

Guildford Street (North)

Guildford Street

In total, nearly £500,000 of funding is available for improvements to Guildford Street (North), much of it from the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). A requirement of the funding is that the improvements must be completed, and the money spent, by April 2025. It is essential therefore that any proposed public realm improvements can be delivered within this timescale. This consultation seeks your views on proposals for improving the street.

Many of the proposals shown in this exhibition would need to be delivered on highway land owned by Surrey County Council (SCC). As such, Runnymede Borough Council will be discussing the feedback from this consultation with SCC and working collaboratively with their officers with the aim of ensuring that the preferred measures can be delivered within the timeframe.

£165,000 is also available to help businesses and organisations on Guildford Street improve the appearance of their buildings. Grants offered will be up to £20,000 per building and a 15% contribution will be required from businesses. Again, the grant funding needs to be spent by April 2025. Further detail is available at:

www.runnymede.gov.uk/businessfrontagegrant

There are also other initiatives being progressed which will help improve Guildford Street in the long term. In particular, preparations are in place for a new monthly market which has been something local surveys have indicated would benefit the town centre.

The focus of this exhibition is on the improvements to the public realm of Guildford Street (North), the area shown within the red line. The following boards explain the proposals and there are a series of questions which will enable you to tell us what you think of the ideas.

You can also complete the survey on-line by going to www.runnymede.gov.uk/guildfordstreet. If you scan the QR code on each board they will also take you to the website page for the survey.

The survey closes at midnight on Sunday 24th March.



Do you agree that Guildford Street needs environmental improvements?



Heritage character

Guildford Street

Street Furniture

Guildford Street (North) is towards the centre of the Chertsey Conservation Area. As such, enhancing it would not only help improve the localised street scene, but also the wider historic environment in which it sits.

The Council has commissioned a Heritage Assessment to consider how the heritage setting of Guildford Street (North) could be improved. This could involve:

- having a unified style for street furniture moving forward such as the bollards, bins and benches,
- reducing 'street clutter' e.g. multiple signposts through rationalisation etc,
- replacing tired street furniture with high-quality replacements which fit in with the new 'unified' style.

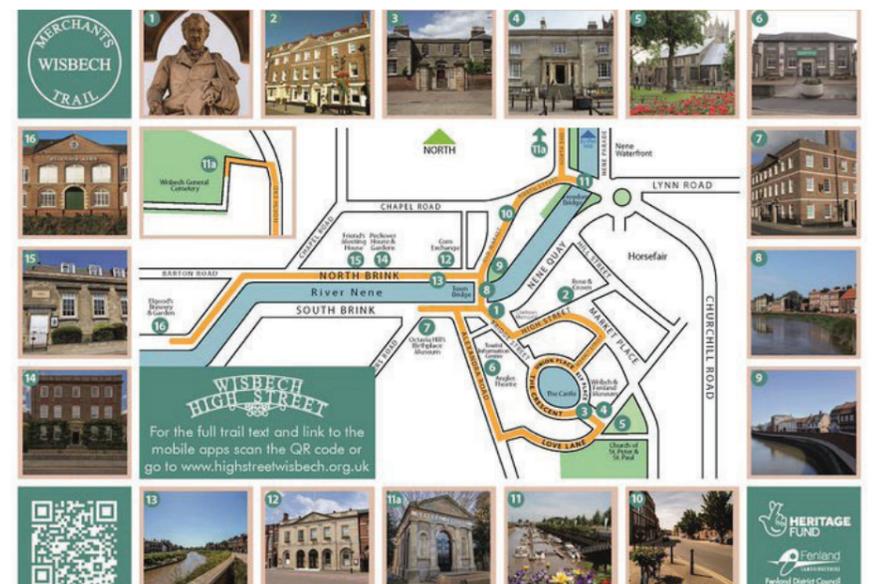


Photos illustrating the wide variety of styles and colours used for street furniture on Guildford Street, poor maintenance of existing features such as bike rack, and excessive signage attached to a historic lamp in the background. Addressing these types of issues would improve the character of the Conservation Area and wider street scene.

Heritage Trails

The Council would also like your views on proposals for interactive trails which could cover both Guildford Street and the wider town centre. It is proposed that QR codes could be introduced at key locations to provide information to visitors on the history of Chertsey and historic local figures. Headsets could be hired at the Chertsey Museum and content could be amended as required.

It is intended that trails could be changed as needed, for example in the school holidays, trails could be developed which are aimed at children, to encourage families to visit the town, or trails could be developed at other times to appeal to the interests of other including bespoke-themed events.



Example of interactive Heritage Trail board

Business Improvement Frontage Grants

Alongside enhancing the general street scene along Guildford Street, the Council has received grant funding (£165,000) from the Government that is being targeted at improving shop fronts. We are offering grants of up to £20,000 for businesses with the Chertsey Conservation Area and will fund up to 85% of the cost of improvements.

Guildford Street businesses will be prioritised, but the programme is also open to applications from businesses on Windsor Street and London Street.

The grants can be used in a variety of ways to improve shopfronts and business frontages, including upper storeys. This includes:

- New shopfronts, repairs or maintenance to existing shopfronts,
- Reinstatement of original architectural features
- Replacement of external security shutters with internal open grille-style shutters
- New signage and/or lighting that is more in keeping with the area
- Awnings, Stall risers and pilaster
- Repairs to façade render / pointing
- Repairs to windows/replacement windows
- New or replacement window boxes/planters
- Painting
- Outdoor tables and seating (subject to pavement licence applications).



Examples of how shopfront grants have helped support local businesses and improve other town centres.

Tell us what you think of the ideas to improve the heritage character



Opportunities

Guildford Street

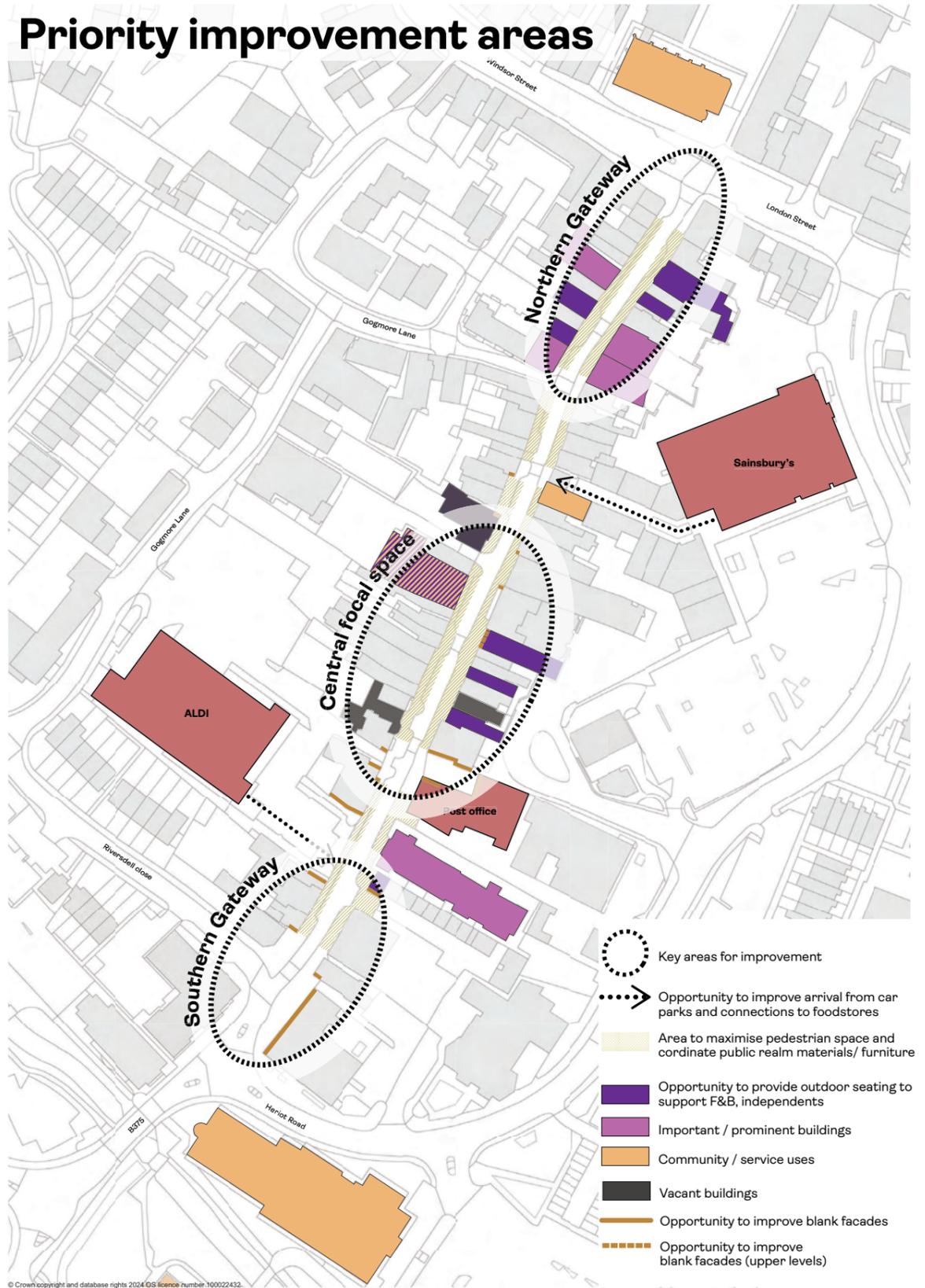
The public realm strategy for Guildford Street is based on the following key objectives:

- Support businesses by providing an improved public realm and increasing 'dwell time' in Guildford Street,
- Improve gateways and points of arrival for pedestrians to create a more welcoming environment and improve footfall,
- Improve the historic character of the street and individual buildings,
- Improve areas which can stimulate interest in vacant premises,
- Create focal points of interest along the street,
- Increase opportunities for socialising, with more seating and attractive places to spend time,
- Increase greenery in the street,
- Reduce the speed of traffic entering the street and travelling along it, to create a safer environment for shoppers and visitors.

In terms of value for money, a key objective of the public realm proposals should also be to maximise the number of businesses, and the length of the street, that benefits from the improvements. Investment is therefore proposed to be spread across a number of areas in Guildford Street.

Three broad areas have been identified for improvement. The Northern Gateway, Southern Gateway and a new Central Focal Space. Possible improvements to these areas are shown later in this exhibition.

Priority improvement areas



Area 1: Northern Gateway (see Board 5)



Area 2: Central Focal Space (see Board 6)



Area 3: Southern Gateway (see Board 7)



Do you agree with the three priority areas identified for improvement?

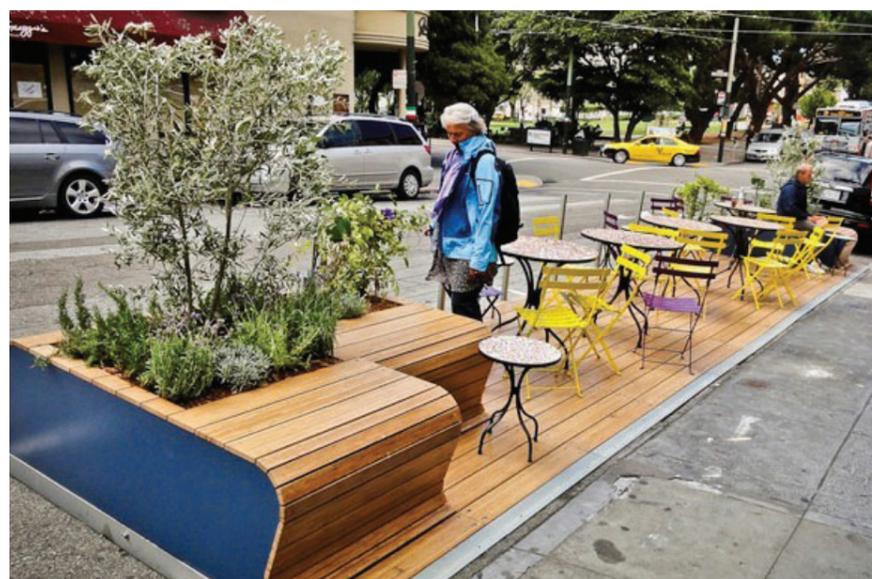


Seating & planting

Guildford Street

In order to ensure the public realm proposals can be implemented by April 2025, they would be designed to avoid permanent changes to kerbs or footways. This approach reduces the design time and approvals needed for the changes. It also reduces construction costs and means more areas of Guildford Street can be improved.

This board shows examples of 'parklets' which many High Streets implemented in the period following the Covid 19 outbreak, to provide additional greenspace and outdoor seating for residents, visitors and town centre businesses. Subject to the agreement of the County Council, these 'parklets' can be provided on a trial basis, public opinion tested, and if necessary the designs can be amended or the parklets relocated to address any concerns.



It is important to note that such 'temporary' parklets have a permanent quality to them, and are of high quality design. They can be supplied 'off the shelf' from existing companies, but ideally could be designed locally in partnership with businesses, artists and community groups, with materials, colours and planting to be selected to enhance the conservation area and create a coordinated identity for Guildford Street.

Removable planters, or 'heritage gates', can also be used to create a more appropriate barrier to Guildford Street on market and event days, (rather than bollards), with design, planting, signage and messaging tailored for more specific events and advertising the traders.



Do you support the ideas for introducing greenery and seating?



Area 1: Northern Gateway

Guildford Street

We would like to improve the entrances or 'gateways' into Guildford Street for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Improving the 'sense of arrival' would help bring more visitors into the street.

There is an opportunity to make the vehicular entrance into Guildford Street from London Street/Windsor Street a bit narrower. This would slow traffic down as it turns the corner, make it safer to cross the street at this junction and increase space for pedestrians and seating. These proposals are being investigated in detail as part of the Runnymede Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Planters or parklets where the pavement is wider could improve arrival, and significantly reduce the visual impact of cars on the street and the conservation area. This would also help reduce illegal parking between the existing bollards.

Removable planters could be used on market and event days to create a more attractive traffic barrier which also promotes local businesses.

The existing wide pavement is used by House of Flowers for display and by Just Relish for customer seating outside the cafe. Additional planting and seating could make the space more attractive to customers and help reduce illegal parking on the pavement.

Existing on-street parking bays retained.

Existing on-street parking bays retained.

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An indicative sketch showing how planters could potentially improve the entrance to Guildford Street and create an attractive way to close the street on market and event days.



Tell us what you think of the ideas to improve the Northern Gateway



Area 2: Central Focal Space

Guildford Street

Creating a 'central focal space' around the cluster of independent businesses, community uses and food and drink premises that exist at the heart of Guildford Street north and improving pedestrian arrival from the Sainsbury car park would bring a number of benefits.



Planters and seating on the wide pavement outside the Kings Head could encourage reuse of this vacant building, creating a more attractive space for customers and reducing illegal parking.

The four parking bays in front of Blue Mushroom would be retained, providing on-street parking and space for stalls on market days and event days.

Planters placed at key points along the street would bring greenery to the street and help reduce illegal parking, creating more space for pedestrians.

Improving the public realm and slowing traffic would also improve the environment for the cluster of local restaurants and cafes on the east side of Guildford Street.

Planting and seating would create an attractive space in the area just north of the Post Office Depot, helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve pedestrian arrival from the Sainsburys car park (see sketch below).



An indicative sketch to show how the space owned by Runnymede Borough Council (to the north of the Post Office Depot) could be improved by creating a parklet, with seating, planting, lighting, better cycle parking and opportunities for public art.

Tell us what you think of the ideas to improve the Central Focal Space



Area 3: Southern Gateway

Guildford Street

This is an important space for drawing pedestrians north from the Leisure Centre, Library, car park, Riverside park and from other areas of Guildford Street to the south.

New planters and seating to replace semi-circle of bollards at entrance to Aldi car park (this can only be done with support of Aldi). Existing on-street parking retained.

On-street parking retained in front of Super Pizza, Chertsey Vets and Abbeymead Dental Practice

Planters can be provided within the existing wide pavement at the entrance to Guildford Street (North). This could be combined with bins and signage to reduce clutter.

The wide pavement provides an opportunity for seating, public art, planters and parklets next to SSNR club whilst still leaving plenty of room for pedestrians. Space could also be made for market stalls and street food operators, bringing life to this empty part of the street.

There is an opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities at the junction with Heriot Road and by the library. These proposals are being investigated in detail by the LCWIP feasibility study.

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Indicative sketch showing how a parklet could improve the space outside the SSNR building, with new planting, seating and even opportunities for 'street food' whilst still leaving plenty of room for pedestrian flow to and from Guildford Street. It would provide a focal space for social activity which is lacking in the town centre.

Tell us what you think of the ideas to improve the Southern Gateway



Survey & Next Steps

Guildford Street

Please tell us what you think

We would like to know whether you support the overall investment in Guildford Street, your views on the individual proposals and what you think are the priority areas for improvement.

This consultation exercise will last for 3 weeks and closes at midnight on Sunday March 24th. You can submit hard copies of your questionnaire or view the exhibition on-line and provide your responses at

www.runnymede.gov.uk/guildfordstreet

The QR code (right) will also take you to the appropriate website page.



Next Steps

Please note that what is shown on these boards are not final proposals. Final proposals will be developed once responses from this current consultation have been considered.

When we have analysed the survey responses we will let you know the results via our council website. We will be reviewing all the responses and identifying the key priority areas.

Runnymede Borough Council is working with Surrey County Council to deliver a coordinated package of improvements for Guildford Street by April 2025. This includes considerations around any consents needed to implement the parklets and their long term management and maintenance.

Key areas of interest will be investigated further before detailed plans are developed and shared in a public consultation later in the year. We intend to undertake surveys over the coming year which will help us to understand other opportunities for further enhancements and developments for Guildford Street.

Surrey County Council is also preparing the Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which will include proposals to improve Chertsey town centre for pedestrians and cyclists. The County Council is currently considering improvements to London Street and Windsor Street which will coordinate with any future environmental improvements to Guildford Street and consultation on this will take place later in 2025.

Business Improvement Frontage Grants

We will also be communication with businesses on Guildford Street, Windsor Street and London Street for information on how to apply for Business Improvement Frontage Grants.

To find out more information, and to register an expression of interest in applying for a Business Improvement Frontage Grant, please visit our website at

www.runnymede.gov.uk/businessfrontagegrant

The QR code (right) will also take you to the appropriate website page.



Thank you for taking the time to look at this exhibition. We hope you will complete the questionnaire and help us improve Chertsey town centre.

Please remember that you can view these posters and complete the questionnaire by visiting the Council's website at

www.runnymede.gov.uk/guildfordstreet