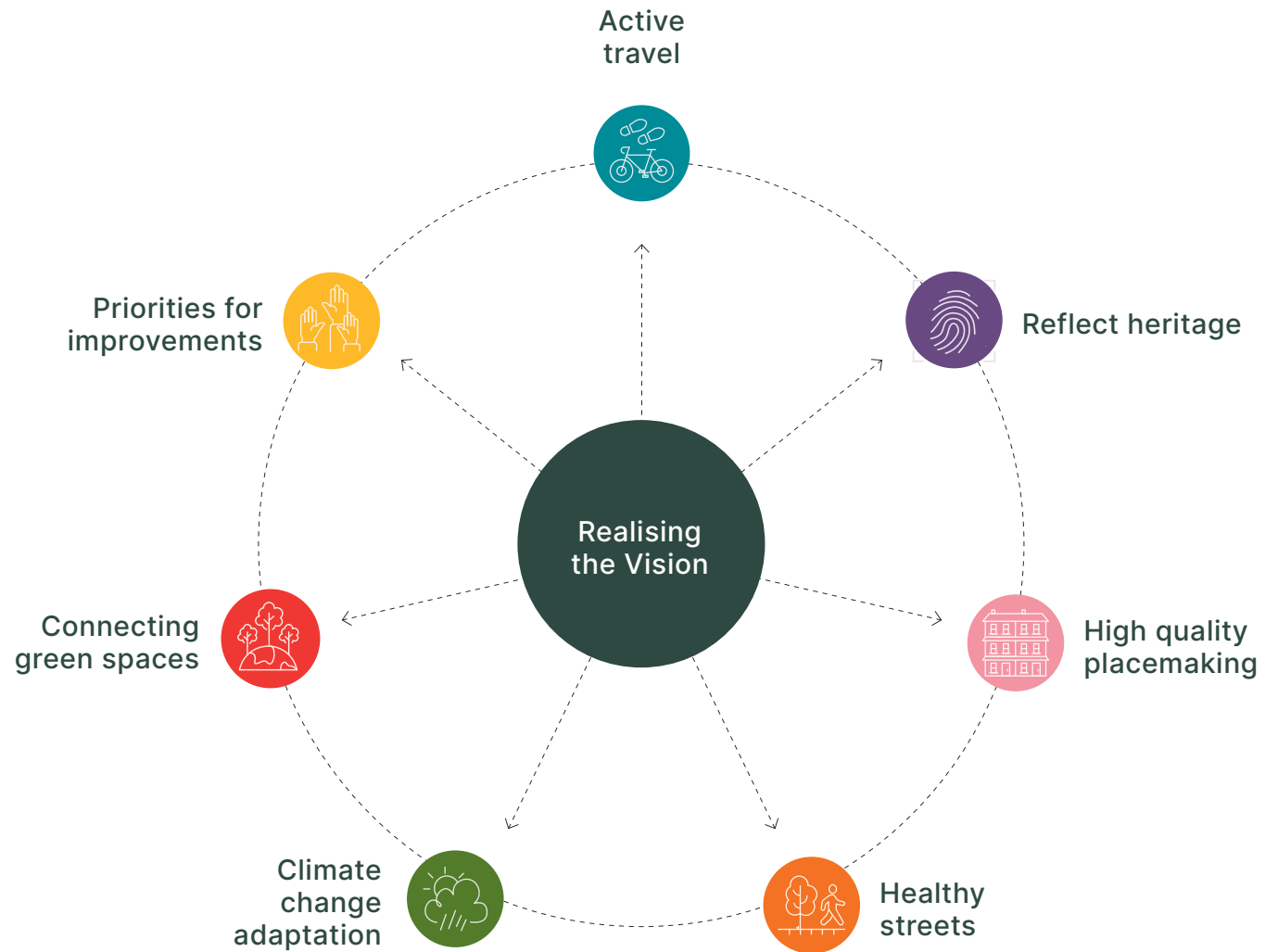
VISION AND
OBJECTIVES

Vision

A transformed town centre destination with **accessible**, high quality public realm will **grow and encourage new experiences** and build on **civic pride**.

Activating spaces will encourage people to **explore and discover, pause, dwell and enjoy** Rugby, promoting **social connections** and **health and well-being**.

Embedding sustainable and regenerative design principles will support a **low carbon economy, mitigating the impacts of climate change**, developing **more resilient communities** and a greener future.



Objectives

The Ambition →

To draw upon the existing charm and unique history of the place to revitalize the heart of Rugby, making it socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

- Create **high quality places to build civic pride**, to attract visitors, workers and residents and to increase dwell time and improve health and wellbeing
- Create a public realm that **reflects the heritage** of Rugby
- Provide opportunities for **sustainable** and active travel' to support public transport access to the town centre as well as improving walking, cycling and wheeling.
- Ensure that all improvements are **adaptable to climate change**
- Integrate water management, biodiversity, air quality priorities, renewable energy creation as part of **healthy streets and spaces**
- **Enhance and connect green spaces** across the town centre
- Provide **clear priorities for improvements** and direction for future developments within Rugby town centre.
- Provide **enhanced** streets and public spaces for events - to include local businesses, cultural, community and voluntary organisations - adding **vitality** to the town centre.



Rugby Food and Drink festival, Regent Street (2019)

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UNDERSTANDING
THE PLACE

Background

Rugby is the second largest market town in Warwickshire, situated on the eastern edge of the county near its border with Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. The town itself has a population of around 77,000 and the wider borough approximately 120,000.

A desirable place to live

For many reasons Rugby today is an attractive place to live. Encouraging people to move to the area, reasons for choosing Rugby include:

- Excellent transport links – road and rail
- A blend of historic architecture and contemporary development
- A range of housing options to suit families, professionals, and retirees
- Lower cost of living compared to larger cities
- High-performing schools, including the prestigious Rugby School
- A mix of independent shops, cafes, and national retailers
- Local markets and events throughout the year
- Surrounding countryside, including Draycote Water (Reservoir and country park) and the nearby Cotswolds
- Cultural attractions including Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) exhibitions and events and grass-roots music

Historic Context of Rugby

History of Rugby

- Historically since early Iron Age - site 400 feet above sea level, overlooking river Avon
- The evolution of Rugby from a small settlement into a strategically important market town is a result of proximity to important roads. Two routes converged; one running east from Barrs Hill, Coventry, the other came southwards from Leicester. This road forked towards Oxford, forming a Y junction at the point of the Clock Tower. This space became the market place and the street pattern remains. The medieval town grew based around this crossing.
- Roman times - two major Roman roads built close to the site of today's Rugby (Fosse Way, Watling Street); High Cross (place where the roads cross) 12 miles north of Rugby
- Tripointium - Roman settlement - just outside Rugby
- In medieval times the small settlement of Rugby was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Rocheberie. Possibly derived from an old Celtic name droche-brig meaning 'wild hilltop' or, the Old English name Hrocaberg meaning 'Hroca's hill fortification'. By this time Rugby had grown into a modest market town, benefiting from its location on key trade routes.
- By the 13th century the name of the town was commonly spelt as Rokeby (or Rookby) before gradually evolving into the modern form by the 18th century.
- 13th century - obtained a market charter and became a small market town
- 1567 - Rugby School was founded by Lawrence Sheriff, a local born grocer to Queen Elisabeth I, left money in his will to establish a school in Rugby for local boys. Gradually, the school became a largely fee-paying school, with most of its pupils coming from outside of Rugby.
- William Webb Ellis, was said to have invented rugby football in 1823.
- Rugby has a world-renowned heritage as the birthplace of the game, a distinction that defines much of the town's identity.
- Lawrence Sheriff school was founded in 1878 to continue Sheriff's intention to provide a free grammar school for the boys of Rugby.
- Until late 18th century, the population stayed at 500-1000.
- The growth was initiated by the construction of Oxford Canal, which stimulated local industry.
- Further significant catalyst for expansion was the railway. The London to Birmingham railway opened in 1838 and Rugby station was built. This facilitated the shift from market town to a railway and industrial centre.
- The arrival of the railways in the 19th century transformed Rugby into a major transport hub, boosting its industrial development and population growth. This expansion included a strong engineering sector and cement works, both of which were pivotal to the town's economy.



Historic plan of Rugby during 15th century

Rugby Timeline



Roman times -

Fosse Way and Watling Street built near town centre

1255 -

Granted Market charter



1605 -

The villages of Ashby St. Ledgers and Dunchurch plays a part in the Gunpowder Plot



18th century -

North Oxford Canal opens up south of town

1823 -

Game of Rugby invented by William Webb Ellis



1904 -

Caldecott Park opens

1937 -

First successful test of the Jet engine by Sir Frank Whittle



1977 -

Jubilee Gardens opens

1086 -

Mentioned in the Domesday Book



16th Century -

Rugby Almshouses founded by Lawrence Sheriff



19th century -

Arrival of railway

1842 -

William and Gilbert ball makers move to High Street



1915 -

Rupert Brook's '1914 and other Poems' published

1961 -

Benn Hall opened by Queen Elizabeth II



2023 -

Bicentenary of game of Rugby



Key findings

Intricate historic street network with North Street / Church Street as the central street bringing north and south of town together

Gateways at the edges of town centre **defined by pockets of public space** of varying sizes

Historically **fine urban grain** in the western part of town centre between North Street and Corporation Street **replaced by large-footprint shopping centre**

The Victorian Clock Tower, located centrally, constitutes **the heart of the town**. A recognised unique historic feature and **focal point** of the Rugby community.

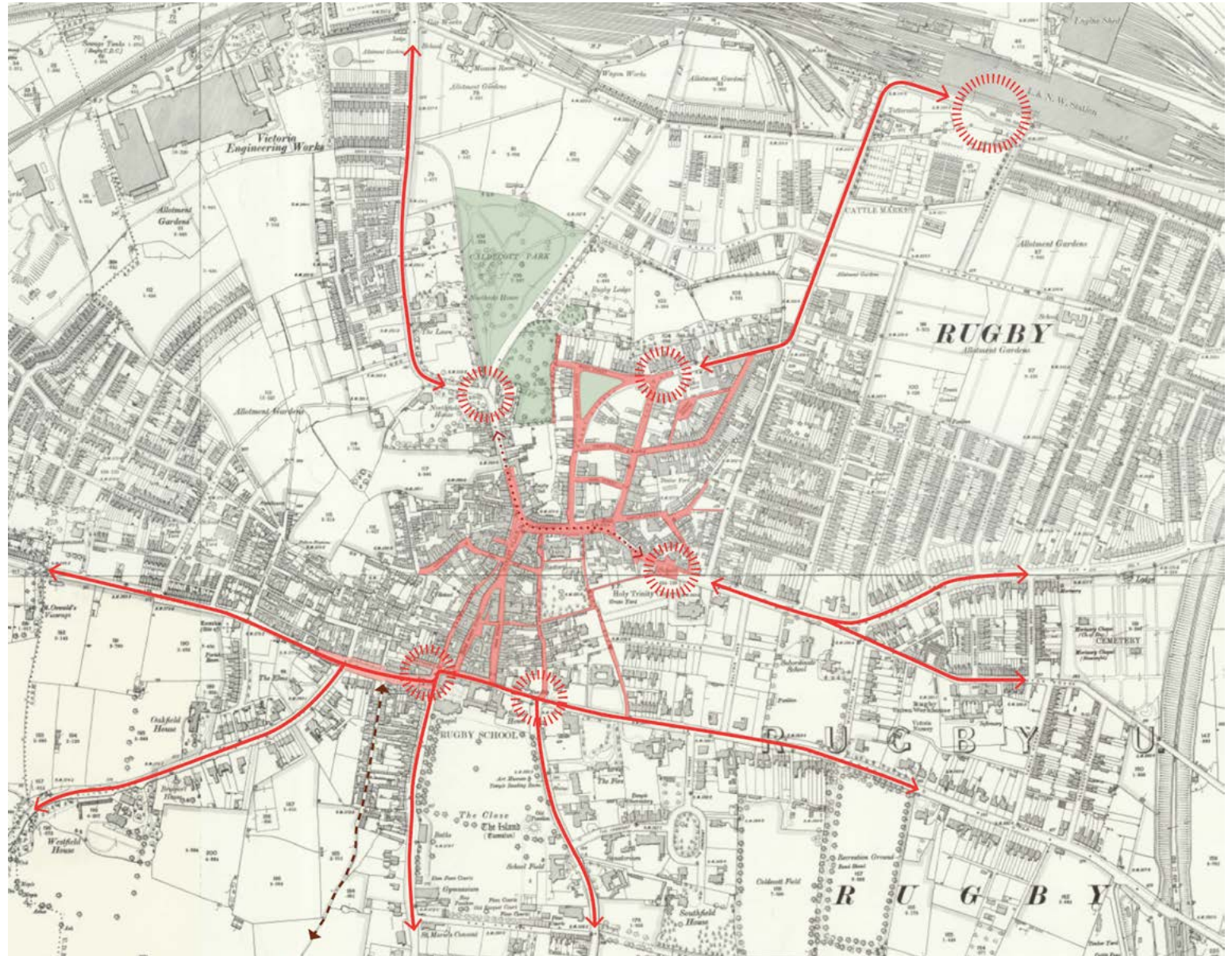


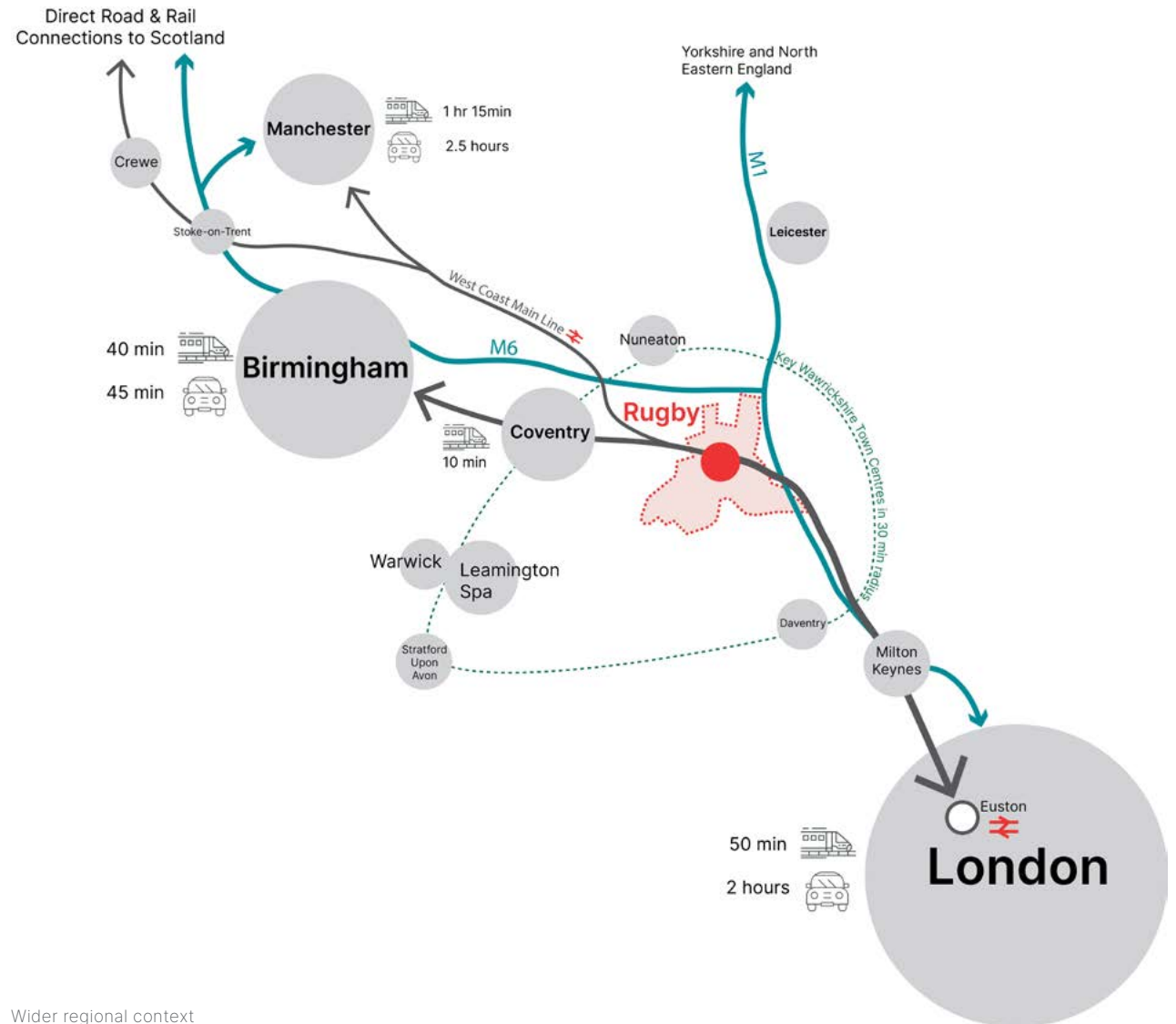
Figure 3 - Historic plan of Rugby town centre (1903)

Geographic Location

Rugby is a hub of transport connectivity. Rugby railway station is a key stop on the West Coast Main Line, providing quick links to London, Birmingham, Manchester and the north of England.

Rugby also sits at the intersection of major motorways, including the M1, M6, and A45, making it an ideal location for logistics and commuting.

Local road and rail connections include Coventry, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick, and Stratford-on-Avon.



Wider regional context

Social Context

The town centre has the potential to better serve its surrounding communities' needs with enhanced access to shops, services and amenities.

Increased footfall and better public spaces will support a more diverse range of businesses and amenities and encourage citizens of Rugby, as well as visitors, to linger longer in the town centre.

A Diverse Community

Rugby town centre serves a growing and diverse population. It is home to a range of ethnic and cultural groups, which enrich its social landscape through events, community activities and cuisine.

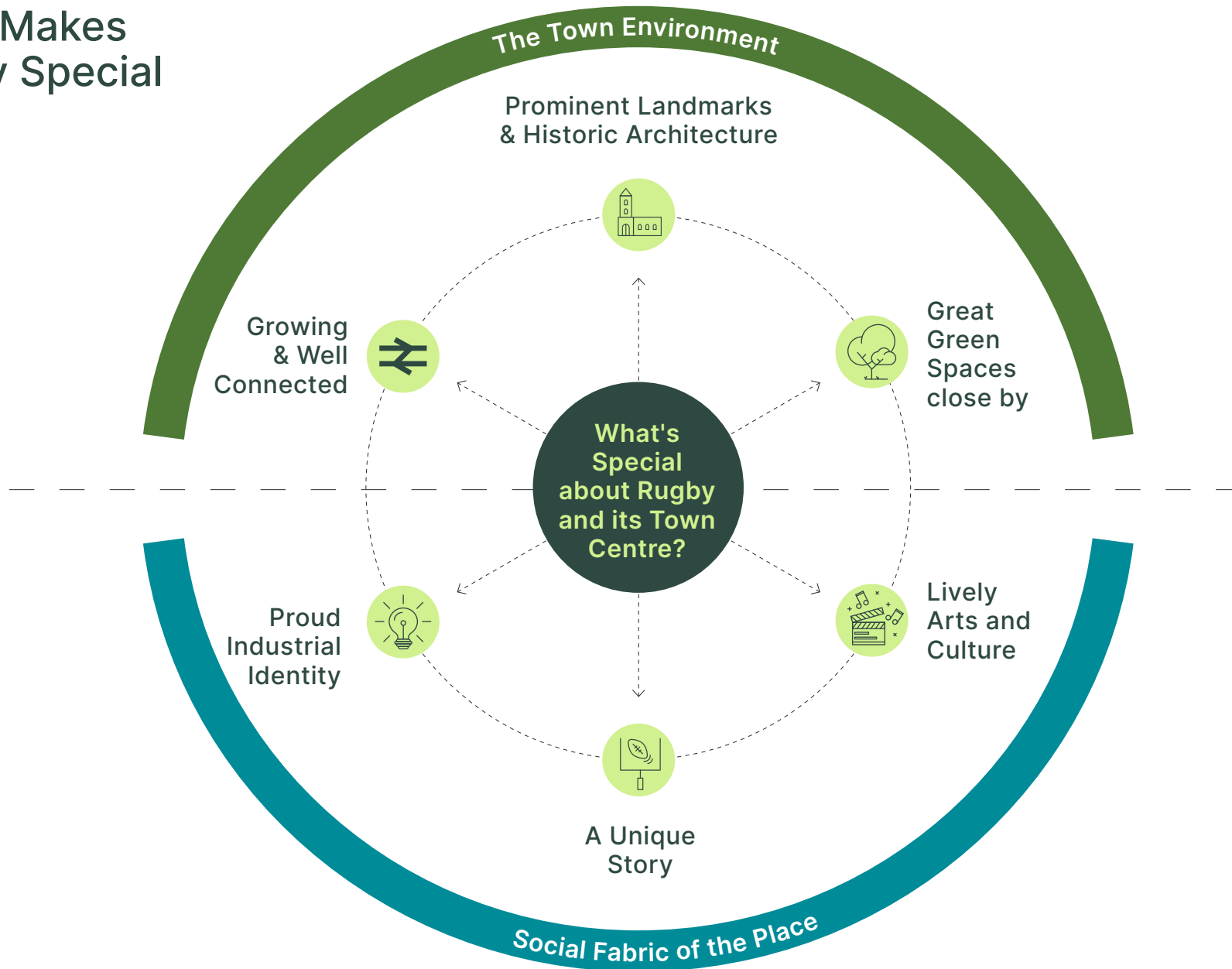
Social challenges include adapting to the diverse needs of the growing population, maintaining affordability, and ensuring equitable access to public amenities. This extends to providing public streets and spaces that cater for and are accessible to all.

The town centre plays a central role in local social life, offering spaces for leisure, dining, and cultural activities. Maintaining a vibrant and sustainable town centre relies on people visiting it on a regular basis to undertake their shopping, business and leisure activities. As well as this, community initiatives, such as local markets, cultural festivals, and sports events, draw people into the town centre.

Independent shops, cafés, and restaurants contribute to a sense of character and community, while venues like the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) provide cultural enrichment.

The rise of online shopping and out-of-town retail centres has challenged the town centre's traditional role as a social hub. To compete with these pressures the town centre needs to provide a high-quality experience that sets it apart. A place that is inviting and engaging and makes people want to dwell longer. This includes social spaces that are green and welcoming to all.

What Makes Rugby Special





Rugby Station main entrance

Growing & Well Connected

Rugby's strategic location gives it easy access to major cities across the UK providing a wide range of work and leisure opportunities to residents and making it an easy place to attract visitors to from beyond the town itself.



St Andrew's Church Spire

Prominent Landmarks & Historic Townscape

The town centre has clear landmarks that provide a strong visual identity and make it an easy place to get around. Rugby's attractive historic buildings are arranged in an intricate urban grain with charming routes and spaces that encourage you to explore.



Caldecott Park Gates, Rugby Town Centre, Robin Stott

Great Green Spaces

There are high quality parks and green spaces on the inner edges of the town centre, that provide oasis of calm and a chance to connect with nature within the offer of a characterful urban location.



British Thomson Houston logo

Proud Industrial History

Rugby had a international impact through technology and industry as well as sport. The turbojet engine was invented in the town as well as holography. Manufacturing and industrial uses still play a key role in the local economy.



William Webb Ellis statue

A Unique Story

Rugby is a characterful and historic market town with many famous stories to tell but none more so well-known than that of William Webb Ellis, the founder of the sport. This gives the town a unique statues and global prominence that many places could only dream of having.



Crowds at Rugby's Bikefest

Arts and Culture

Not only does Rugby celebrate its story and identity through plentiful public art but it has a lively cultural scene anchored in places such as the Rugby Museum and The Alex Art Centre. Independent businesses are also thriving putting on events like the spring food festival.

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CONTEXTUAL APPRAISAL

Strategic Context

Rugby's Town Centre serves a wide and growing catchment of suburban neighbourhoods and rural villages, it is crucial to understand the wider structure of the town and how it connects with the centre. The following plan illustrates the structure of the wider town and informs the key strategic observations.

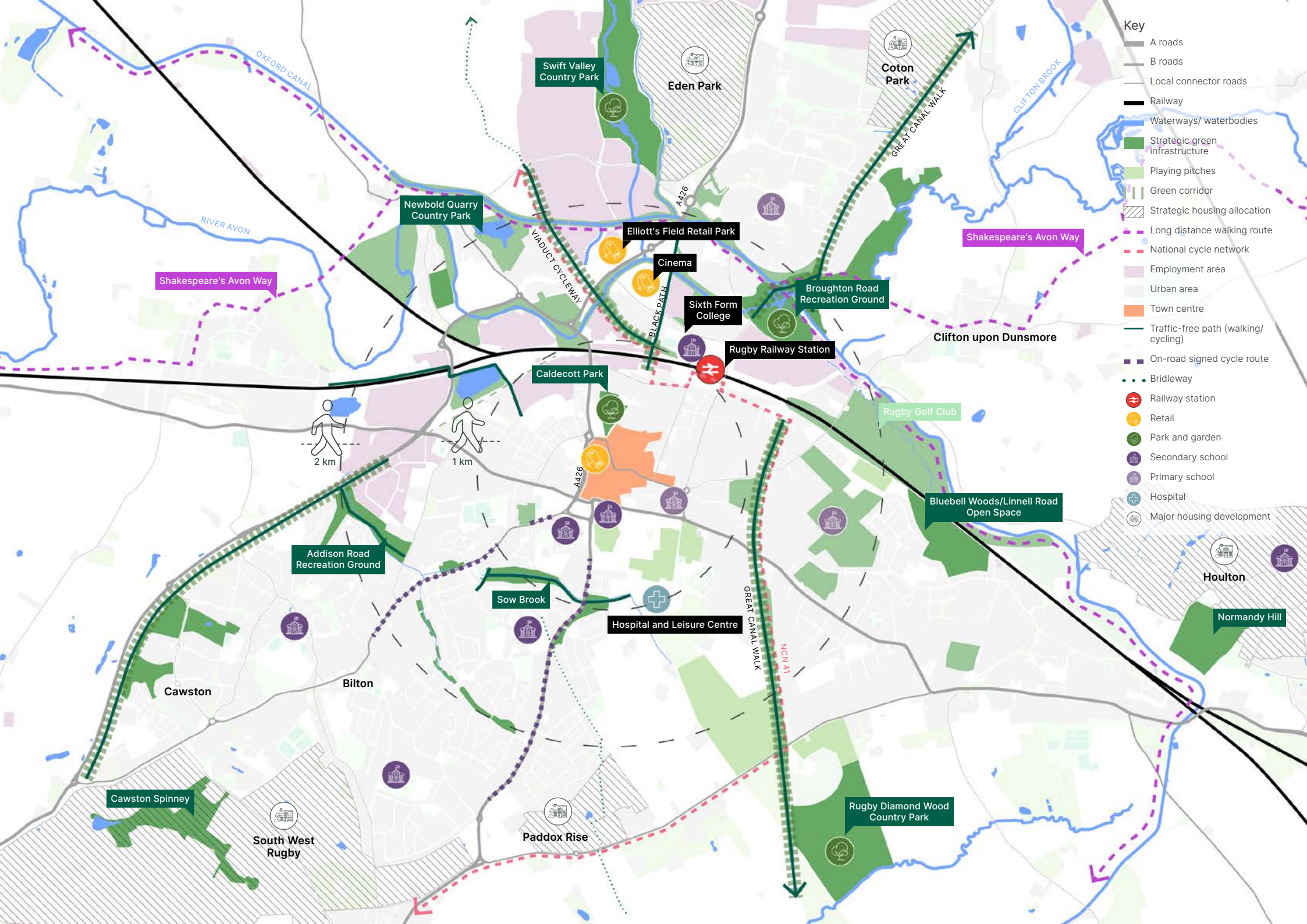
Key Strategic Observations for the Town Centre:

1. The town and its centre have a **strong strategic location** due to the station on the WCML and the proximity to M1 and M6.
2. **Blue Infrastructure/waterways and long distance paths converge north of the town** beyond the train station.
3. Several parks, sports facilities and recreation grounds are located within 2km from the town centre.
4. Competing offer - **strong competition with the large retail park** (Elliott's Field) to the north.
5. **Green links**, from the town centre to wider green corridors and spaces **are currently weak**.
6. **Large amounts of employment** areas exist to the north, west and far east of the town.
7. Growing catchment population with **substantial residential developments** on the edges of the town, including Houlton, South West Rugby, Eden Park and Coton Park.
8. Major **barriers exist between town centre and catchment**, including the railway line to the north and the road network to the west and south.
9. **Clear routes exist** from neighbourhoods to town centre but are currently vehicle dominated, drawing large amounts of traffic into and around the town centre.
10. Town Centre **gateways need improving** to provide visual cues of arrival and enhance the attractiveness of the place as a destination.
11. **Key facilities 1km+ from the Town Centre have poor walking and cycling connections**. For example, Rugby College, Hospital and Leisure Centre.

Main Challenges:

- There is a disconnect with Rugby's residential neighbourhoods in terms of walking and cycling. Infrastructure is car-focused and the arterial roads act as barriers.
- There is a lack of a sense of arrival in the town centre.
- The retail park to north and other centres in Warwickshire draw businesses and people away.
- The town centre doesn't link up with wider green and blue networks.





- Key**
- A roads
 - B roads
 - Local connector roads
 - Railway
 - Waterways/ waterbodies
 - Strategic green infrastructure
 - Playing pitches
 - Green corridor
 - Strategic housing allocation
 - Long distance walking route
 - National cycle network
 - Employment area
 - Urban area
 - Town centre
 - Traffic-free path (walking/cycling)
 - On-road signed cycle route
 - Bridleway
 - Railway station
 - Retail
 - Park and garden
 - Secondary school
 - Primary school
 - Hospital
 - Major housing development

Shakespeare's Avon Way

Swift Valley Country Park

Eden Park

Coton Park

Newbold Quarry Country Park

Elliott's Field Retail Park

Cinema

Sixth Form College

Broughton Road Recreation Ground

Shakespeare's Avon Way

Clifton upon Dunsmore

Rugby Railway Station

Caldecott Park

Rugby Golf Club

Addison Road Recreation Ground

Bluebell Woods/Linnell Road Open Space

Sow Brook

Hospital and Leisure Centre

Houlton

Normandy Hill

Cawston

Bilton

Cawston Spinney

South West Rugby

Paddock Rise

Rugby Diamond Wood Country Park



2 km

1 km

A426

A426

NON A1

OXFORD CANAL

RIVER AVON

GREAT CANAL WALK

GREAT CANAL WALK

VIADUCT CYCLEWAY

BLACK PATH

GREAT CANAL WALK

CLIFTON BROOK

South West Rugby

Paddock Rise

Rugby Diamond Wood Country Park

Houlton

Normandy Hill



2 km

1 km

A426

A426

NON A1

OXFORD CANAL

RIVER AVON

GREAT CANAL WALK

GREAT CANAL WALK

VIADUCT CYCLEWAY

BLACK PATH

GREAT CANAL WALK

CLIFTON BROOK

South West Rugby

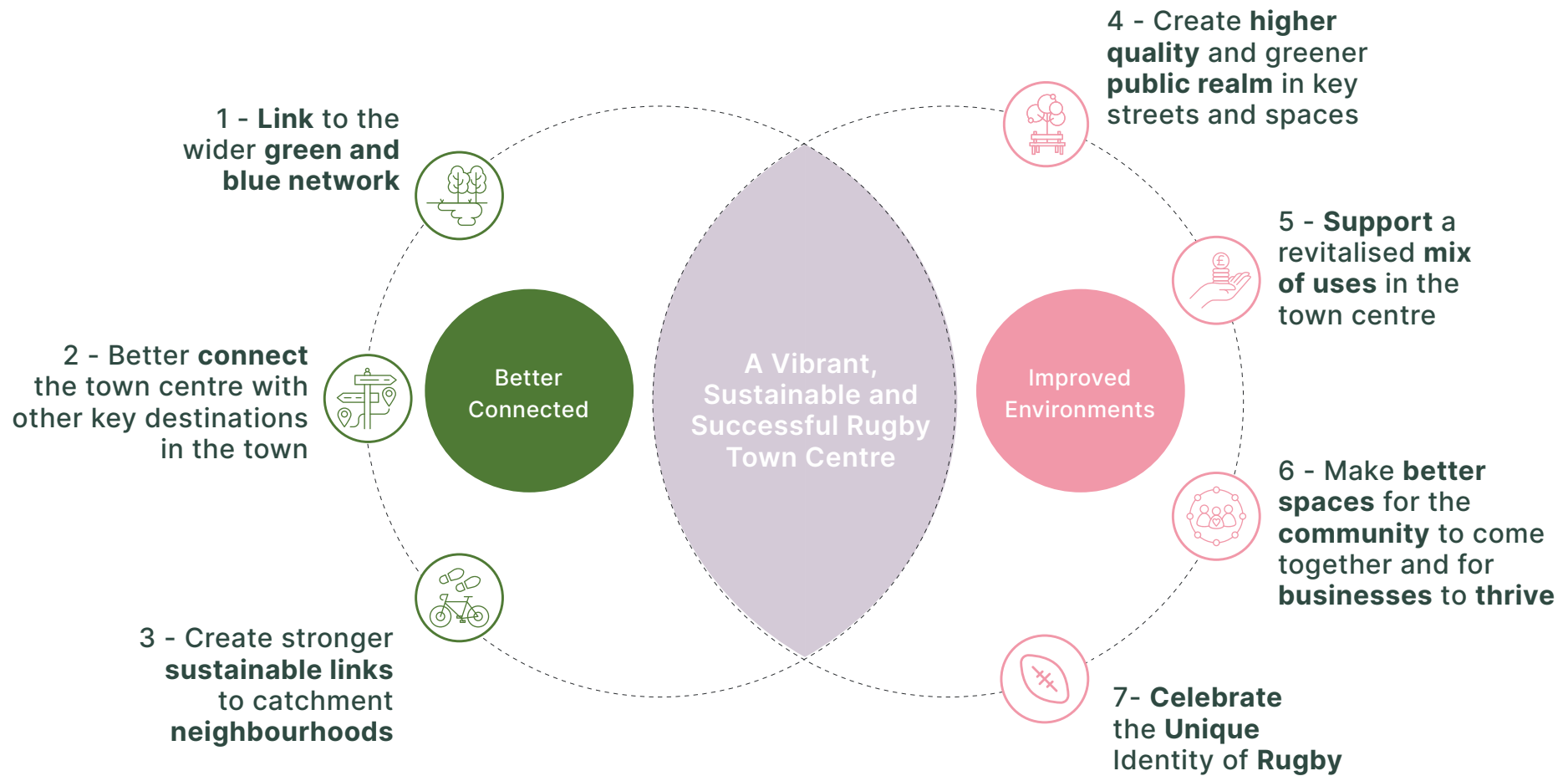
Paddock Rise

Rugby Diamond Wood Country Park

Houlton

Normandy Hill

Strategic Opportunities for the Town Centre



Realising the Opportunities

The opportunities for Rugby town centre are drawn jointly from the project brief objectives and the key takeaways of our analysis of the town centre. Focussing on the two key themes of **a better connected** and **improved environment** will deliver a heart to the town that is cherished by all.

Opportunities



Outcomes:

Connecting to the green routes, parks and waterways around Rugby will help draw people into town and connect communities. It will increase recreational opportunities and make it a more desirable place to live and visit, given the enhanced access to natural assets from the town centre.



Better connecting key destinations and amenities outside the town centre, such as the Railway Station, Sixth form College, Hospital and Leisure Centre, will make it easier for people to access these by foot, micro-mobility and bicycle.



Making it easier to travel into town by walking, micro-mobility, cycling or public transport will improve local peoples lives and the attractiveness of the town centre. Improving road crossings and reducing the dominance of cars on key routes will better connect the town centre to its communities.



Re-imagining the town centre's public realm will make it function more as a unified place and allow people to more easily enjoy the different amenities and experiences it offers such as shopping, culture and leisure activities, and local events.



An improved environment will encourage a wider range of people into the town centre, both during the day and in the evenings. In turn, a greater mix of uses will become more viable to deliver and help improve the strength of the town centre.



More spaces in which people can gather, socialise, hold events and linger longer will strengthen it as the heart of the Rugby community.



The town's history attracts visitors from far and wide, setting it apart as a destination with a unique story and place-identity. This can be drawn on further within the town centre to help it stand out from the retail park to the north or other nearby competing town/city centres.

Existing Uses

Rugby town centre can be broadly divided into a number of character zones.

The Clock Tower, is the geographic centre of town. The location of the market, it acts as a navigational node. An opportunity exists to improve the Clock Tower setting, allowing it more space, provide better seating and lighting, and improving the connection between Market Place and Regent Street.

Sheep Street and High Street are the traditional shopping streets of Rugby with the typical UK chain stores / brands. A number of shop fronts lie vacant but with some independents moving in.

The Regent Street area is home to a lot of the independent shops of Rugby as well as cafés and the Rugby Theatre on Henry Street.

The Old Market area of town includes a number of restaurants and pubs - more of the evening economy of the town.

The Asda superstore and Rugby Central include car parks for a lot of people visiting the town centre. Better connections with the rest of the town could encourage people to venture further.

The Rugby Art Gallery Library and Museum is a cultural focus of the town next door to Asda.



Neighbourhood Connections








The local area features a diverse mix of neighbourhoods of various degrees of prosperity.

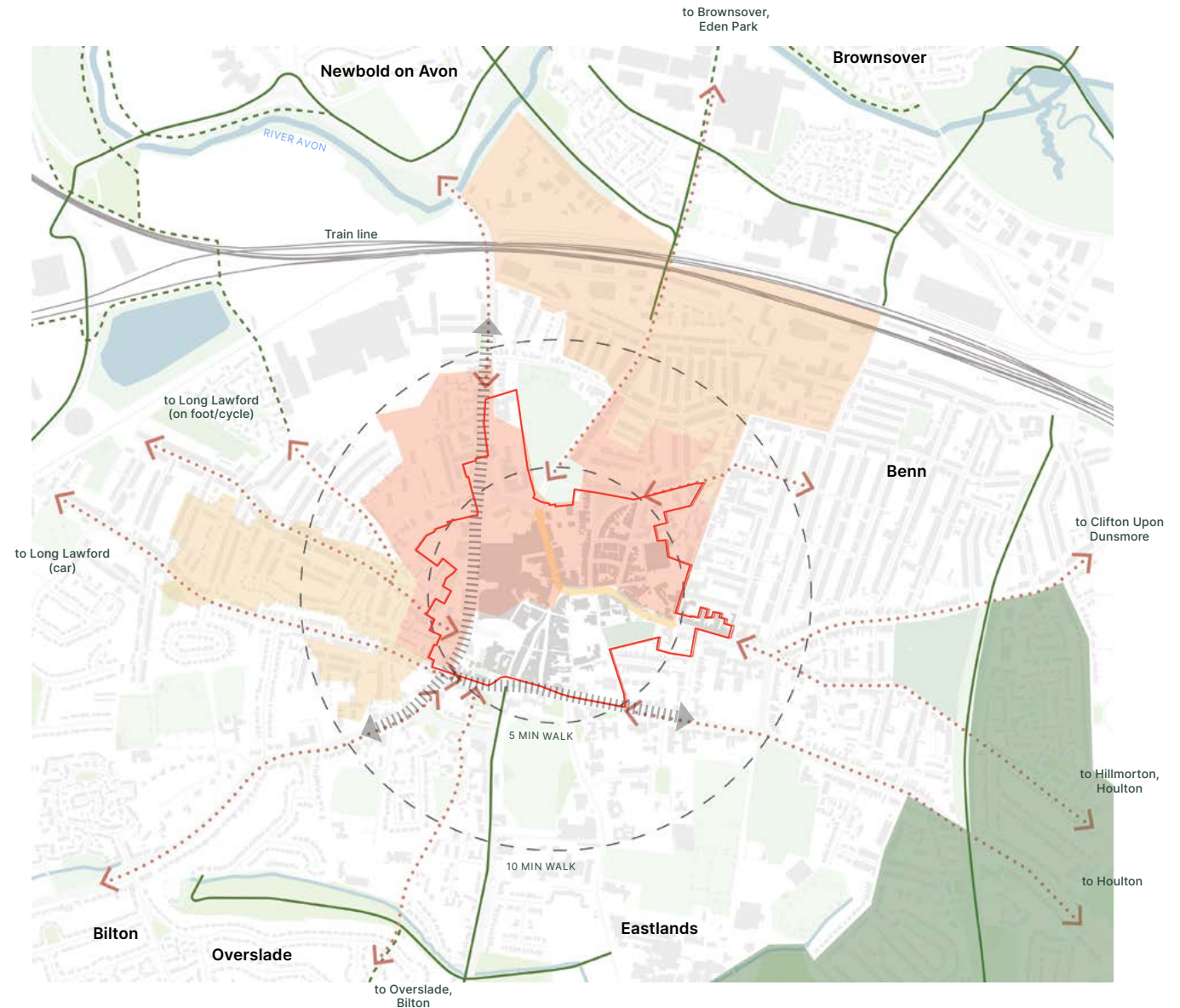
Establishing clear and accessible connections to all neighbourhoods will help attract a more diverse population to the town centre.

The A426 and A428 roads sever the town centre from its western and southern neighbourhoods due to heavy traffic and poor-quality crossing points. The west is severed from the town centre by the A426. Access to the north, an industrial area and rows of terraced housing, is limited by the railway line. The town centre itself is cut in two by the B5414, a busy traffic environment and zone of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

There is a great opportunity to address the busy roads by improving access / crossing points, removing barriers, slowing vehicle speeds and reallocating road space.

Key

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Town Centre boundary |  Key linkages between neighbourhoods and town centre |
|  Most deprived neighbourhood |  Traffic-free path (walking/cycling) |
|  Moderately deprived neighbourhood |  Footpath (no cycle) |
|  Affluent area |  Severance by busy road |



Destinations

Many major destinations and amenities are located within 10 minutes walking distance from the town centre and along some of the key roads and paths.

Improving the connection with the town's key destinations by creating safe and accessible public realm, with an emphasis on walk-ability strengthens the existing offer, while also serving the wider community and neighbourhoods.

Vacant buildings within the town centre present an opportunity to increase community facilities, charities, arts organisations and/or provide low rent spaces for start-ups.

Key

Town Centre boundary	School
Railway station	Church/ Place of worship
Green Space	Community centre
Allotments	Council office
Sports	Hospital
Cemetery	Industry
Retail	Linkage to town centre
Play area	Green corridor
Theatre	Library



Movement

The development of the town centre public realm aims to prioritise **active travel** options, as there is currently a lack of good quality, accessible, traffic-free paths connecting to the central area.

The town centre public realm improvements should focus on linking with planned wider cycle and pedestrian networks, whilst providing more cycle parking facilities within the town centre, making cycling for short journeys an attractive option.

New strategies aim to implement streets that are suitable for all users, where pedestrians, cyclists and traffic can comfortably share town centre streets effectively. Improved links with the train station including better wayfinding signage and where possible, wider footpaths with more planting would help people to navigate to the centre of town from this arrival gateway.

Buses serve the heart of the town centre with stops along Church Street and North Street. It is important that these routes continue to serve the town centre, and improvements to bus stops are provided as part of the public realm improvements.



Private Vehicles

Private cars and congestion negatively impact the town centre, with several roads, including Corporation Street (A426), acting as barriers to pedestrian and cycle access.

On the north-east side of the town centre, the 20 mph zone extends to the railway line. Combined with the town centre area, many of the streets are low-speed environments suitable for cycling in the carriageway.

Parking

RBC is currently undertaking a review of the town's car parking provision. There are plenty of off-street car parks, including the Asda, Rugby Central and John Barford car parking buildings.

Many of the at-grade car parks present great opportunities for either turning into public green spaces and/or building developments.



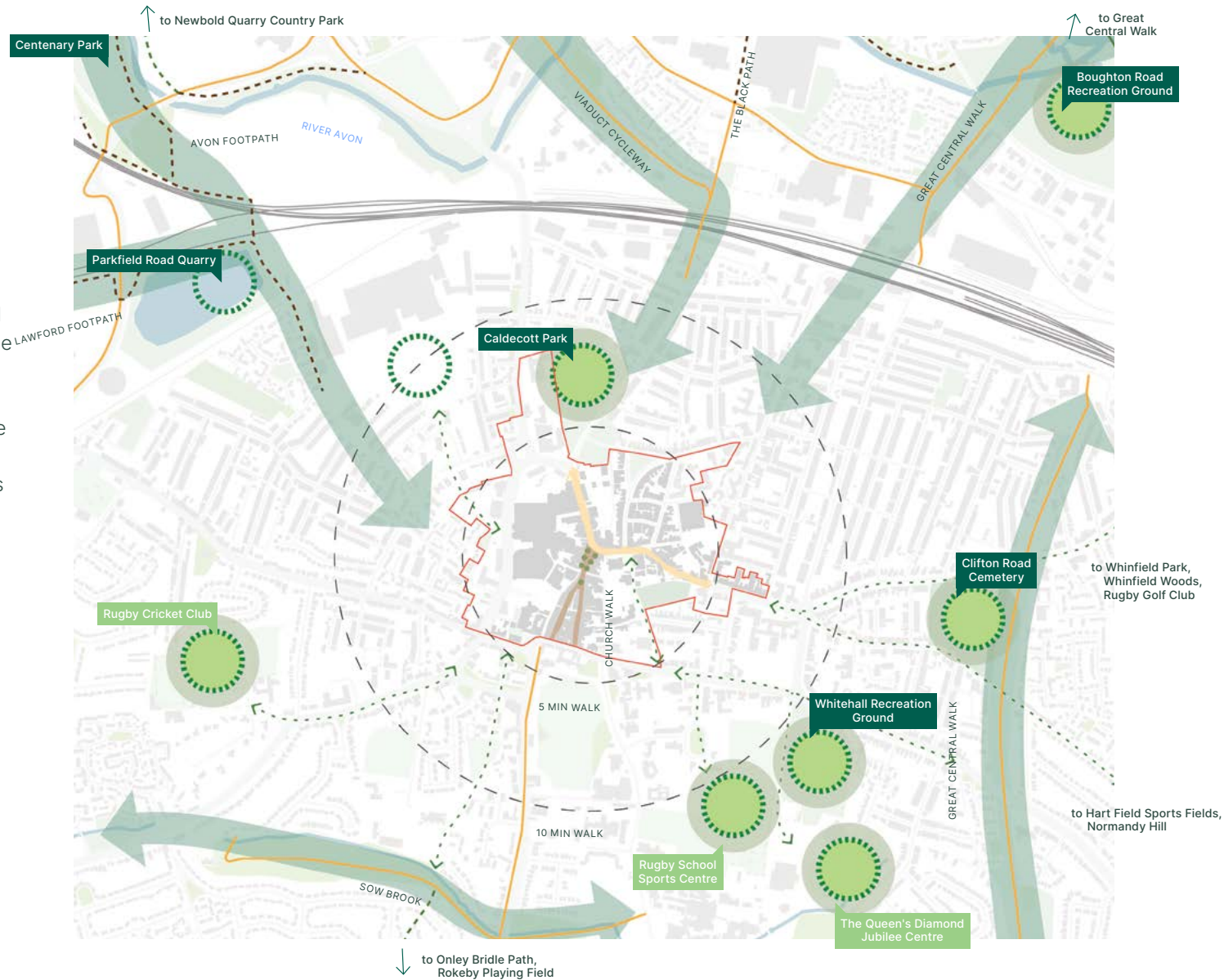
Green/Blue Infrastructure

Improved connections to the town centre will serve the local community, linking people to the wider green and blue infrastructure.

A network of interlinked green corridors walking and cycling routes exist in Rugby. These connect to some of the local long-distance routes (Avon Way, NCN 53,41). However, these linkages fail to connect to the centre of town. There is a great opportunity here to draw people into town via active travel (walking and cycling) by linking up with these wider networks and better connect the town to the green and blue infrastructure that surrounds it.

There are also several green spaces within 10-15 minutes walk from the town centre - Parkfield Road Quarry and the green space to the south of GE Power site that would benefit from better connections and engagement.

- Key**
- Town Centre boundary
 - Green space
 - Sports pitches and playing fields
 - Pedestrianised high street with trees
 - Strategic green space
 - Potential new public green space
 - Potential link to new green space
 - Traffic-free path (walking/cycling)
 - Footpath (no cycle)
 - National Cycle Network route (53, 41)
 - Green corridor



Town Centre Green Spaces

Caldecott Park is a Green Flag Award winning park, and the main green space of the town. Smaller green areas, such as Regent Place and St Andrews Gardens exist but significant improvements could be made to the amount of green infrastructure within the town centre.

The town centre streets are somewhat lacking significant existing trees and therefore the public realm masterplan provides a great opportunity to improve the amount of green spaces and streets within the town.



Heritage assets

Rugby has some great historic buildings within the town centre, many of which are listed, just some of which are identified in this report.

By improving the streets and spaces within the town centre, the setting of these buildings is enhanced.



Heritage assets



1 Rugby School, founded 1567



2 The Victorian Clock Tower, 1907



3 Whitelaw House, 1836



4 St Andrew's Church, 1828



5 Rugby Baptist Church, 1905



6 New Big School, 1885

Local Vernacular

From its medieval roots as a market town, Rugby underwent transformation during the Industrial Revolution, eventually evolving into the modern-day settlement it is today.

During the transition from a market town, many of the town's historic buildings were designed by renowned 19th century, Gothic revival architect, William Butterfield. He worked on various buildings including Rugby School, elements of St Andrews Church and was best known for using numerous colours in brick and masonry. The polychrome brickwork uses two or three brick colours which are generally red with buff accents.



Medieval Building, Chapel Street.

The Clock Tower was built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in the late 19th Century. Designed by Goodacres of Leicester and built by Parnalls of Rugby, it is constructed of Derby Dale stone, partially filled in with Northamptonshire iron stone on a base of grey granite.



Rugby Clock Tower on High Street



St Andrews Church on North Street



New Big School Building on Lawrence Sheriff Street

Character

Rugby town centre is characterised by a mix of Victorian and Georgian architecture, particularly along Regent Street and High Street, along with more modern buildings such as the Art Deco Napier Building on North Street.

Streets such as High Street and Market Place are partially pedestrianised and are connected to smaller streets and passageways / ginnels. North Street, through to Church Street and Clifton Road are wider roads that sever the centre of town. Around the clock tower much of the road space is given to vehicle carriageway, including bus stops and taxi stands.

Rugby Central is a mid-range shopping centre which has connections to North Street, Market Place and the lane next to Asda supermarket.

Generally, paving within the town centre is a mix of medium to low quality materials, including brick, concrete flag and concrete block paving. Very few areas of the town centre are paved with natural stone.

The town centre has limited tree canopy cover apart from some trees in Market Place and green spaces are limited to Caldecott Park, Regent Place and St Andrews Gardens.



Cycling infrastructure in the town centre is limited in terms of dedicated road space and there is a general car dominance, especially on roads such as Corporation Street and North Street.

Highway barriers at crossing points reinforce this emphasis on the vehicle, making these challenging places to cross.

Street furniture is limited and variable in quality and there is certain amount of clutter that could be removed to improve the environment and access for pedestrians and cyclists.



Challenges and Opportunities

Rugby town centre faces a mix of challenges and opportunities as it adapts to changing social, economic and environmental conditions.

Challenges

Despite Rugby being one of the fastest growing boroughs in Warwickshire and the UK, the town centre faces the following challenges:

- **Retail Decline:** Like many town centres, Rugby has experienced a downturn in traditional retail, with high street stores closing due to competition from online shopping and out-of-town retail parks.
- **Empty Units:** Vacant properties contributing to a less vibrant atmosphere, reducing the appeal of the town centre.
- **Traffic:** Congestion and limited transport choice inhibiting access to the town centre
- **Public Perception:** Maintaining the appeal of the town centre against modern developments elsewhere is critical to attracting both residents and visitors.



Opportunities

- **Regeneration of Public Space and Infrastructure:** Acting as a catalyst, by improving the streets and public spaces of Rugby, people and businesses will be attracted back to the town centre.
- **Increasing Green and Blue Infrastructure:** Developing green spaces, increasing tree canopy coverage in the town centre
- **Promoting Transport Choice:** making it easier and more desirable to walk and cycle into the centre, such as cycle lanes, wider footpaths and better crossings, can enhance liveability.
- **Private Development:** Recent and planned investments in commercial, housing, and mixed-use development offer opportunities to contribute to the revitalisation of the town centre.
- **Cultural and Heritage Tourism:** Rugby's status as the birthplace of the game provides a unique selling point, which can be leveraged through events and attractions.
- **Community Initiatives:** Engaging local businesses and residents in planning and decision-making can strengthen the town's sense of identity and purpose.

The investment in public realm improvements have proven to be the catalyst for revival of our high streets, as shown with Altrincham, Greater Manchester for example. Improving the streets and spaces within Rugby will make it an easier and more attractive place to visit, increasing the time people want to spend in the middle of the town and in turn attracting retail and commercial businesses back into the centre.

5

PUBLIC REALM
MASTERPLAN

Creating the Framework A Successful Town Centre

In order to improve Rugby town centre, there is an array of different interventions at a variety of scales to propose.

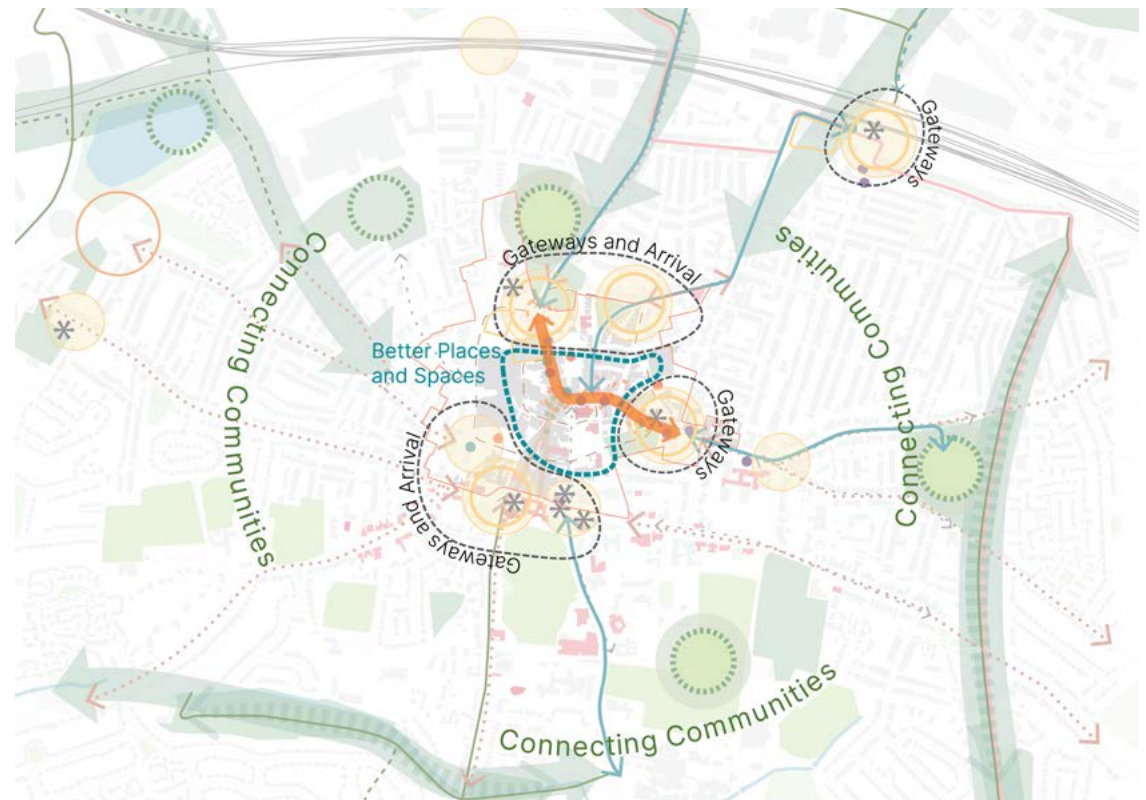
Being the centre surrounded by numerous residential neighbourhoods and satellites, it is important to facilitate a network of connections between these elements, with and throughout the centre itself. This type of intervention aims to reinforce the core of Rugby and the community feeling of its residents. Sustainable types of connections are the first in line to be established, throughout the use of cycle paths and wider and more welcoming walkways and crossings.

Reinforcing connectivity, also means improving the quality of their main nodes, therefore, the main gateways of the town. It is important to underline the entrances to the town centre, in which a stronger and more unified character should be immediately perceived by the residents and visitors. Giving an immediate view of what the town centre looks like when entering it, should attract more visitors and residents to meet and spend their time in it.

Finally, once within the town centre, the quality of the spaces should be the highest possible level. Throughout the renovation a strategy of materials, furniture and green spaces; the aim is to create new important services to the town and its residents, and at the same time, reinforce the sense of belonging to this place.

Key Themes:

1. Connecting Communities
2. Gateways and Arrival
3. Better Places and Spaces



Key Moves

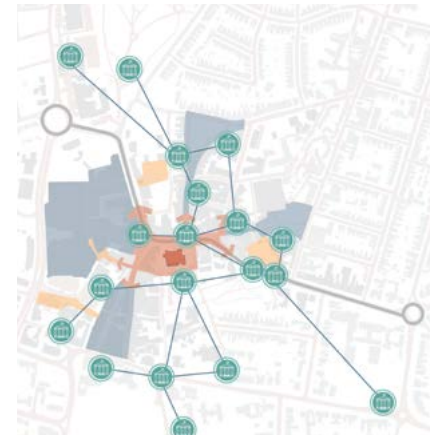
There are several key moves to be taken into account for the public realm masterplan. The starting point is to establish a town heart that can be interconnected with multiple parts of the town, becoming the beating heart for the local community.

The amount of heritage buildings and spaces around the town can not be ignored, but on the contrary, has to be underlined and used as an activating network for the whole town.

Making sure that sustainable connections are accessible to everyone is an important area of the masterplan, generating new valuable connections and improving the overall spatial quality. This is possible by creating links between existing relevant spaces and new ones that can be created or implemented by the activation of this network.



A connected and healthy centre
Destinations and spaces



Joining the dots
The heritage network



Moving around the town



Inner and outer
The hidden loops



Finding the green links

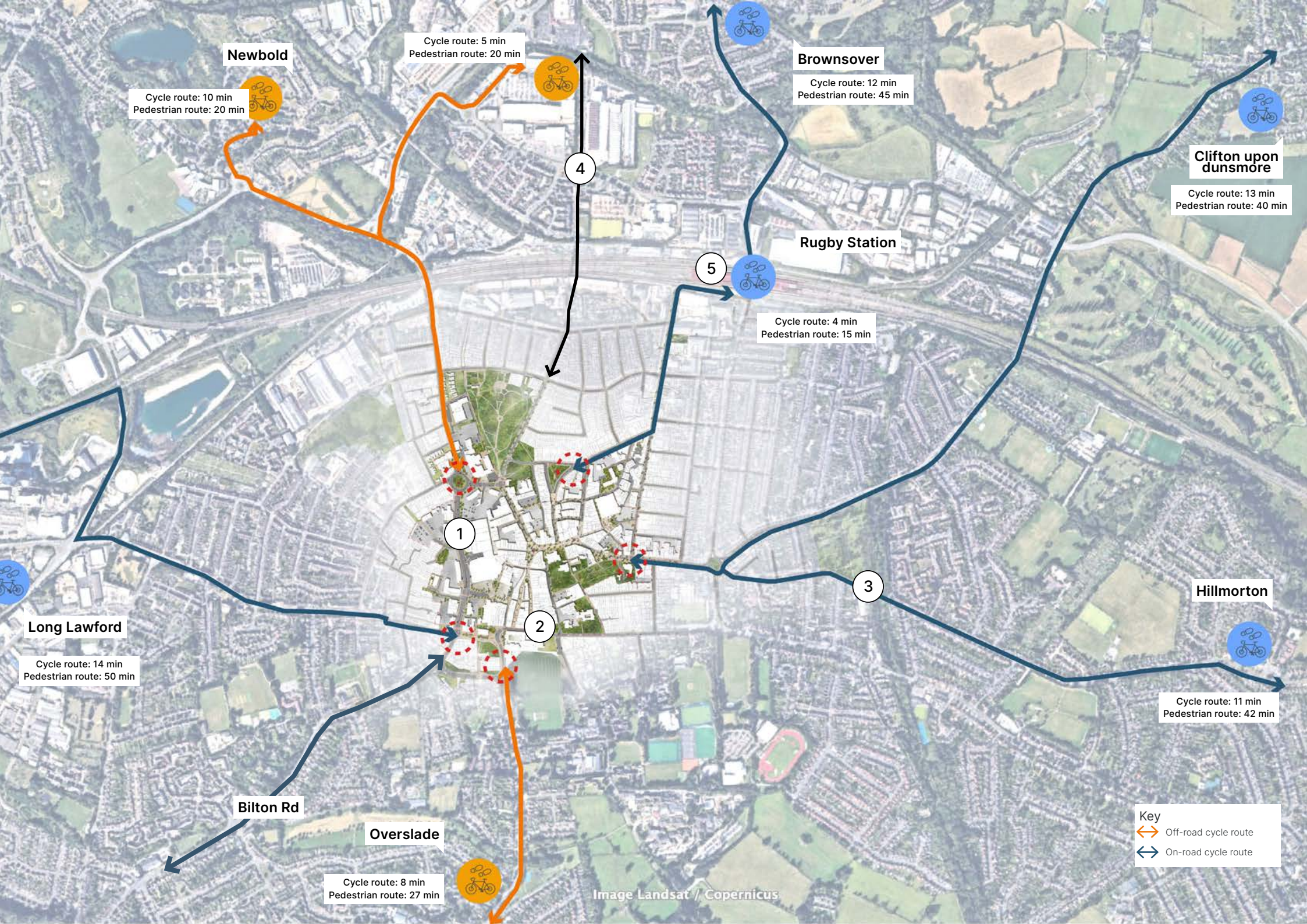


The importance of the street
Stitching the ingredients together

Connecting Communities

Focusing on enabling better walking and cycling connections into the town centre from all directions (north, south, east and west), these projects include prioritising active travel at crossing points, removing barriers and improved infrastructure for these modes of travel.

1. Corporation Street - enhanced crossing points at key points along the A426
2. Lawrence Sheriff Street - enhanced crossings to better connect to the historic Rugby School and the south of the town.
3. Clifton Road - improvements to walking and cycling out to the east of the town linking Houlton and surrounding neighbourhoods including segregated cycle lanes.
4. The Black Path - walking and cycling route improvements, including wayfinding and lighting to enhance the connection to northern neighbourhoods and amenities beyond the railway line.
5. Rugby Station and Murray/Mill Road underpass - enhanced environment for walking and segregated cycling.



Newbold

Cycle route: 10 min
Pedestrian route: 20 min

Cycle route: 5 min
Pedestrian route: 20 min

Brownsover

Cycle route: 12 min
Pedestrian route: 45 min

Clifton upon dunsmore

Cycle route: 13 min
Pedestrian route: 40 min

Rugby Station

Cycle route: 4 min
Pedestrian route: 15 min

Hillmorton

Cycle route: 11 min
Pedestrian route: 42 min

Long Lawford

Cycle route: 14 min
Pedestrian route: 50 min



Bilton Rd

Overlade

Cycle route: 8 min
Pedestrian route: 27 min

Image Landsat / Copernicus

Key

-  Off-road cycle route
-  On-road cycle route

Illustrative Masterplan

The illustrative masterplan focuses in on the heart of Rugby, that being the Clock Tower and Church Street, from Market Place to Old Market Place.

The general strategy of intervention is to create a palette of materials, softworks and furniture that could be applied across all the 10 different projects in a different way while remaining in essence consistent throughout the town centre.

The use of specific materiality helps to create a cohesive and welcoming streetscape, and at points, to underline special areas and meeting spaces.

Using a restrained palette of materials will establish a consistent character, look and feel across the town centre.

This is to be applied as well to the creation of green areas and little squares, places to dwell and meet, enjoying the town centre atmosphere. Establishing these places, could help the development of the town local economy and boosting the sense of belonging.



EVREUX WAY

CHESTNUT FIELD

NORTH STREET

HENRY STREET

BANK STREET

REGENT STREET

ALBERT STREET

CORPORATION STREET (A426)

Clock Tower

CHURCH STREET

St Andrew's Church

Pleasance Garden

Rugby Library, Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM)

SHEEP STREET

HIGH STREET

CHURCH WALK

CLIFTON ROAD

— Rugby town centre extents



Gateways and Arrival

The locations identified on the plan opposite represent the key locations at which people enter the town centre when driving by car, plus arriving by train. Enhanced gateway thresholds at these points will provide visual cues that signify to drivers that they are entering a slow speed environment.

- 1 Enhanced Gateways - markers on the main routes into town. Landscape enhancements (paving/planting/signage) to signify these arrival thresholds and influence drivers to slow down.
- 2 Improved arrival experience at the main town car parks including landscape enhancements and clear wayfinding cues.
- 3 Improved arrival experience at Rugby Station. Transformation of the southern main entrance into an arrivals area that welcomes visitors, provides a place to pause, public and active travel options and clear wayfinding cues for travelling into town by bike or on foot.

1a Newbold Road

RUGBY STATION 3 1b Murray/Mill Road

1c A426 Roundabout

2 Chestnut Field Car Park

2 John Barford MSCP

2 Asda Car Park

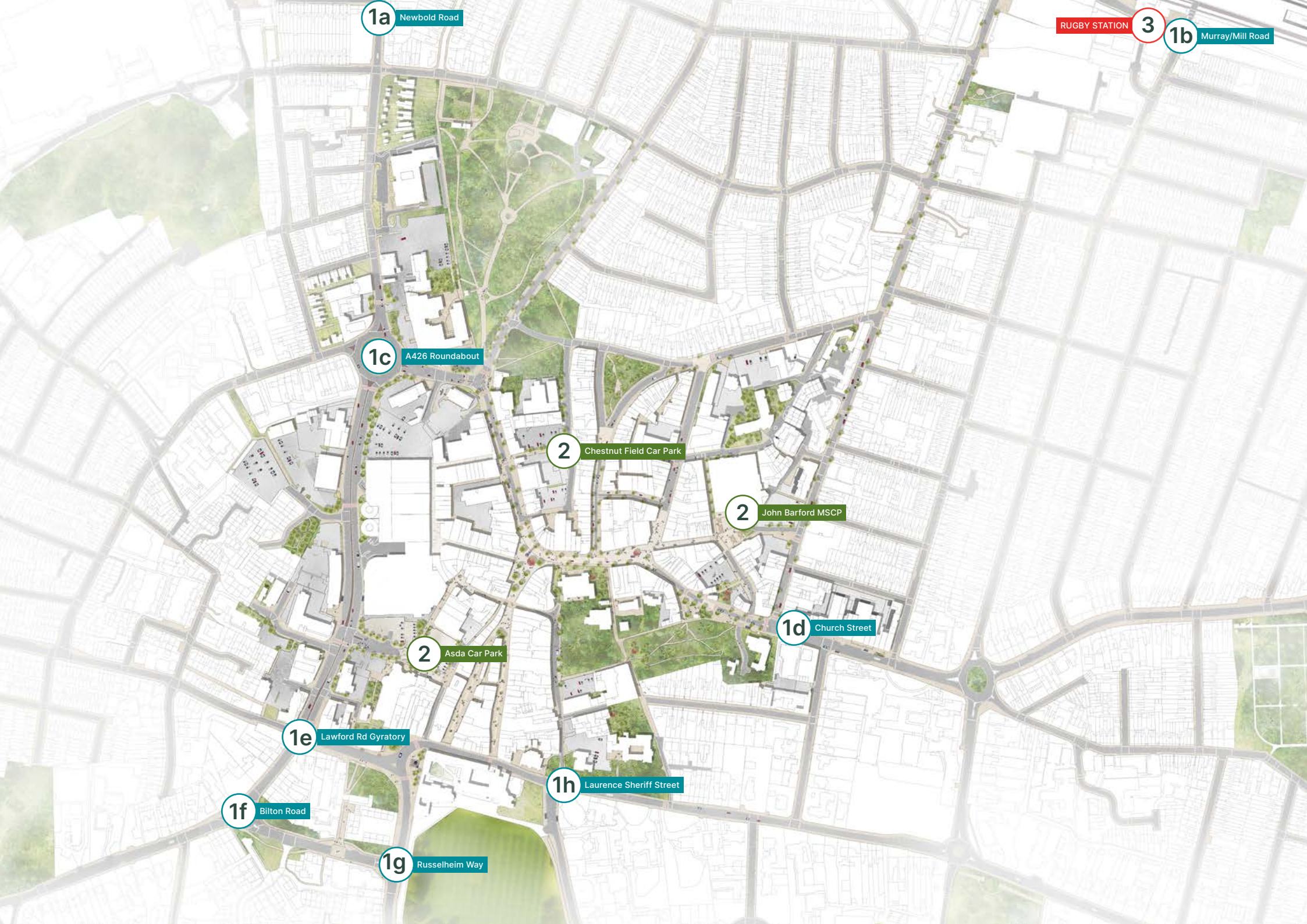
1d Church Street

1e Lawford Rd Gyratory

1h Laurence Sheriff Street

1f Bilton Road

1g Russelheim Way












Better Places and Spaces

The following have been identified as key projects to deliver as part of the masterplan regeneration programme for Rugby town centre.

1. Clock Tower / Market Place – Identified as the central, catalyst project. As part of the Stitch, this becomes the central link of the area, giving the clock tower more room to breathe while providing a nicer environment to sit and spend time in, and improving the space for market stalls and extending these locations to link up with the Old Market Place. This is to become a new public space/plaza to complement the development of the old covered market hall, potentially into a food and beverage offering. Potential to include incidental play elements
2. The Stitch – To include the transformation of the main route through the town centre, stitching the town together again by slowing vehicle speeds, removing pedestrian barriers, introducing regular courtesy crossings, with the aim to reduce vehicle numbers and make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to inhabit and navigate through
3. The Pleasance Garden – Enhancing and extending this space to make it a nicer place to linger, improved by the transformation of Church Street as part of the Stitch project
4. Chapel Street square – enhancements to this space making it more enjoyable to spend time in. A quiet, incidental space, linking with;
5. Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) Entrance – providing a better approach and setting to this important public asset
6. William Webb Ellis 'Park/Plaza' -The removal of the gyratory and pedestrian underpass is a potential long-term option to divert traffic from Warwick Street, improving the setting of the green space and WWE statue. Further highway mitigation would be required making it a possibility for the future rather than an immediate solution.
7. Laneway improvements – Material enhancements to pedestrian and cycling routes within the town centre. Exploration routes that link the key spaces and places. Laneway improvements within sheep street, High Street and Market Place will require changes to the current traffic regulation orders (TROs) to promote cycle friendly spaces
8. Street enhancements – Improvements for cycling and walking routes within the town centre and connecting to the railway station.

Key

-  The Stitch
-  1 Market Place to Old Market
-  2 The Stitch North
-  3 The Stitch South including Pleasance Gardens
-  4 Chapel Street Square
-  5 Library, Museum and Art Gallery Entrance
-  6 William Webb Ellis 'Park/Plaza'
-  7 Laneway Improvements
-  8 Street Enhancements



Taxi Rank Provision

Revitalising the town centre is done through improving the experience of people walking and cycling, making them want to linger longer and inviting them back again. This involves making our streets and spaces more inhabitable and providing a nicer setting for historic features of the town.

At present, the taxi ranks at Market Place dominate the space and block views to the clock tower.

From the June/July 2024 survey of bus and taxi usage in the town centre, the following observations were made:

- Busiest period for taxi rank activity on a weekday was between 12:00 – 13:00 (35 taxi's per hour using the 18 taxi ranks)
- On average, 36% of weekday taxi rank activity was observed as standing taxi use.



Key

— Existing Taxi Rank Locations

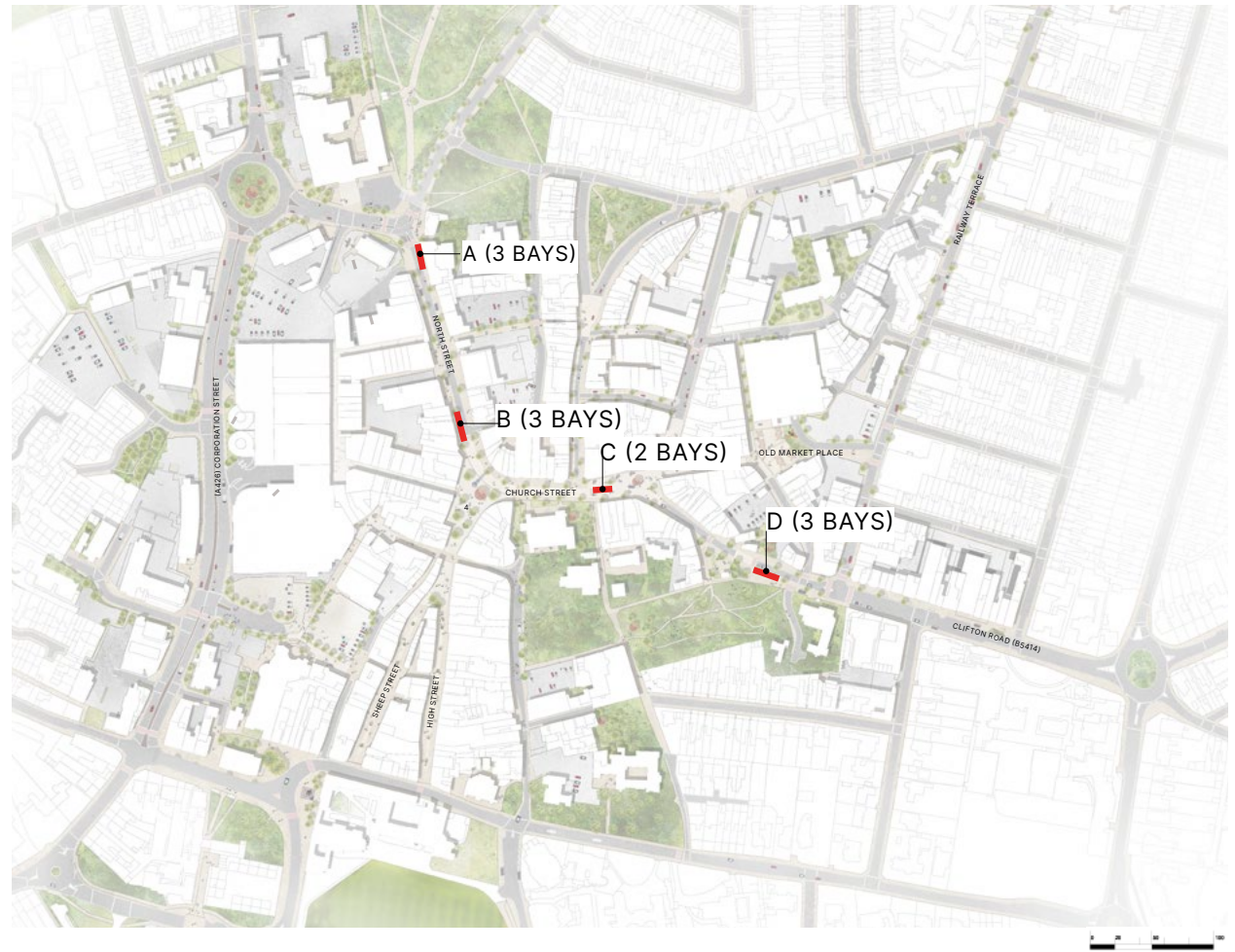
Proposed Location Options

For Market Place and the historic clock tower, we propose reallocating the dominant carriageway space to pedestrian areas and as part of this, removing the taxi bays from their current location.

Recommendation:

With 36% standing taxis, reduce taxi ranks to 12 bays and spread these throughout the town centre area to provide improved passenger coverage.

Potential options for the relocated taxi bays are shown on the plan opposite. These maintain accessible options for finding a taxi within the town centre. Bays A & B are facing north, heading out of the town centre, with bays C & D facing/heading east.



Key

— Proposed Taxi Rank Location Options

Bus Stops

Bus lay-bys extend down the length of the spine which is North Street, Church Street, and Clifton Road. They take up a significant amount of road space and are an inefficient use of public space.

By consolidating standing locations and utilising in-lane bus stops, we can significantly reduce the amount of space given to buses, providing opportunities for wider footpaths, more planting and street furniture, creating a better passenger waiting experience as well as improving pedestrian accessibility through the town centre.

From the June/July 2024 survey of bus and taxi usage in the town centre, the following observations were made:

- There are no significant peak periods for bus vehicles using bus stops/stands
- On average, 3 bus vehicles per hour use each stop/stand (weekday and weekend).
- 10-19% of stops/stands are used for bus standing only and are not used for passenger boarding or alighting (weekday and weekend)

Key

— Existing Bus stop Locations



Proposed Location Options

Reducing the extents of the town centre bus lay-bys gives more space for walking and cycling and in turn reduces the dominance of the carriageway.

Providing relocated bus stops within a zone that is 250m walking distance of the central town centre core is recommended. Providing relocated bus stops along North Street and Church Street gives an opportunity to improve bus operations and bus passenger waiting facilities, whilst improving the overall streetscape along this important town centre street.

Recommendation:

- Engage with bus operators at the next stage of design development to agree specific locations for and design of bus stops for the benefit of all users
- Consider bus locations for standing outside the town centre area

NOTE: The proposals for buses along The Stitch are shown as indicative locations and are subject to further detailed work taking place alongside WCC and stakeholders at the next design stage.



Key

- Potential Bus Stop Lay-by
- Potential In-lane Bus Stop

6

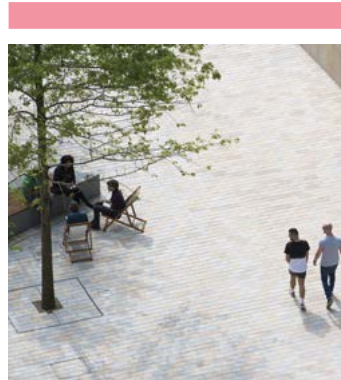
PUBLIC REALM
ELEMENTS

Hardworks

Material selection plays a crucial role in landscape design, influencing both the aesthetic appeal and the functionality of outdoor spaces.

This approach organises town centre streets by function, traffic flow, and aesthetics, creating a clear hierarchy for human scale and legibility. The hardworks strategy balances access for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles, **while material selection enhances aesthetics, functionality, and climate change adaptability.**

Spaces



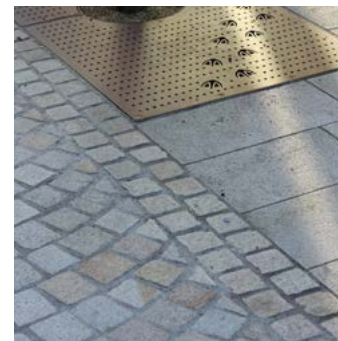
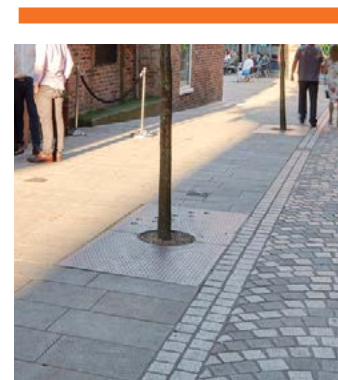
Natural stone paving with bespoke elements that connect the space to its heritage.

Streets



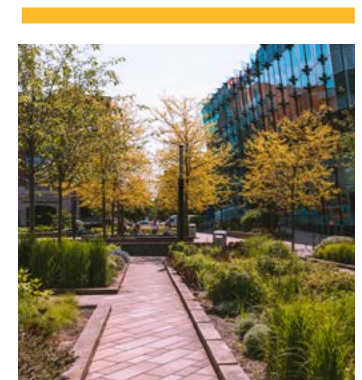
Robust materials, in keeping with the town's heritage

Lanes



Definition of the space through change in materiality and using space wisely to integrate bespoke solutions and vegetation where feasible.

Paths



Clear desire lines and integration of public art detailing in key spaces.



EVREUX WAY

CHESTNUT FIELD

NORTH STREET

HENRY STREET

BANK STREET

REGENT STREET

ALBERT STREET

CORPORATION STREET (A426)

Clock Tower

CHURCH STREET

St Andrew's Church

Pleasance Garden

Rugby Library, Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM)

SHEEP STREET

HIGH STREET

CHURCH WALK

CLIFTON ROAD

0 20 50 100

Softworks

Right plant, right place.

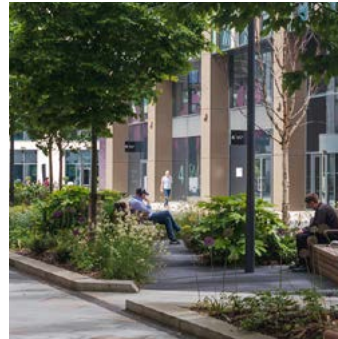
This phase plays an important role in shaping the planting palette for Rugby Town Centre, ensuring plants are suited to the site's conditions and enhancing its visual and ecological character. A diverse range of plants is suggested to provide year-round interest. Proposed planting must provide structure, identity and amenity value to the public realm. A diverse and resilient planting mix should be provided with an interesting variety of colour, texture, and scent. The planting palette should consider a combination of native and non-native plant species.

Hardy, drought-tolerant plants should be prioritised to keep maintenance low while maintaining a resilient and attractive town centre.

Spaces



Legibility and wayfinding



Structure, texture and form



Integrating seating for activation



Sustainable Drainage features



Providing shade and shelter



Habitat provision and screening



Seasonal Texture and colour for interest and biodiversity



Street trees

Streets and Lanes

Tree Planting Strategy

The proposed tree planting will help to define distinct character areas throughout the site, providing structure and legibility along with contributing to biodiversity net gain, urban greening and the mitigation of urban heat island effect.

The Stitch

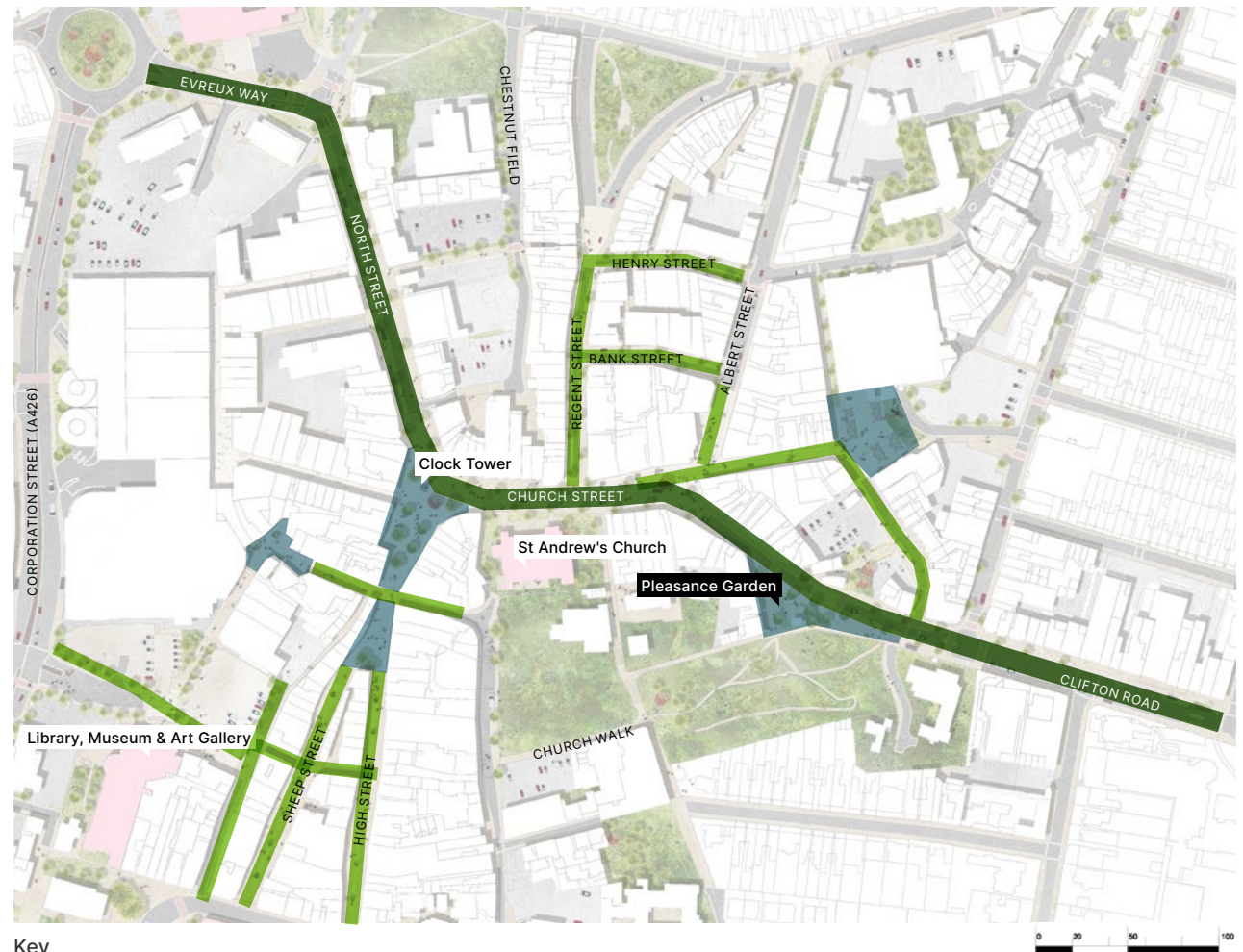
Building on the existing tree planting in the Town Centre, the Stitch proposals aim to increase the rhythm of planting along the route, connecting to the wider green infrastructure and providing seasonal interest and a sense of arrival. Wherever feasible, trees will be planted directly into the ground within soft landscaped areas designed to absorb surface runoff.

Streets and Lanes

Building on the Stitch's rhythm, these compact routes maximise limited space with medium-sized trees in hardscape, often with a fastigate canopy. Where possible, herbaceous planting softens the environment, complementing the hardscape design.

Squares

Differing sizes and forms appropriate to the spaces they inhabit. Feature trees form part of the legibility as landmarks for the squares. Multi-stem trees define areas and provide seasonal interest.



Key

- The Stitch
- Streets and Lanes
- Squares

Street Furniture

Creating a palette of street furniture for the town centre is essential to produce visual cohesion and can support and enhance the town's character and identity.

Street furniture is chosen to be low maintenance and accessible to all. The choice of materials, styles, and designs in street furniture reflect the cultural and historical identity of the town, contributing to a unique sense of character. This reinforces the town's branding and community pride.

Furniture



1. Seating



2. Cycle parking



3. Litter bins and recycling

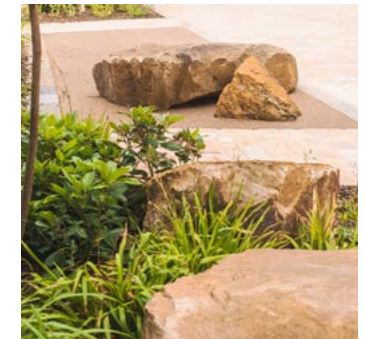


4. Hostile Vehicle Mitigation

Play

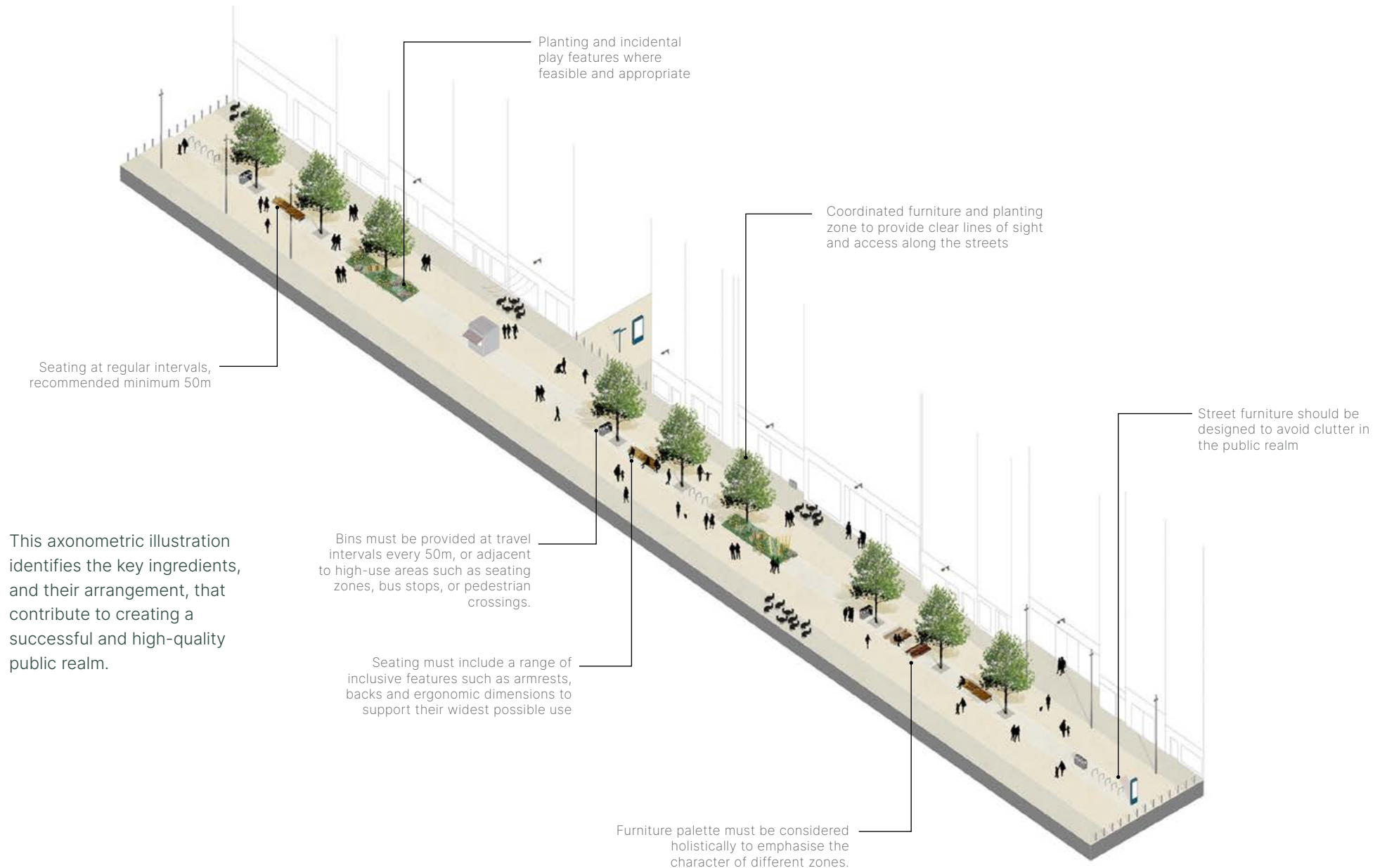


5. Incidental play



6. Playful features

NB - Images are examples demonstrating the key ingredients that contribute to creating a successful and high-quality public realm.



Pedestrian Connections

Effective wayfinding goes beyond just signs; it helps define the town's identity creates a rooted sense of place and makes navigation easier. We started by assessing the current signs to identify issues, gaps, and areas needing improvement.

The adjacent plan shows where the existing signs are located. We identified three types of signs; fingerposts, map boards and interpretation boards that compliment the art pieces throughout the town.

The existing wayfinding is generally in a poor condition and there are gaps in the towns connectivity. The signs are not bespoke to Rugby and differ in styles.



Finger signs are present but not consistently and effectively placed



Maps are dated and lack a sense of identity

Key

- FP - Fingerpost
- M - Map Board / Totem
- IN - Interpretation Board



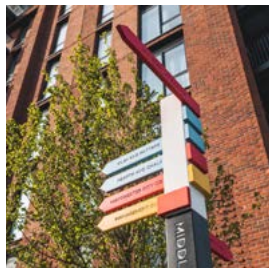
Existing Layout

Wayfinding Items

The plan opposite shows the proposal for new signage in Rugby. This has been informed by the legibility study and the work drawn upon from the masterplan. We have looked at how we can improve connectivity from the railway station to town centre by ensuring there are signs placed at the key orientation points along the route.

Gateway signs have been positioned on the approach roads to the town to welcome visitors. Map monoliths have been placed at key orientation and arrival points such as the train station to help improve connectivity in the town.

Fingerposts have then been added along the footpaths to reinforce routes to destinations.



● Fingerposts



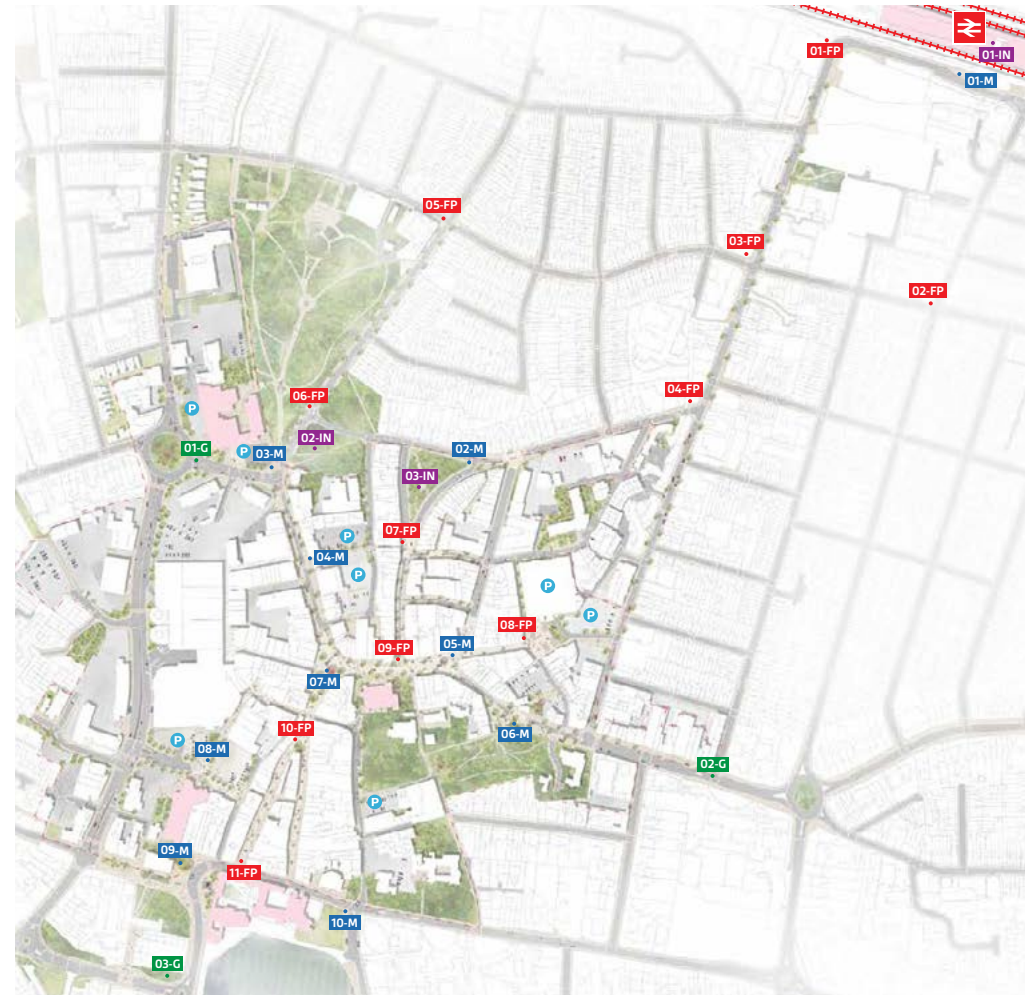
● Map Monolith



● Interpretation Board



● Gateway



Wayfinding Proposals

Wayfinding and Sense Of Place

A well-signed and legible environment projects a sense of a well-organised and welcoming place to live, work or visit. Engaging, effective and consistent signage that reflects and communicates the values and vision of a place gives a sense of cohesion and community.

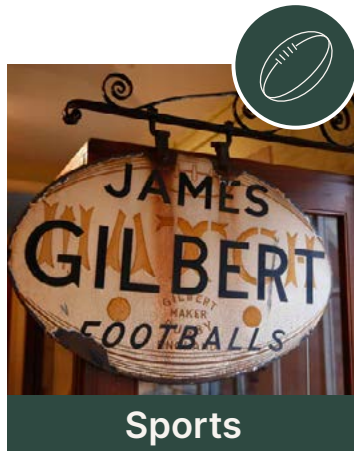
By incorporating key stories and interpretation in to the sign design will help visitors to create a deeper connection to the place. The town is currently known as the birthplace of the game of Rugby, but there is the opportunity with the new signage to highlight other stories which haven't been explored yet.

There is also the opportunity to make the signs more accessible for the community and the visitor by introducing more pedestrian friendly mapping and walking minutes to content. This will help visitors to plan their journey and encourage them to stay longer and explore further.



Heritage

Buildings designed by William Butterfield are identifiable from the patterns and distinct use of 2/3 colours.



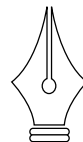
Sports

The font CLARENDON BOLD is used on Gilbert Rugby balls.



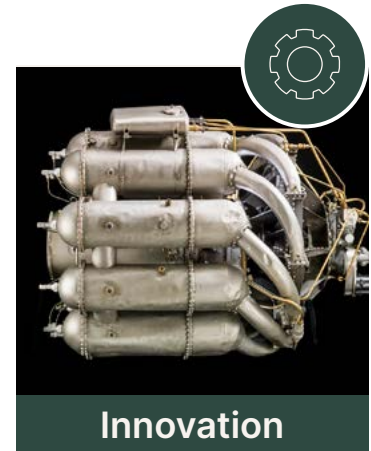
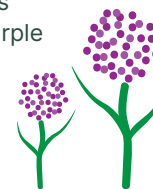
Literature

WW1 English poet Rupert Brooke was born in Rugby.



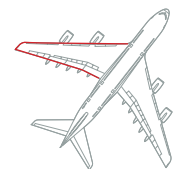
Horticulture

Caldecott Park is known for its purple allium flowers.



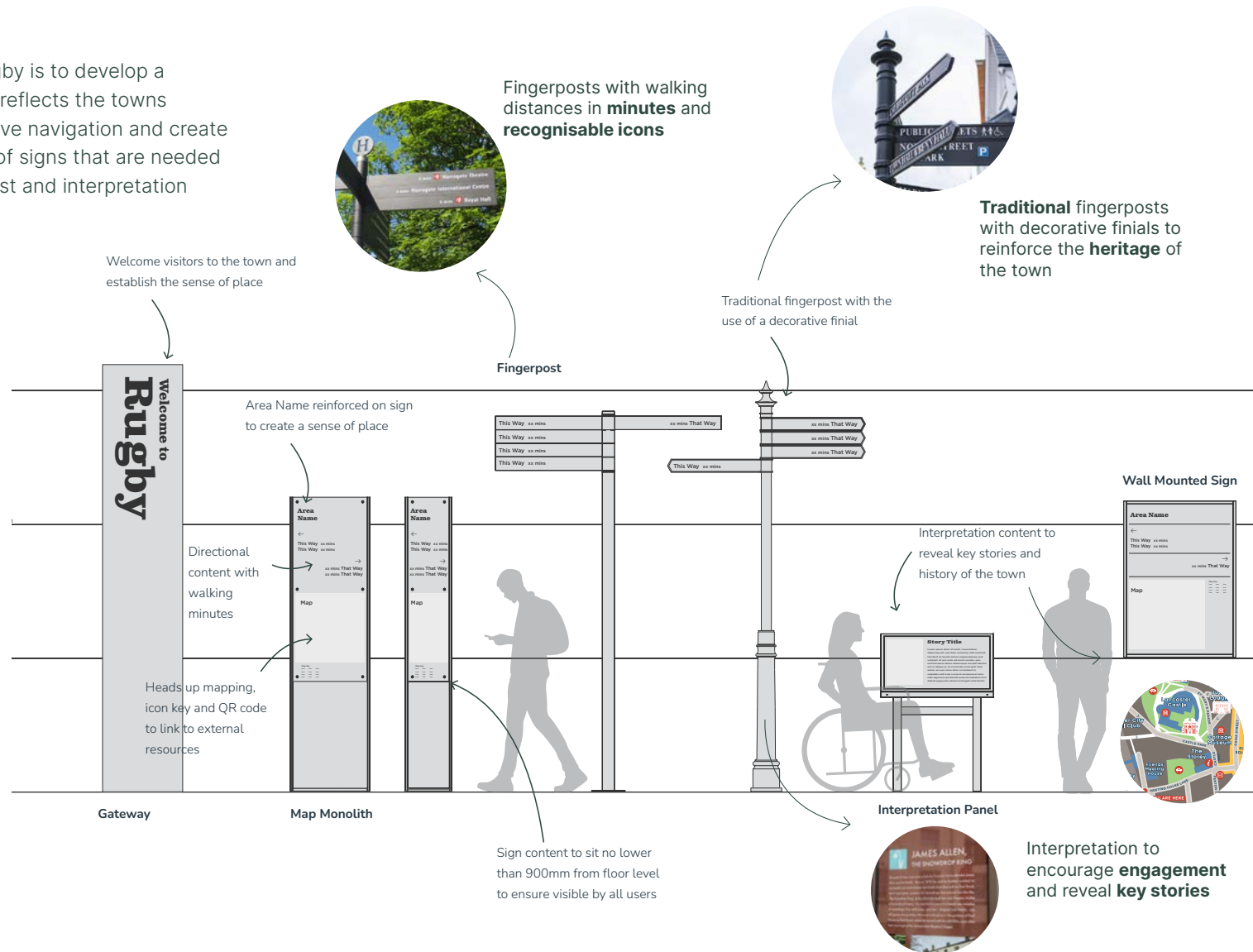
Innovation

The engine Frank Whittle developed has gone on to be used primarily in planes.



Sign Precedents

Our recommendation for Rugby is to develop a bespoke family of signs that reflects the towns character and will help improve navigation and create a sense of place. The types of signs that are needed are a map monolith, fingerpost and interpretation boards.



Lighting

The public realm projects in the town centre aim to create inviting, high-quality outdoor spaces for visitors and commuters. The lighting strategy will enhance these spaces by using varied intensities and hues of light to support wayfinding and define distinct atmospheres tailored to the area's use. This approach ensures a simple, elegant, and sophisticated experience, avoiding the traditional 'blanket' lighting method that can result in over-lit, uninviting environments.

Lighting Principles:

The lighting design should:

- Reflect and enhance the hierarchy of routes.
- Support wayfinding throughout the town centre.
- Promote safety and security for all users.
- Foster an appealing atmosphere and ambience.
- Incorporate feature lighting where appropriate to highlight key elements.

Design Considerations:

The overall treatment should:

- Utilise low-energy, sustainable lighting sources.
- Complement the urban environment without overpowering it.
- Minimise light pollution and avoid overlighting any areas.

Key routes should be well-lit to provide clear, safe, and secure pathways, serving as navigational aids for those passing through. In contrast, designated dwell areas should feature lower levels of warm, inviting lighting to create comfortable, cosy spaces for evening use.

Additionally, the lighting approach should focus on highlighting the quality of materials and craftsmanship in the public realm. This can be achieved by illuminating vertical surfaces, soft landscaping, and textures, enhancing the richness and visual appeal of the space.



Wash of warm light across open spaces and opportunities for feature lighting that can be adjusted for changing seasons and events.



Complementary columns that provide safety along primary routes for all users



Human scale columns along secondary routes

Lighting Approach



Streets
8-10m tall Lighting Column
Distribution - approximately every 30m

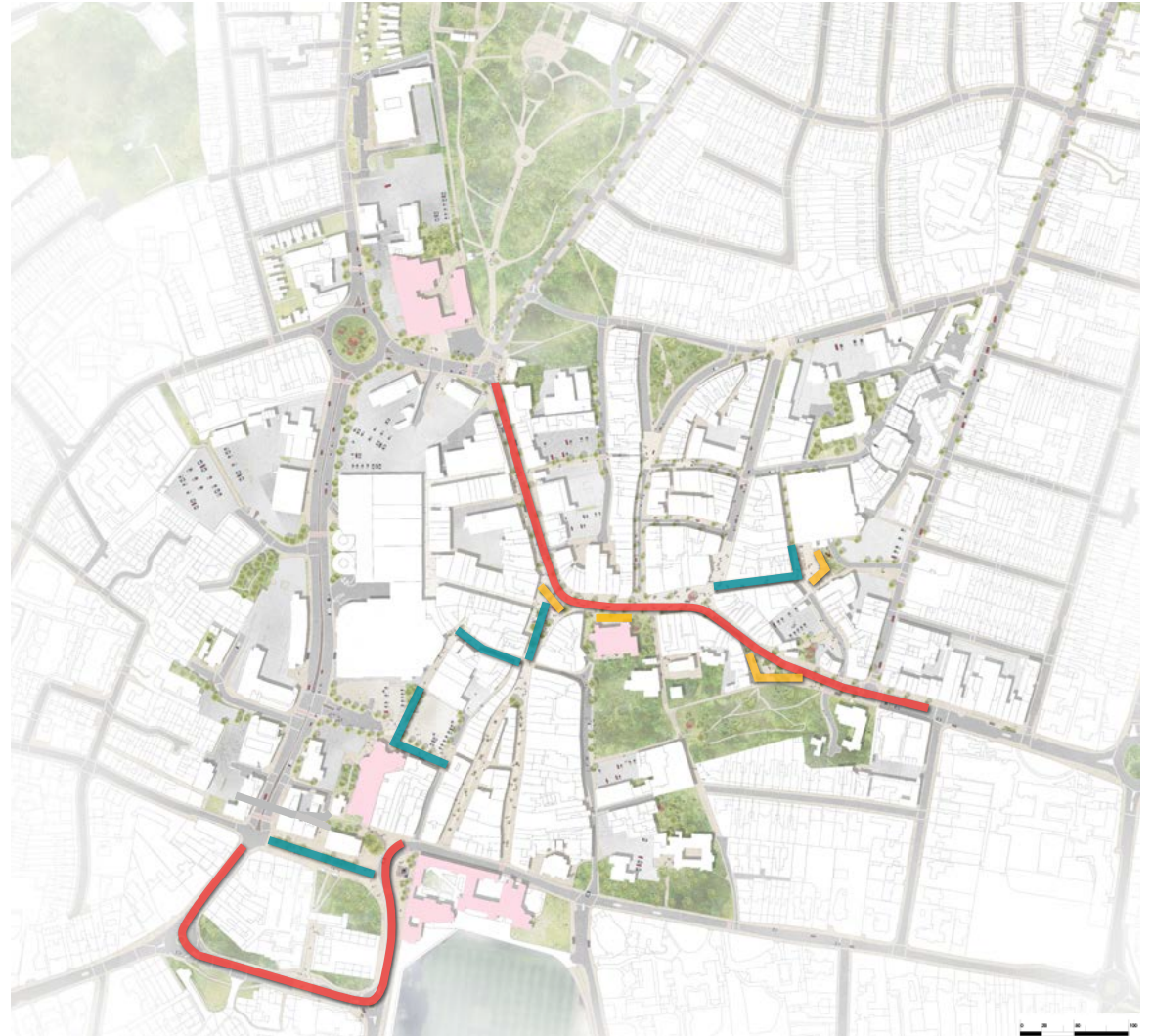


Lanes And Squares
6-8m tall Lighting Column
Distribution - approximately every 20m



Feature Areas
Architectural lighting to enhance the public space and illuminate key features. For example, the clock tower.

NOTE: Specification and distribution to be calculated by appointed Lighting Engineer



SuDS Features

The management of rainwater is an essential element to support the Town Centre's resilience, but this does not mean that it needs to be either unsightly or hidden away. Sustainable rainwater management can be viewed as a positive, integrated element of any proposals. SuDS schemes have a number of benefits.

The range of possible solutions: from permeable surfaces to green roofs and swales have a number of applications that can be tailored to specific site circumstances. In most cases the introduction of water can have a positive impact within wider landscape proposals, adding to the aesthetic and environmental value of a place.

Integrating urban drainage into the public realm can also provide destinations for social activities and interaction.



Rain garden, Altrincham, Greater Manchester



Embedding SuDS features in the public realm



Consideration of detail design is key to providing functionality



Signage helps to promote awareness of climate adaptive landscapes

Planting Approach

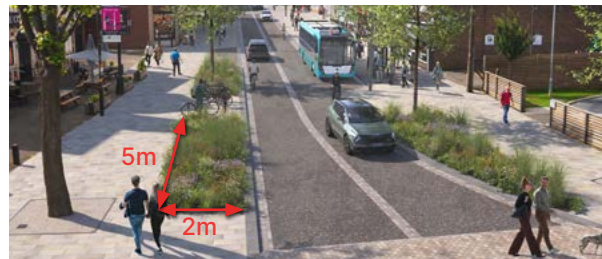


Highway SuDs - The Stitch
Allowing for 2 x 10m² every 30m of streetscape on either side of the road.

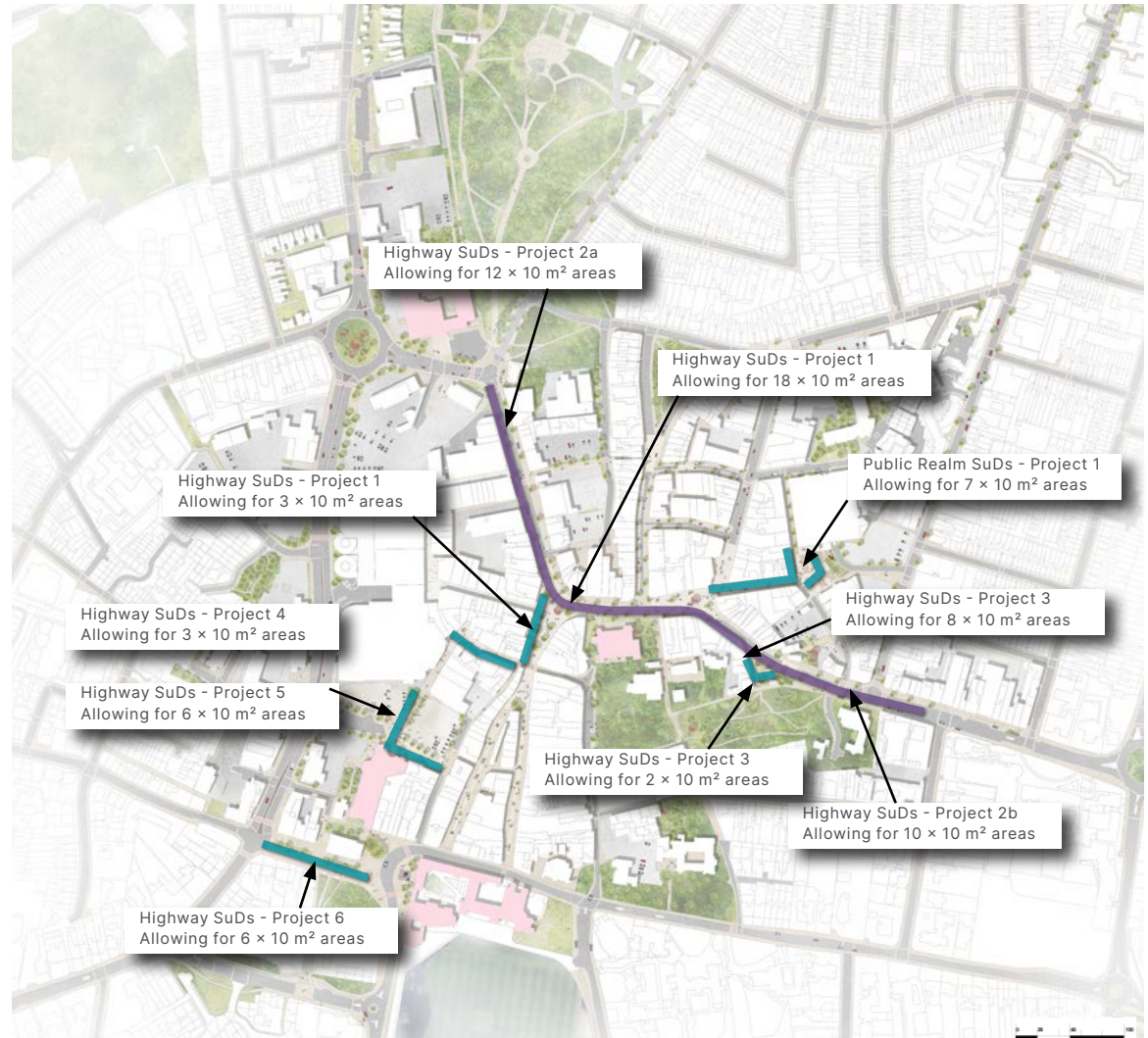


Public Realm SuDs/ Planting areas
Hard landscape drains into planting areas
Allowing for 1 x 10m² every 20m of streetscape.

NOTE: Specification and distribution to be calculated by appointed Drainage Engineer



Approximate Scale of proposed SuDS planting along North Street



7

KEY PROJECTS

The 'Stitch'

The 'Stitch' is a metaphor for binding the north and south of the town together – much like the thread of a rugby ball.

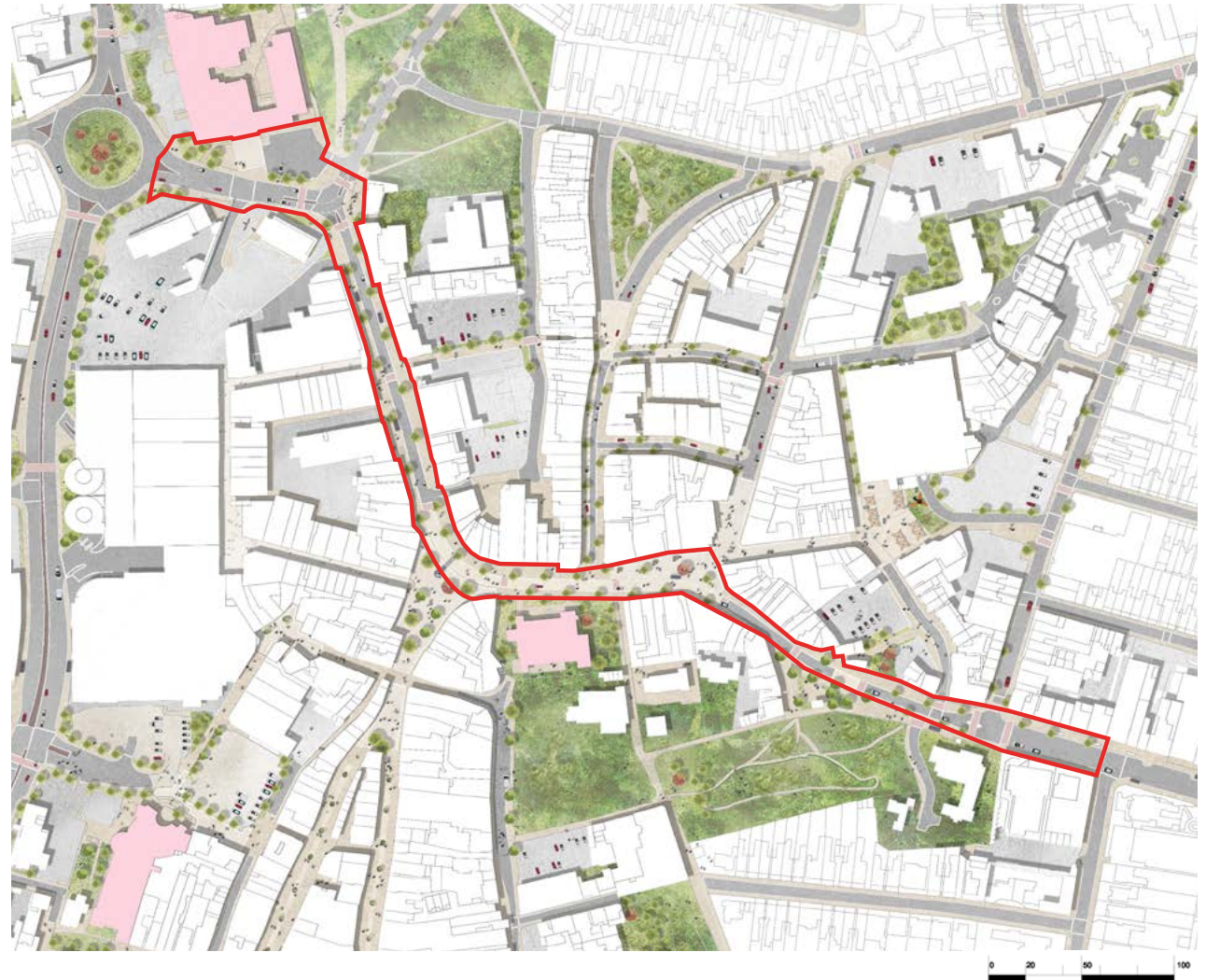
Focused on improving the street environment of Evreux Way, North Street, Church Street and Clifton Road, it is the transformation of the main route through the town centre, providing a more welcoming entrance and stitching the town together.

Through public realm improvements, it will include slowing vehicle speeds, removing pedestrian barriers, introducing regular courtesy crossings.

The aim being to reduce vehicle numbers and make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to inhabit and navigate through.

For cyclists, the low speed street design naturally slows traffic to enable cyclists to be comfortable to cycle on the carriageway.

People will be encouraged to visit and linger longer, and the centre of Rugby will become more unified, breathing life into the heart of the town.





Photograph of existing state

Visualisation of North Street

Project 1 : Clock Tower to Old Market Place

A Catalyst Project

The geographical heart of Rugby is the Clock Tower. As the catalyst project of the town centre improvements, we aim to enhance the setting of this historic landmark and connect it with the Old Market Place.

Scope

Giving the clock tower space to breathe will enhance the area for the market stalls and make it a more enjoyable place to sit and spend time in. Street enhancements will extend from Market Place to the Old Market Place, helping to connect the two sides of Church Street. At Old Market Place, what is currently a car park will be transformed into a flexible new public space.

Currently dominated by cars and carriageway, public realm improvements between the clock tower and Old Market Place will transform the area into a healthy and more welcome environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

By focussing on the heart of the town this will act as a catalyst for future town centre improvements.

Key Features

- Narrowed carriageways - promoting slower speed environment
- Wider footpaths making it easier to navigate
- An improved setting for market stalls
- A new public space/plaza at the Old Market to complement the old market hall - potential for a food and beverage offerings
- Play elements to be incorporated into the spaces
- Enhanced paving, planting, furniture and lighting
- More places to sit and dwell
- Increased canopy cover and green space
- Sustainable drainage features such as rain gardens
- Courtesy crossings making it easier to cross the road.
- Improved bus stop waiting areas
- Improved cycle parking provision

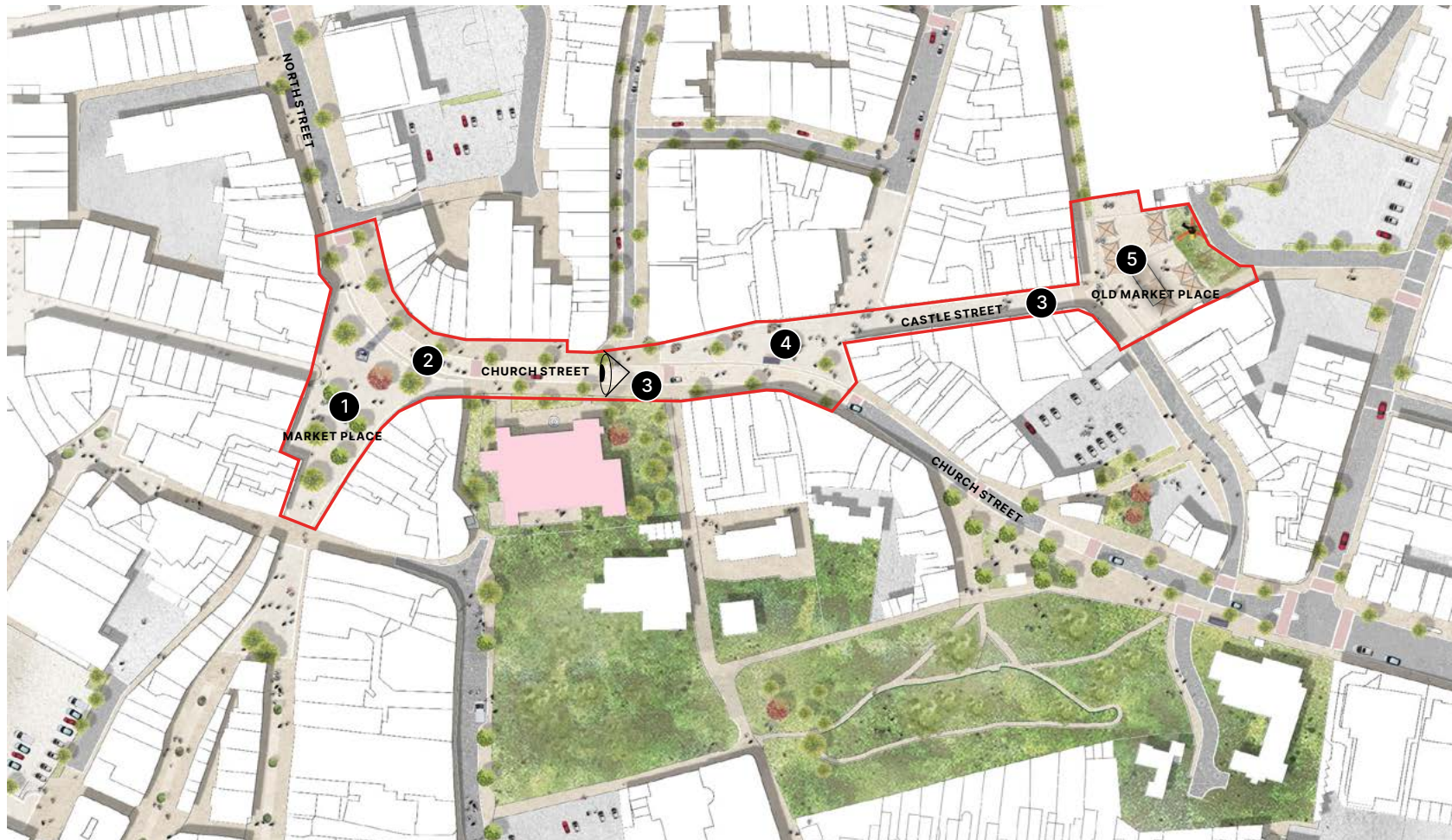
Note: bus and taxi locations require further detailed work taking place alongside WCC and stakeholders during the next stage of design for The Stitch



Photograph of existing state

Visualisation of Church Street

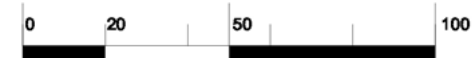
Clock Tower to Old Market Place



Key

- 1 Market Place and Clock Tower improvements
- 2 Narrowed carriageway of North Street and Church Street - slow speed environment
- 3 Streetscape improvements
- 4 Enhanced pedestrian area
- 5 Old Market Place - transformation of car park into a new open space / square.

 Visualisation viewpoint





Market Space



Slow speed environment



Street furniture clusters



Spillover spaces along the edges of squares



Street trees positively enhance streetscene



Covered market with architectural canopy

Project 2 : The Stitch North

The Stitch North project stretches from Evreux Way to the Clock Tower.

Scope

Coming off the A426 at Evreux Way drivers will be presented with a gateway threshold and change in speed environment that signifies their arrival within the town centre.

Drivers will be encouraged to take the Park Road route to car parks instead of travelling down North Street.

Key Features:

Key features of the Stitch North project include:

- A gateway threshold feature at Evreux Way
- Junction improvements (changes in priority) at Evreux Way and North Street
- Narrowed carriageway and wider footpaths
- New and improved crossings
- Higher quality paving finishes
- Coordinated furniture, wayfinding and lighting
- Improved cycling infrastructure
- Street planting and sustainable drainage features
- Improved bus stop waiting areas



The Stitch (North) extents



Greener look and feel of the street section



Courtesy pedestrian crossing points

Project 3 : The Stitch South

The Stitch South encompasses the south-eastern entry into the town centre along Clifton Road.

Scope

This will include a gateway threshold and change in speed environment at the Clifton Road shops that signifies drivers' arrival within the town centre.

Key Features

Key features of the Stitch North project include:

- A gateway threshold feature at the eastern end of Clifton Road
- Junction improvements
- Narrowed carriageway and wider footpaths
- New and improved crossings
- Higher quality paving finishes
- Coordinated furniture, wayfinding and lighting
- Improved cycling infrastructure
- Street planting and sustainable drainage features
- Improved bus stop waiting areas



Slow speed environment



Integrated street furniture and planting



Uncluttered streets with semi-mature trees



Co-located seating, cycle racks and planting

A key part of the Stitch South is the space that includes the Pleasance Garden, positioned at a key node of pedestrian access across town.

Scope

The garden space will be extended to increase the amount of soft landscape, trees and planting, making it a desirable place to pause/dwell. The Church Street crossing will be improved to make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross.

Key Features

- New attractive and green public space adjacent to St Andrews Gardens
- Removal of existing toilet block - open up views and improve pedestrian access along Church St.
- Narrowed carriageway and wider footpaths
- Higher quality paving finishes
- Coordinated furniture, wayfinding and lighting
- Street planting and sustainable drainage features.



The Stitch South extents



Photograph of existing state



WOS24 @ MET AT THE ALEX
Celebration by all at the Alex
The Alex is celebrating its 80th birthday
with a series of events and activities
to mark the occasion. A date to remember
for everyone in the city.

CE GARDENS

Visualisation of Church Street and Pleasance Garden

Project 4 : Chapel Street Square

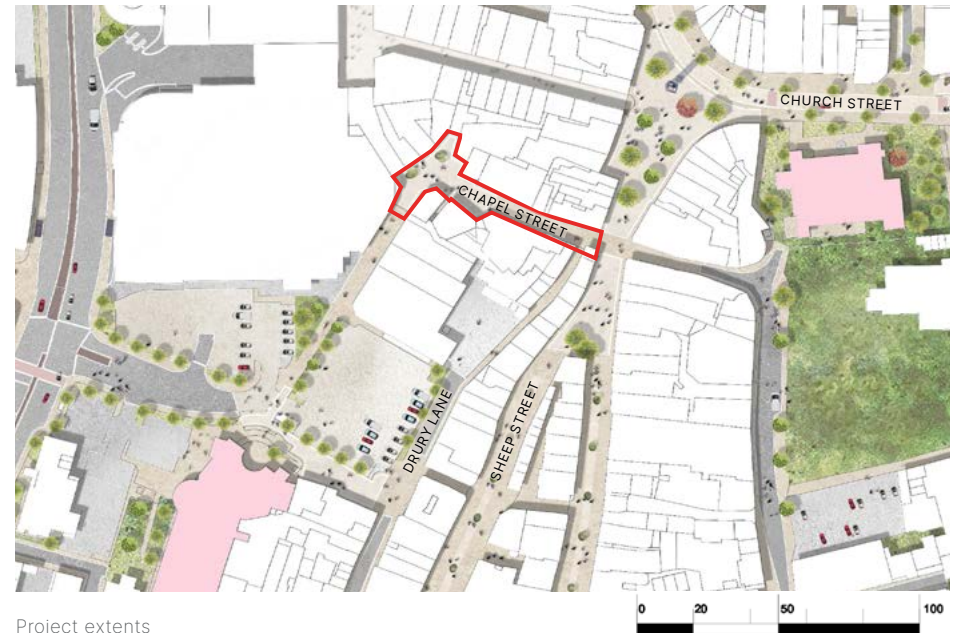
An opportunity exists to turn the space at the end of Chapel Street into an attractive small square - a local gem and a space to give visitors a sense of discovery while exploring the town centre.

Scope

Through providing high quality paving finishes, plus planting and street furniture the space can be transformed, from what feels slightly back of house, into a nice little square. Existing buildings frame the square and can utilise the space for spillout seating/dining.

Key Features

- High quality paving
- Simple planting, including rain garden feature
- Tree planting for shade
- Integrated street furniture



Project extents



Goose Green, Altrincham



Cafe' spillout as attractive amenity

Project 5 : RAGM Frontage

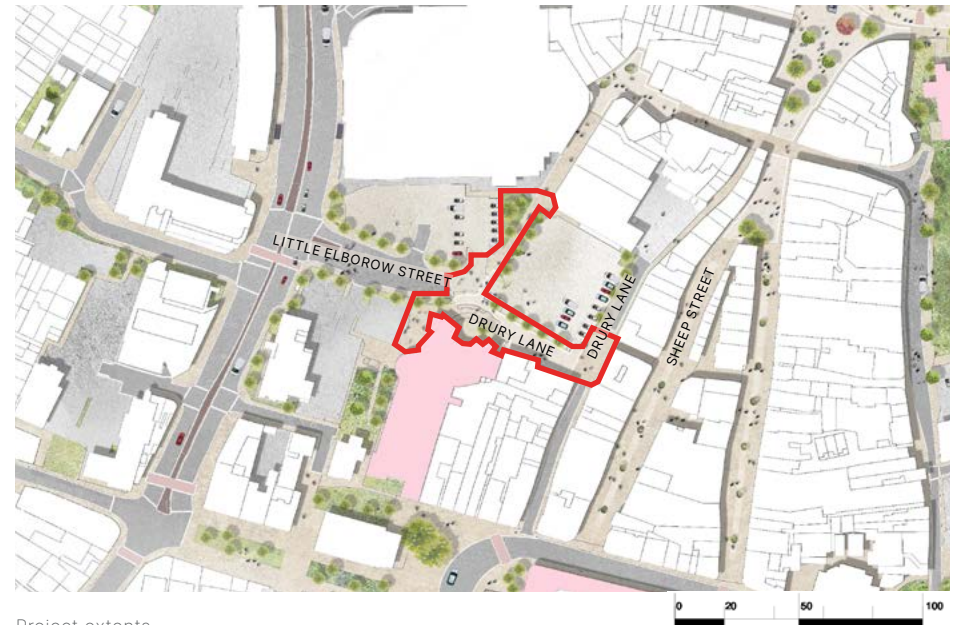
The entrance space to the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) would be dramatically improved with easier access and better links to Sheep Street, High Street and beyond.

Scope

Replacing the existing steps and ramps with a cleaner and simpler design will improve accessibility and provide usable outdoor space connected with the building's function, including for events.

Key Features

- New steps, ramps and handrails
- Spillover space for RAGM users
- Integrated planting, street furniture and lighting
- Wayfinding and interpretational signage
- Drury Lane improvements - enhancing the link to Sheep Street and High Street.



Project extents



Green areas to soften the look and feel of buildings and public space



Library spillout in relaxing and lush environment

Project 6 : William Webb Ellis 'Park/Plaza'

A potential long-term project, removing the existing one-way gyratory will transform this area of town.

Scope

Removing the one-way sections of Bilton Road, Warwick Street, Dunchurch Road and Russelsheim Way. Warwick Street will become a slow speed zone with limited access. This will allow for the removal of the existing pedestrian underpass and turn the park into a more attractive space for people to visit. All this will allow better pedestrian and cycle access into town from the southwest and provide a nicer setting for the school and the William Webb Ellis statue.

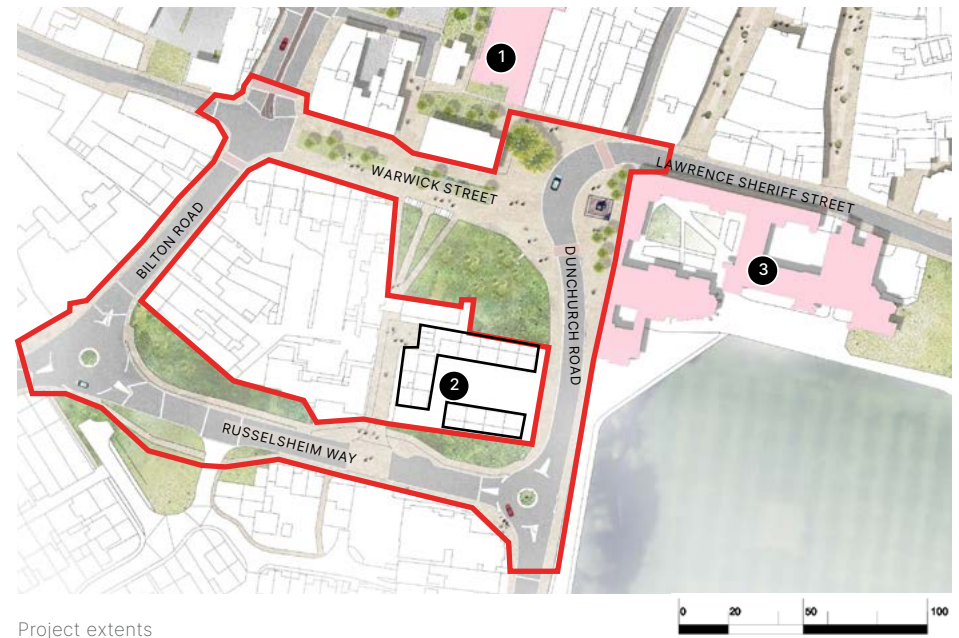
Key Features

- Warwick Road improvements including sustainable drainage (SuDS) features
- Park improvements - planting, paving, lighting, furniture and signage
- Play features
- Junction improvements, including better pedestrian crossings

This project is a long-term aspiration (15+ years) and would be subject to further technical assessments, including highway modelling at an early stage, to inform the development of the project.

KEY

- 1 Rugby Art Gallery and Museum
- 2 Lawrence Sheriff Almshouses
- 3 Rugby School



Project extents



Park edge



Planting, seating and natural play features

Project 7 : Laneway Improvements

Enhancements made to the existing laneways by implementing planting, lighting, furniture, wayfinding and paving strategies over time.

Scope

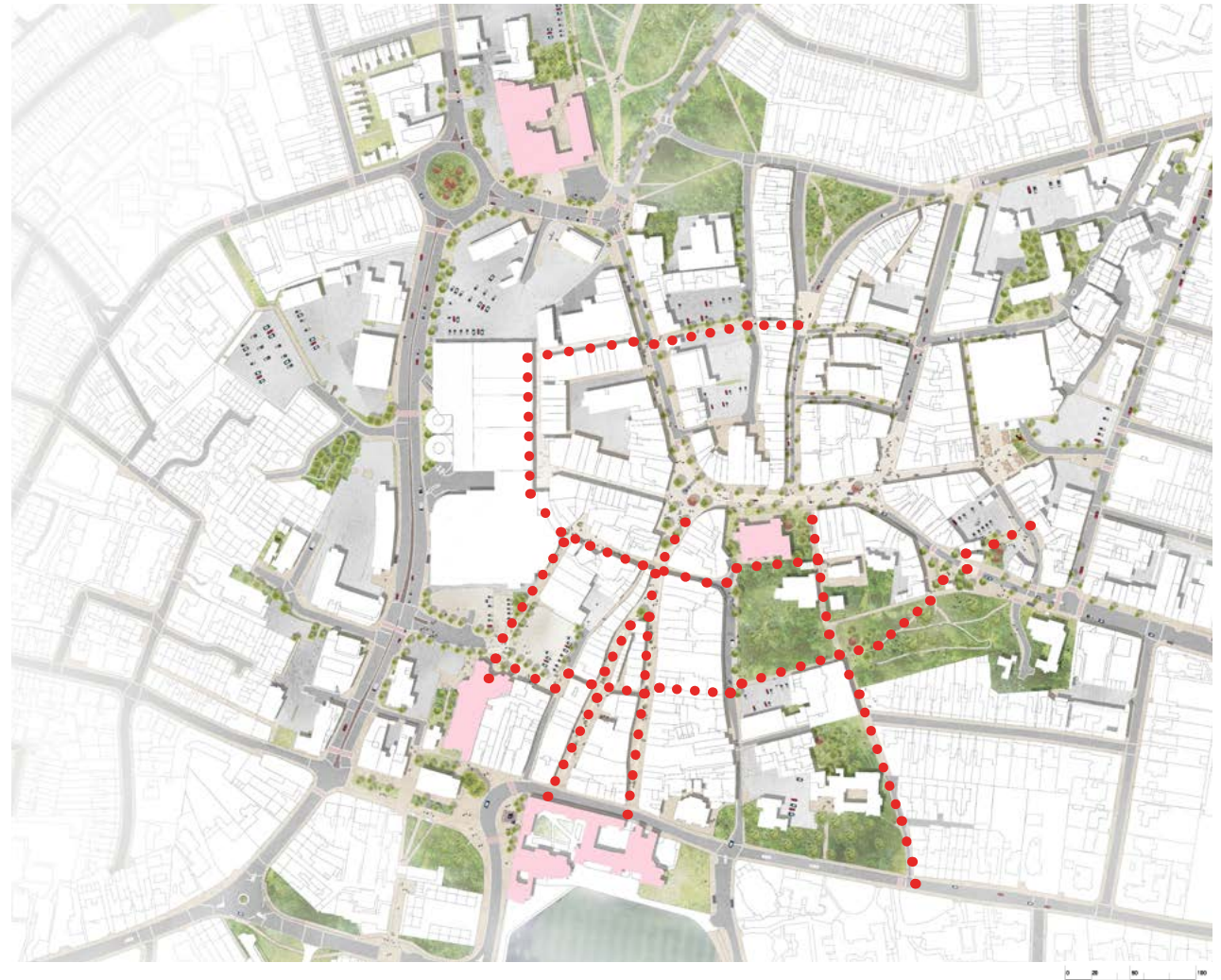
Addressing gaps in north-south connectivity through the town centre, particularly for cyclists, can be supported by improving existing laneways using a landscape and public realm kit of parts (see following pages).

These improvements can be delivered without full-scale transformation, starting with lighting upgrades, followed by furniture, planting, and wayfinding introduced at key points or intervals. Funding could come from existing maintenance budgets and/or Section 106 contributions. There is also scope for community involvement in shaping designs.

Laneway improvements to Sheep Street, High Street, and Market Place would require TRO changes to create safer, more accessible pedestrian and cycle-friendly spaces.

Key Features

- Planting, paving, lighting, furniture and signage, public art, incidental play features



Project extents

Project 8 : Street Enhancements

In the same way laneway enhancements can be delivered, street enhancements can be made from the town centre to the train station.

Scope

By utilising a landscape and public realm kit of parts (see following pages), improvements can be made to the streets without undertaking a whole-scale transformation.

This would deliver improvements such as tree planting to increase canopy coverage and improve the character of the streets, SuDS features to reduce the effects of stormwater, seating for pause points along the route, and directional signage.

These improvements could potentially be made within existing management and maintenance budgets and/or from Section 106 contributions from development. There is also scope for community involvement in terms of integrating public art.

Key Features

- Planting, paving, lighting, furniture and signage, public art, incidental play features.



Project extents

Streets and Laneways: Kit of Parts

Public Realm

Public realm must be inclusively designed and accommodate the needs of different genders, ages and abilities.

Public space design must demonstrate a consideration for the needs of teenagers, particularly women and girls.

On-street loading bays must be capable of accommodating multiple uses (e.g. deliveries, servicing, refuse collection, drop-off) and must be located to minimise impact on pedestrian routes with clear footways provided to the rear of parking, in line with minimum requirements.

Open spaces should be designed with robust and durable materials and street furniture.

Commercial units fronting public spaces should accommodate a mix of uses to ensure activity occurs throughout the day and evening, and 'dead spots' without activity or surveillance don't occur outside daylight hours.

Any gates, bollards, shutters or fences should be minimised and designed carefully to prevent an overtly defensive, obtrusive character which undermines social design qualities.



Integrated Design

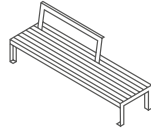


Balanced Street Use



Uncluttered Streetscape

Street furniture



Seating must include a range of inclusive features such as armrests, backs and ergonomic dimensions to support their widest possible use.

Ensure comfort for all ages and abilities.

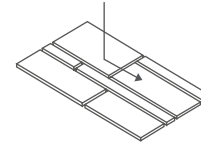
Seating must be provided at travel intervals no greater than 50m apart along selected streets and laneways within the town centre.

Street furniture should be designed to reduce clutter in the public realm, keeping movement routes clear and avoid blocking sight-lines.

Locally sourced and lower embodied carbon materials should be given priority.

Development should ensure a strong and coherent identity to the public realm furniture suite. Furniture palette must be considered holistically to emphasise the character of different zones.

Hardscape



Robust and high-quality materials must be used to ensure longevity of public realm surfaces and furnishings, allowing year-round use

Key pedestrian desire lines through the public realm must be accessible in all weather conditions. The hard material selection must allow for use in different conditions and consider wear, use, access and seasonality.

Materials must be differentiated in order to assist in accessibility and way-finding through such means as change of colour, size, texture or material, in the context of a holistic site-wide palette.

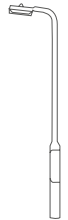
All hard surfacing materials must meet minimum requirements for suitable slip-resistance and visual contrast with abutting materials.

The reuse of existing on-site materials should be considered where feasible.

Materials should contribute to creating a comfortable and positive aesthetic in the public realm.

Locally sourced and lower embodied carbon materials should be given priority.

Lighting



Lighting must be inclusively designed, by preventing excessive glare or contrast, to support way finding for people with visual impairments and/ or neurological processing difficulties.

Lighting proposals must support in creating a sense of a welcoming, safe and secure neighbourhood. Proposals shall provide well lit streets and pedestrian zones.

Light spill into adjacent properties must be minimised through the appropriate specification, siting, orientation and control of lighting apparatus.

All lighting apparatus must be considered as part of each street-scape, pedestrian route or open space's furniture palette in terms of their visual profile, scale, material, colour finish - to ensure a coherent appearance throughout the day time.

Lighting design should explore the use of different forms of lighting apparatus (column-mounted/low level bollard/in-ground recessed) to create distinct character and respond to the intended function of specific spaces.

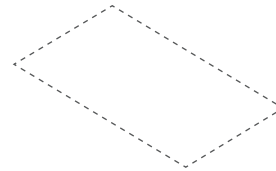
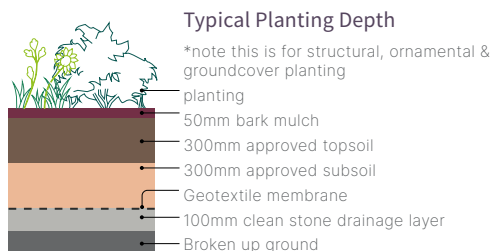
Planting

Planting beds along the should be able to take in drainage from adjacent hard landscape and should aim to provide where feasible **1 x 10m²** every **20m** of streetscape.

Micro-climate and associated conditions must be considered to ensure proposed planting specification is robust and appropriate to specific site conditions

Planting specification must include a mix of evergreen and deciduous planting to ensure year-round interest, structure and colour to the planting scheme.

A diverse and resilient planting mix should be provided with an interesting variety of colour, texture, and scent. The planting palette should consider a combination of native and non-native plant species.



On vehicle routes, and junctions, trees must be specified with clear stems to maintain clear lines of visibility

Root barriers must be used to safeguard surface and foul water sewers and building foundations where necessary.

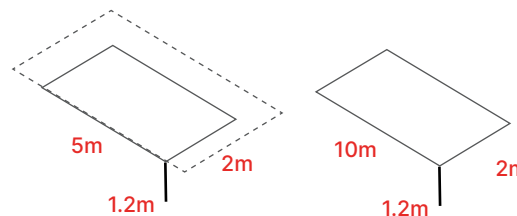
Means of drainage must be provided in pits for all street trees to prevent water logging and to aid establishment.

Newly planted trees must be secured in place, either above or below ground.

Consideration should be given to species in relation to the specific site conditions

Species should be selected to ensure that their ultimate canopy spread does not encroach within 2m of building façades.

Trees should be arranged to create a wildlife corridor to help increase biodiversity in urban areas.



Minimum requirements for tree pit specifications using structural soils. Recommended minimum soil volume of stone-based structural tree soil:

Mature Size of Tree**

Small (5-10m)	Medium (10-15m)	Large (15-25m)	Massive (>25m)
15m ³ (12m ³ if shared)	26m ³ (20m ³ if shared)	36m ³ (28m ³ if shared)	45m ³ (35m ³ if shared)

*Mature tree sizes are listed in Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure - a guide for specifiers
tdag_treespeciesguidev1.3.pdf

†Fastigate trees will require less rooting space than trees with wide canopy shapes. As a rule of thumb, one should assume that a tree with a narrow and columnar crown form would require half as much soil volume as a tree of the same height that has a wide crown.



Approximate Scale of proposed planting along North Street

1.2 Cost Table - Indicative Schedule of Rates

	Item	Unit Rate		Commentary
		£	p	
1	Paving - Mixed-Use / Commercial Streets	£220	/ m2	Natural Stone (finish and bedding)
2	Paving - Residential Streets	£100	/ m2	Precast Concrete / Tarmacadam (finish & bedding)
3	Paving - Substructures (where required)	£100	/ m2	
4	Paving - Removal of existing and disposal	£20	/ m2	
5	SUDs - Permeable Block Paving	£130	/ m2	Precast Concrete (finish & bedding)
6	SUDs - Permeable Block Paving - Substructures (where required)	£120	/ m2	
7	Kerbs - Natural Stone	£175	/ m	
8	Kerbs - Precast Concrete	£85	/ m	
9	Drainage Channels - Natural Stone	£200	/ m	
10	Drainage Channels - Precast Concrete	£100	/ m	
11	Raised Crossings; at key pedestrian intersections Decorative, raised table surface	£350	/ m2	Allowance subject to specification and road width; excludes controlled crossing installations
12	Dropped crossings; at pedestrian intersections Standard Crossing	£250	/ m2	Allowance subject to specification and road width; excludes controlled crossing installations
13	Cycleway; Integrated with Paving Layouts	£200	/ m	Assume 1.5m width; coloured tarmacadam finish; kerbs excluded
14	Planter Edges - Natural Stone	£200	/ m	
15	Planter Edges - Precast Concrete	£85	/ m	
16	SUDs - Swales/Rain Gardens	£230	/ m2	
17	Planting - Medium Trees, in hardscape	£14,200	/ No.	
18	Planting - Medium Trees, in soft landscape	£3,700	/ No.	
19	Planting - Shrubs	£75	/ m2	
20	Planting - herbaceous	£60	/ m2	
21	Lighting - Standard up to 8m; Varies by street	£5,000	/ No.	Excludes trench, cabling
22	Lighting - Standard 10m; Varies by street	£8,000	/ No.	Excludes trench, cabling
23	Bench	£5,000	/ No.	Allowance; bespoke design; based on 2m length
24	Litter Bin	£1,500	/ No.	Assumes 'off the shelf' product
25	Cycle Stands	£900	/ No.	Allowance; bespoke
26	Signage - Finger Posts	£5,000	/ No.	Allowance

* Taken from the Order of Costs report (page 23)
from SFP. Received 16/01/2025

8

ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

Stakeholder Engagement

The masterplan has been developed in consultation with several key stakeholders including the RBC Public Realm Working Group and Warwickshire County Council, and the masterplan material was shared with wider stakeholders as part of the public consultation. For the next stage where detailed projects of the masterplan will be taken forward, the intention is to carry on this engagement with more focused group sessions.

RBC Public Realm Working Group

The Working Group was set up at the start of the public realm masterplan project to monitor and review its progress. This has included a study tour of Altrincham to better understand the potential of public realm improvements to transform a town centre; a review of the initial contextual analysis, and; a review of the public realm masterplan proposals.

Warwickshire County Council

WCC have been engaged throughout the development of the masterplan. Particular interest has been paid to the potential transformation of highways and potential effects on bus and taxi provision. Further engagement with WCC will be undertaken with the projects to be taken forward.

Saint Andrews Church

In October 2024, an engagement session was held with St Andrews Church.

In recent years the Church has undertaken improvements to its grounds. Planned future improvements include cleaning, uplighting, and restoring the stained glass windows. Saint Andrews have a strong commitment to the church and its surroundings serving as a vital community space within the Rugby town centre. They are keen to explore further enhancements to their grounds and better ways of integrating the church into the town's urban fabric. This could possibly include opening access to the south door and widening the entrances to Church Street. The church will be a key stakeholder to be consulted for the central stitch project, ensuring that appropriate access to the church is maintained and enhanced.

Public Consultation

An important step in the development of the proposals for the public realm is the communication and engagement of the locals and residents.

Feedback from the event will help focus the project in the right direction and inspire new and improved solutions for the identified issues, all while fostering a collaborative relationship with the people of Rugby.

Drop-in Event

Date: 21st September 2024

Time: 11:00am - 5:00pm

Location: Rugby Autumn Food and Drink Festival

Online Survey

Date: 21st September - 14th October 2024

The event provided the local community with the opportunity to meet with the design team and share their thoughts on the emerging design ideas. The event was incredibly busy due to the popularity generated from the surrounding food and drink festival, and it created a wonderful opportunity for informal and spontaneous interactions with the public.

10 A1 boards detailing the proposals, interventions and strategies were laid out for people to read, and post-it notes were made available for peoples comments. Many lively conversations were had and it was clear that the people of Rugby were passionate about their town and keen to see real improvements and to get involved in the process.

Paper surveys were on hand as well as a QR code which was shared widely for people to fill in the survey and offer feedback at their leisure.

The following pages provide a summary of what was heard on the day as well as details on the feedback gained from the online questionnaire.

Desired Outcomes

- Communication of findings from stakeholder engagement so far
- Gain local knowledge
- Understand how the space is currently used
- Identify strengths and opportunities
- Highlight existing issues/concerns/conflicts
- Discover dreams & aspirations
- Test the emerging ideas and different spatial scenarios
- Establish trust and build rapport
- Develop a common language
- Mutual understanding of the process
- Build momentum and long-term commitment
- Instil ownership/responsibility



The poster was shared on social media to promote awareness of the engagement event at the festival, and the festivals popularity led to an impressive turnout, attracting a diverse group of participants from various ages and backgrounds. Notably, many of these individuals might not have engaged in a more traditional consultation setting.

RUGBY
BOROUGH COUNCIL

DROP-IN AND SEE THE PROPOSALS FOR RUGBY TOWN CENTRE

11:00-17:00 21st September 2024

Rugby Autumn Food & Drink Festival Rugby Town Centre

Come and visit us at the Rugby Borough Council stall at the Autumn Food and Drink Festival to find out more about our exciting proposals for Rugby Town centre.

We will be showcasing our ideas for:

- Enhanced streets and spaces in the heart of Rugby;
- Reconnecting our communities.

Share your thoughts on the emerging designs and help shape the future of Rugby. Everyone is invited to join us for an informative day!

Drop-in anytime between 11:00am and 5:00pm for a friendly chat.

You will also be able to view the proposals online at:

www.rugby.gov.uk/haveyoursay
From Saturday 21st September to 14th October 2024.

You will find us next door to the pop-up kitchen on the lawn at Regent Place.

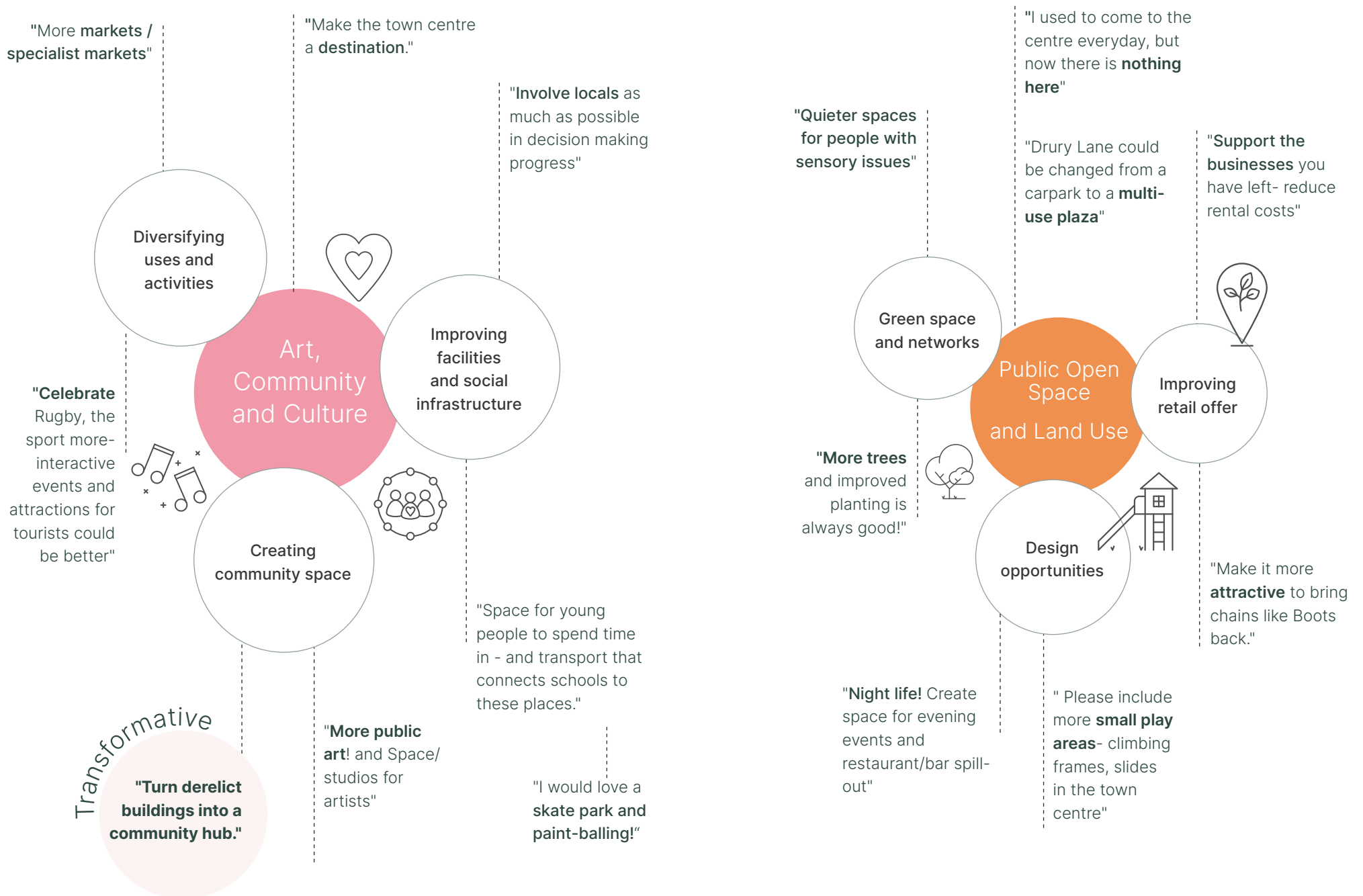
Feedback and comments

During the consultation residents were encouraged to share their thoughts and comments on post-it notes and directed to the survey.

Informal one-on-one conversations yielded some of the most engaging and informative insights. The topics and feelings discussed were wide-ranging, and yet many sentiments were consistently echoed.

This feedback has helped to create a picture of what are considered the most pressing issues to locals today.





Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities

The following provides a summary of the common issues identified as strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the town centre, according to Rugby residents and visitors:

Strengths

- Character buildings and assets such as the Victorian clock tower
- Excellent connections to surrounding cities, London etc.
- Popular events such as the food and drink festivals and bike festival
- Excellent schools - young people bring vibrancy to the area
- Caldecott Park - a high quality green-flag awarded park
- Increased tourism through celebration of the game of rugby and the town's rich history

Weaknesses

- Failing highstreet and high cost of renting retail units pushing businesses out
- Parking in the town centre is too widespread and too expensive
- The town centre is congested and traffic is an issue
- Limited connection to the train station and no bus station
- Poor crossing points
- Unwelcoming arrival points and gateways
- General lack of activities and attractions to draw people into the centre
- History not celebrated enough - there are other stories to tell.

Opportunities

- Upgrading central areas that prioritise pedestrians over vehicles
- More investment in the highstreet - pop-up shops in vacant units, reduction of rates
- More outdoor seating and spill-out areas
- Integrate play elements to attract families
- Consider feelings of safety - softer lighting and better lit areas such as the railway bridge and Caldecott Park
- Better designed space for activities and events
- More trees and planting - connecting the greenspaces, shade, seasonal interest
- Interactive elements - sculpture and things that highlight Rugby's history and connection to the sport
- Better public transport and more convenient connections throughout the town

What could there be?



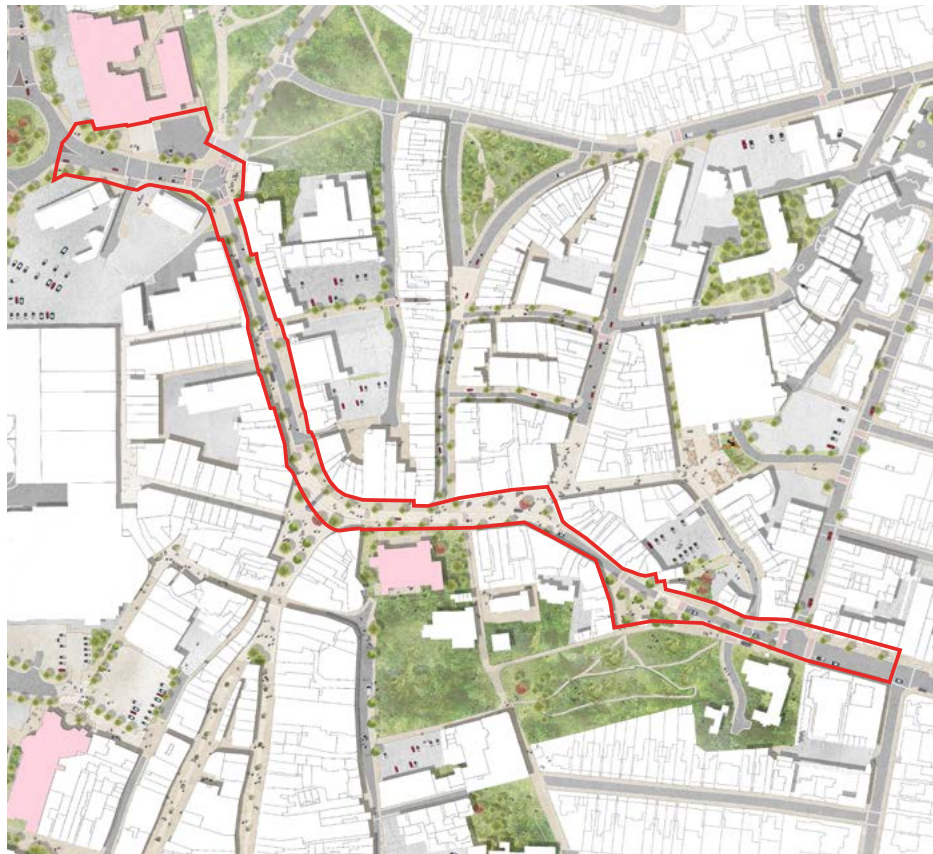
Key words and common ideas

Throughout the day there were many themes, feelings and ideas that came up time and again.

potential bad
ashamed
cycling busy
history parking
Shuttlebus quiet
highstreet
rugby game vacant
traffic
derelict pedestrianise
empty retail
disappointing park

Feedback on project 1 - The Stitch

The catalyst project- The Stitch, received lots of attention and positive comments from the local residents.



Goals

- More welcoming and safe street and walkways for pedestrians and cyclists
- Greener street section with more dwelling space
- Consistent furniture and lighting strategy
- Cycle path integrated in street section, together with cycle stands
- Clearer crossing points and way finding
- Improved accessibility to the main area and the surroundings
- Improved shop frontages and spillout areas

Widening the pavements is a great idea

Pedestrianise the whole of the centre

'The derelict building could be bought for the community to use - its an eyesore

We definitely want more trees!

Bus provision should not be reduced - too many people rely on it

Getting rid of the taxi rank around the clock tower would be great - open up the space

Summary of Feedback

Public consultation feedback Summary

Overall, the community responded positively to the emerging proposals.

People seem excited by the opportunity with lots of supportive commentary, particularly around the enhancement of green space and creating a more efficient public transport and vehicular strategy.

To be expected, there were some concerns and conflicting opinions but they were in the minority.

The support and enthusiasm for the proposed improvements to Rugby's town centre was evident.

Wayfinding feedback

The feedback on the wayfinding proposals was mixed, with some respondents strongly supporting the ideas, while others expressed opposition or uncertainty about their significance.

This range of opinions was also reflected in our discussions with the public. Overall, however, there is considerable enthusiasm for the town centre proposals, along with a clear recognition that improvements are essential for the town's ongoing development.

For a more detailed analysis and report on the wayfinding proposals and the feedback received, please refer to the *Rugby - Place Analysis* document in the appendices.

Questionnaire Feedback

A questionnaire was designed to collect key information and feedback from the Rugby community.

Paper copies were provided on the day of the event, with an online version accessible from September 21st to October 14th. Overall, only 34 people responded to the online survey—a small percentage compared to those who participated in the consultation in person. However, the survey results largely reflect the feedback gathered directly on the day.

To summarise; The questionnaire responses revealed that Rugby residents typically spent 1-2 hours most days in the town centre, primarily for shopping, including grocery shopping. Many expressed a desire to make the town centre more appealing and pedestrian-friendly. There was also a consistent call for additional amenities and attractions to encourage longer visits and greater engagement.

9

COSTING AND
DELIVERY

Order of Cost Estimate

An Order of Cost Estimate was undertaken by Simon Fenton Partnership on behalf of Rugby Borough Council. This provides a high-level calculation of the potential construction costs for each project identified in the masterplan.

The estimated construction cost takes into account the outline design proposals noting the following:

- Costs have been stated in terms of estimated cost per m2 of public realm, based on precedent construction projects.
- Costs should be considered as an order of magnitude as to what the scheme may cost.
- The further development of the costs will be subject to further design development and the associated review of detailed General Arrangements, Construction Details, Specifications, Site Surveys and Reports.
- The table presents a summary of the total project costs, encompassing construction costs, design fees, and additional project expenses. These include design and construction risks, employer risks, and inflation.

Phase	Total Cost
Project 1 - Clock Tower to Old Market Place	£10,262,858
Project 2 - The Stitch (North and South)	£11,325,428
Project 3 - The Pleasance Garden	£3,925,704
Project 4 - Chapel Street Square	£1,368,946
Project 5 - Library Museum and Art Gallery Entrance	£3,247,804
Project 6 - William Webb Ellis Park / Plaza	£16,863,787
Total Construction Cost (Ex VAT)	£46,994,526

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