



# UXBRIDGE

## Town Centre Vision

September 2024



HILLINGDON  
LONDON



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## PROJECT TEAM

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Avison Young

Urban Flow

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JA Projects

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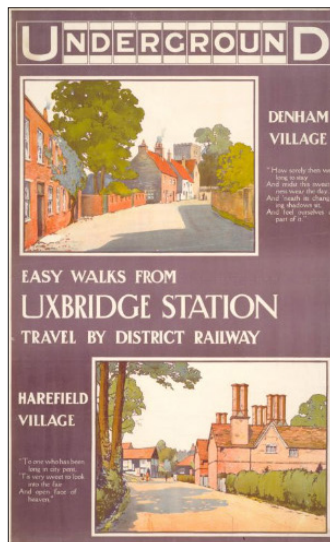
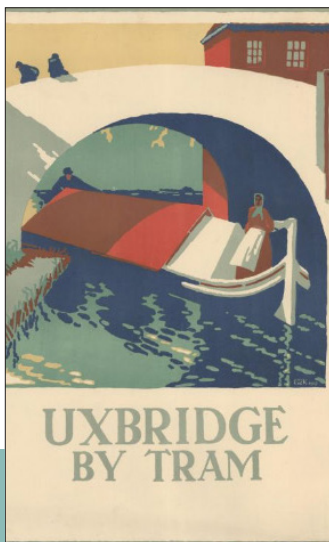
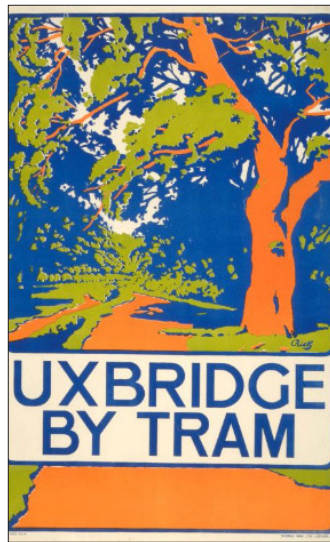
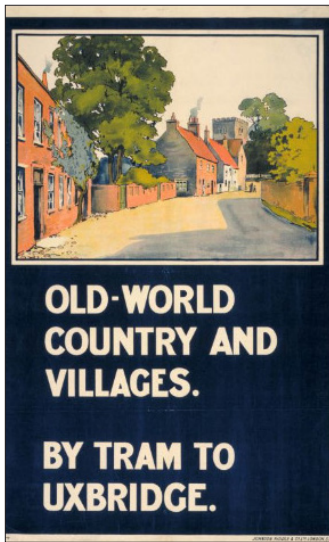
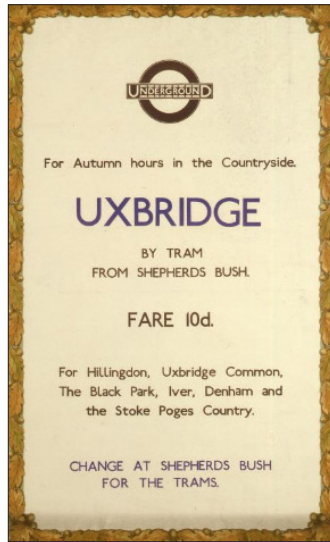
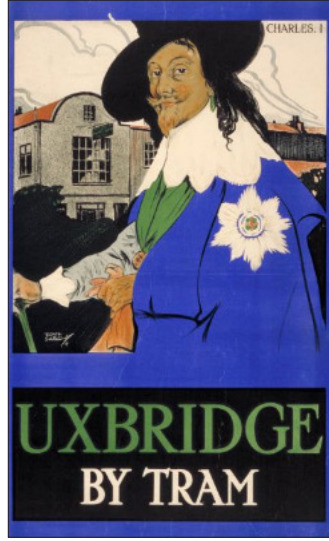
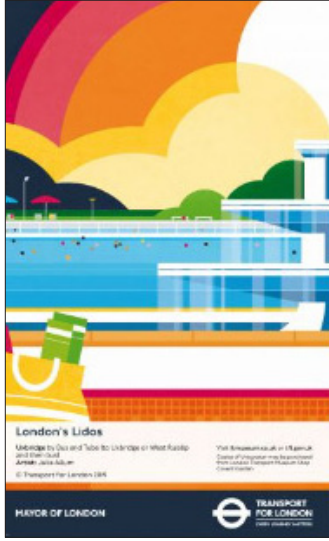


Fig 1.1: Historic posters for transport in Uxbridge produced in the early 1900s. Source: London Transport Museum collection (permission requested), various

# 1.1 Introduction

Hillingdon Council has commissioned a team led by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners to prepare a vision for Uxbridge Town Centre. Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners are leading the masterplanning process and are supported by Avison Young (economy and property), Urban Flow (transport), Brunel University (community engagement) and JA Projects (short term interventions).

Hillingdon Council is reviewing the Local Plan, and this Town Centre Vision will provide an updated vision for Uxbridge as a part of this Local Plan review.

The Uxbridge Town Centre Vision will be a strategic piece that sets out a high-level vision and framework for the future of Uxbridge. It will include a movement strategy, development strategy and public realm strategy, alongside a delivery plan for short term as well as short term interventions for revitalisation. The proposals will be closely informed and shaped by community engagement led by Brunel University.

This document follows a baseline analysis stage which provided a detailed assessment of Uxbridge Town Centre and the immediate hinterland areas. It established an evidence base to inform a set of principles and priorities for the vision.

This Town Centre Vision focuses on Uxbridge's centre. Its purpose is to provide a clear framework for decision making - steering investment priorities, setting principles for development and intervention and providing the basis for landowners and investors to confidently progress plans.

The vision is based on an extensive evidence base and active community engagement. Many stakeholders and representatives have given their time generously and are eager to see the vision delivered once it is agreed. The vision will act as a key document, setting a strategy to achieve parts of the new Local Plan.

This document will be corporately adopted as Council policy, and as such will direct funding and investment decisions immediately. The document is a 15 year vision and therefore stretches beyond existing planning policy but will address the new Local Plan period.

Hillingdon Council would appreciate feedback on all proposals from the public and local stakeholders. The Council will not be able to take all ideas forward, however, consultation will provide a basis for a focus for investment and future priorities for Uxbridge Town Centre.



The Uxbridge Town Centre Vision provides an exciting opportunity to explore a thoughtful and locally specific response to the issues affecting high streets and town centres across the country, and to embrace the assets and roles which make the town centre such a key positive feature for Uxbridge and its residents.

The first phase of community engagement ran between June and August 2023 and wide variety of activities to consult diverse user groups including key stakeholders, community leaders, office workers, business owners, students, and local residents. The methods used include ethnographic observation, experiential mapping, on-street interviews, walk arounds, focus groups, drop in sessions, surveys, social media analysis and a public exhibition. In total 1,097 people participated in the various community consultation activities. This baseline report draws in

findings from the community engagement at key points. This includes area-specific findings where appropriate e.g. Windsor Street and Civic Centre, a summary at the end of each chapter of headline messages relating to each theme, as well as interview quotes throughout the analysis.

The second phase of engagement will take place in Summer 2024 and will test the content of this Draft Town Centre Vision.



Fig 1.2: Photographs of engagement events and activities



## 1.2 Why we need a vision

### Purpose of the study

A coherent framework for future activity and investment

The purpose of the town centre vision is to establish a long term strategy within which short term interventions can be delivered. The framework must encompass a movement and transport strategy, a development and renewal strategy, a land use framework and a public realm strategy.

Some key aspects that the vision must explore are:

**Public realm vitality:** creation of new spaces to socialise that will encourage the community to visit the town centre more and support its businesses. These include a new series of permanent and temporary public spaces.

**New activities:** A programme of interventions such as pop-up shops, maker spaces, and exhibitions that bring new organisations into the town centre.

**Better links:** The improvement of connections with surrounding areas, notably St. Andrews Park, Fasnidge Park and Brunel University, to bring more footfall into the centre, especially in the evenings.

**Residential intensification:** options for increasing opportunities to live within the town centre.

### Context

#### Policy context

This document sits within a unique policy context, which was thoroughly reviewed during the baseline stage. The review was important to understand the huge amount of work that has already been done examining Uxbridge town centre. The policy context underpins the vision, understanding how the project can build upon existing policy and where there may be gaps in understanding/proposals.

#### Previous work

The vision is not starting from scratch. Much work has been done before and the team have absorbed these studies and built on them to establish a comprehensive framework for future change. This includes 2016 We Made That Strategy, 2017 DK-CM report and 2021 Re-imagining Uxbridge High Street by Brunel University for the Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce.





## Baseline activities (stage 1)

### Engagement activities:

- 1,097 people spoken to via interviews, focus groups, walkarounds, drop ins and exhibition event
- User group analysis
- Meetings with key stakeholders, landowners and local groups
- Initial findings (detailed report to follow in Sept)
- Social media analysis

### Urban design analysis:

- Character analysis and mapping
- Public realm analysis and comparison with previous studies
- Climate change considerations (mitigation and adaptation)

### Movement analysis:

- Meetings with Transport for London, Greater London Authority and Hillingdon officers
- Data gathering
- Analysis of wider regional connections
- Impact assessments of built form on active travel

### Economic, social and commercial evidence base:

- Examination of Uxbridge's economy/office base
- Examination of Uxbridge's high street mix
- Demographic analysis and trends
- Implications of retail and office shifts



## 1.3 Location and study area

### Vision study area boundary

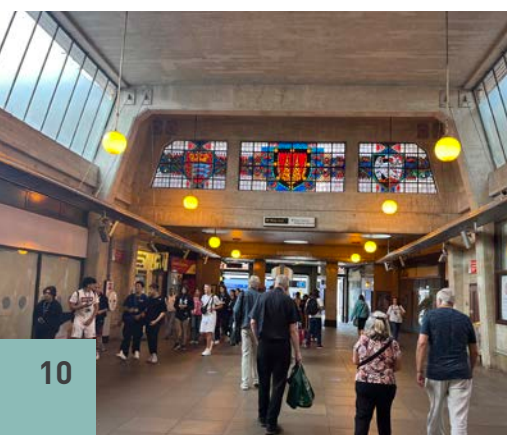
The core study boundary is the designated town centre boundary (shown in red on the adjacent plan). However, the baseline analysis has also looked at the immediate areas around this boundary, as well as the wider catchment for the town centre. In addition to the town centre boundary there are two additional sites identified by Hillingdon Council for consideration. The study area considers the major retail and commercial spaces, transport interchanges and contains numerous stakeholders.

### Strategic connections

Uxbridge town centre is approximately 15 miles west of Central London, located right on the western edge of Greater London. It is a Metropolitan Centre and the commercial and civic focus for the London Borough of Hillingdon. Uxbridge station is in the centre of the High Street and is the western terminus for the Metropolitan and Piccadilly underground lines.

Despite the direct links into central London, the journey time is relatively long, especially in the context of the connections that Hayes and West Drayton have through the Elizabeth. The central reaches West Ruislip nearby.

These east-west connections are stronger, however, than the north-south movement throughout the borough. London Heathrow airport is south of Uxbridge but not easily accessed. Many studies have examined rapid bus transit between Uxbridge and Heathrow, however, they have been deemed unviable.



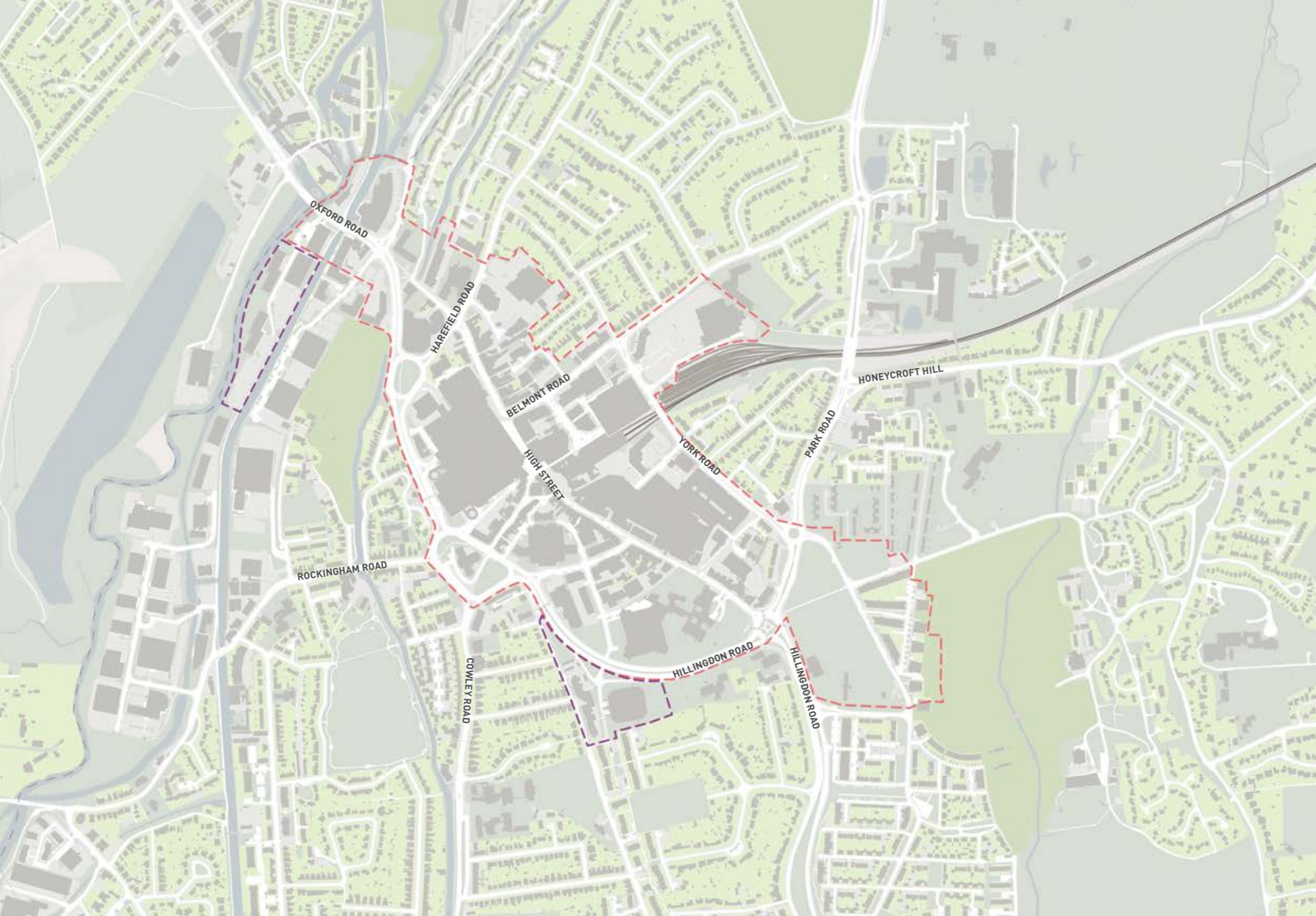
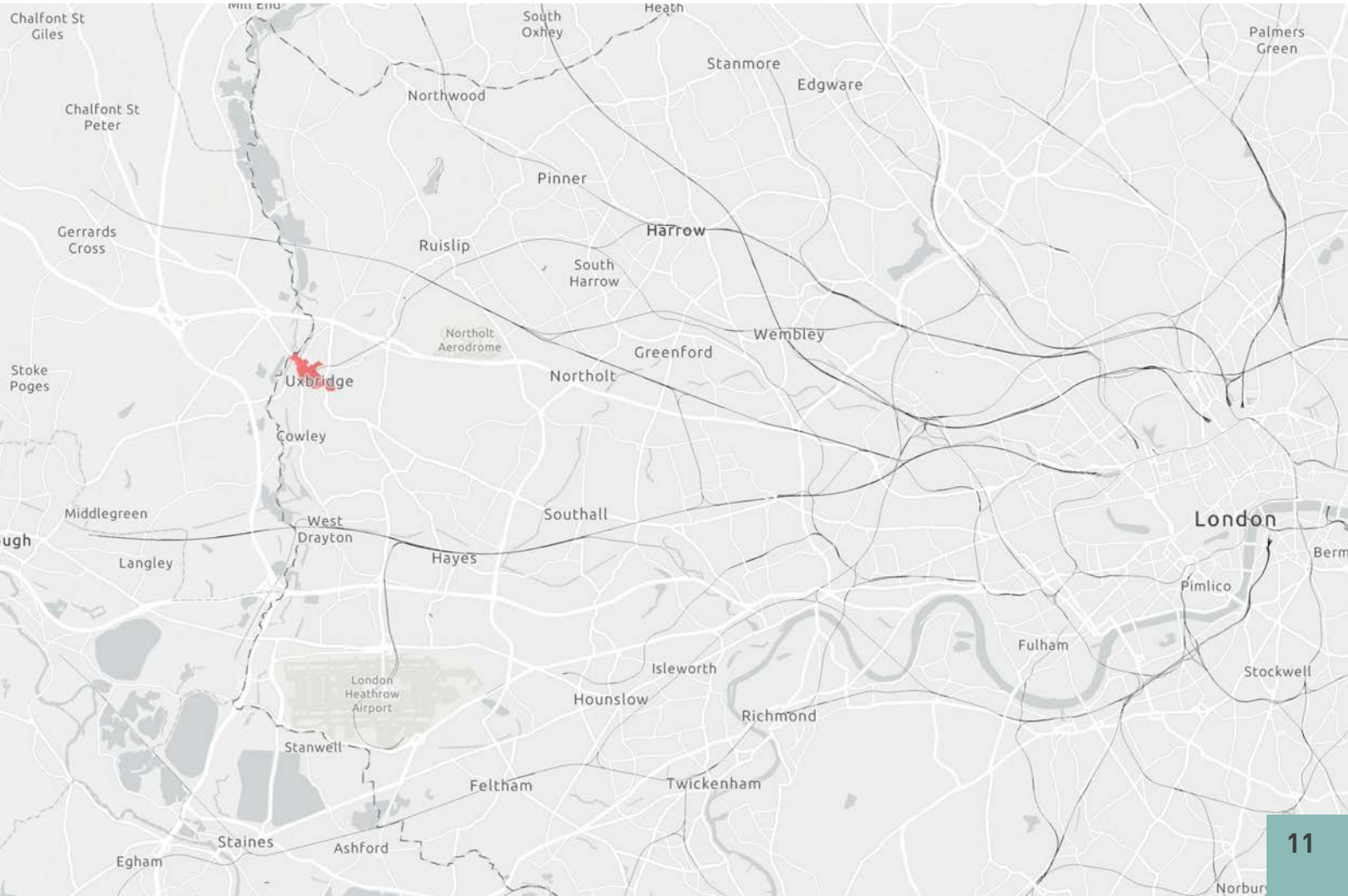


Fig 1.3: Study area - Uxbridge town centre boundary and additional adjacent opportunity sites. Source: © Crown copyright Ordnance Survey 2023 OS licence 09121572

Fig 1.4: Location plan - Uxbridge sits at the western edge of Greater London. Source: © Crown copyright Ordnance Survey 2023 OS licence 09121572





OXFORD ROAD

Buckinghamshire  
New University

HAREFIELD ROAD

Police  
Station

Fassnidge  
Park

The Pavilions

BELMONT ROAD

HIGH STREET

Tube  
station

ROCKINGHAM ROAD

The  
Charter  
Building

COWLEY ROAD



Sainsbury's

Uxbridge  
College

HONEYCROFT HILL

YORK ROAD

PARK ROAD

The  
Chimes

Civic  
Centre

HILLINGDON ROAD

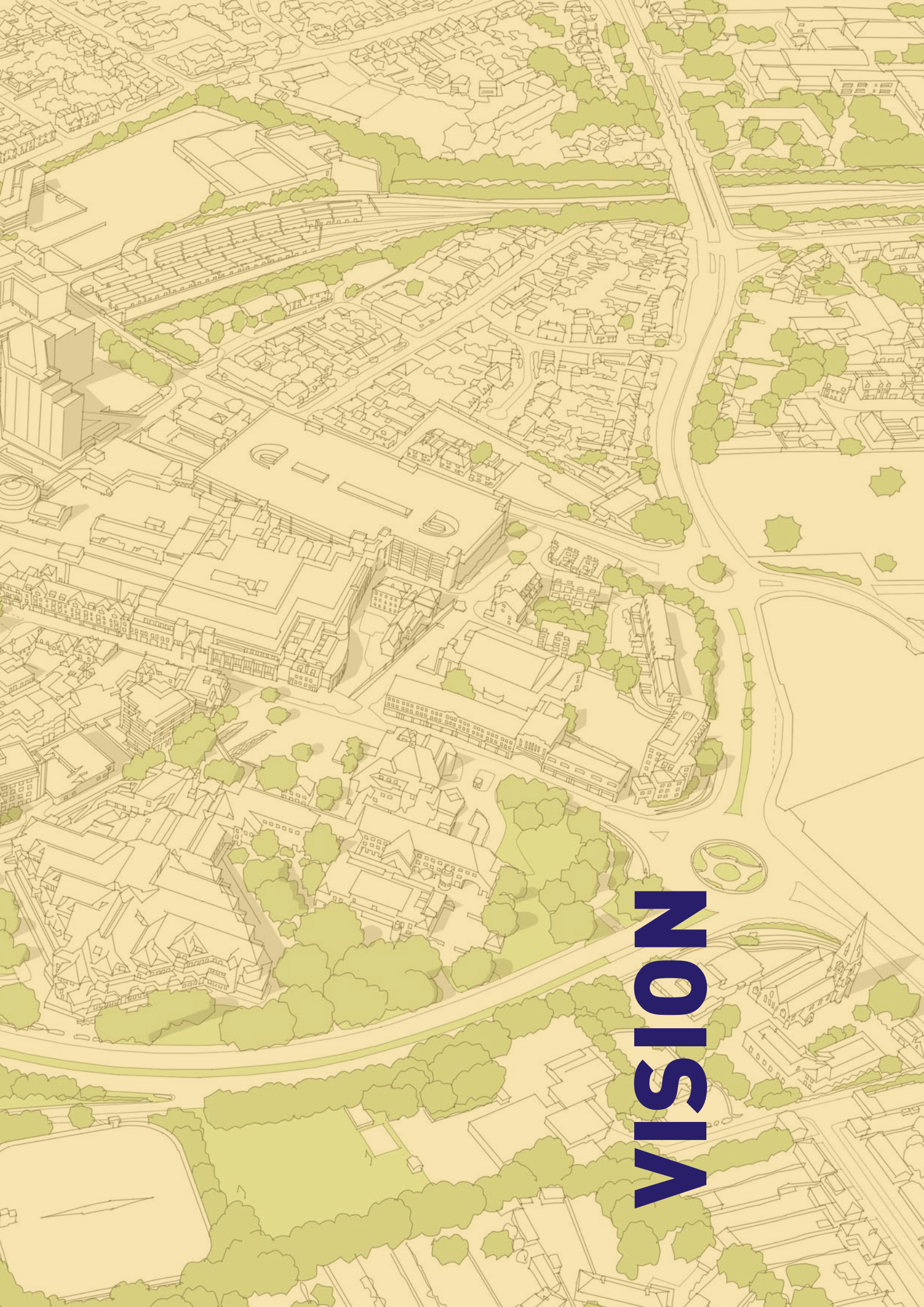
HILLINGDON ROAD

St Andrew's  
Park





2



# VISION

## 2.1 A vision for Uxbridge

### WELCOME TO UXBRIDGE

Uxbridge will establish an identity as a **welcoming town centre for all**.

Local people are hugely invested in the town centre but they need it to evolve and catch up with their current needs and to more proactively respond to future trends.

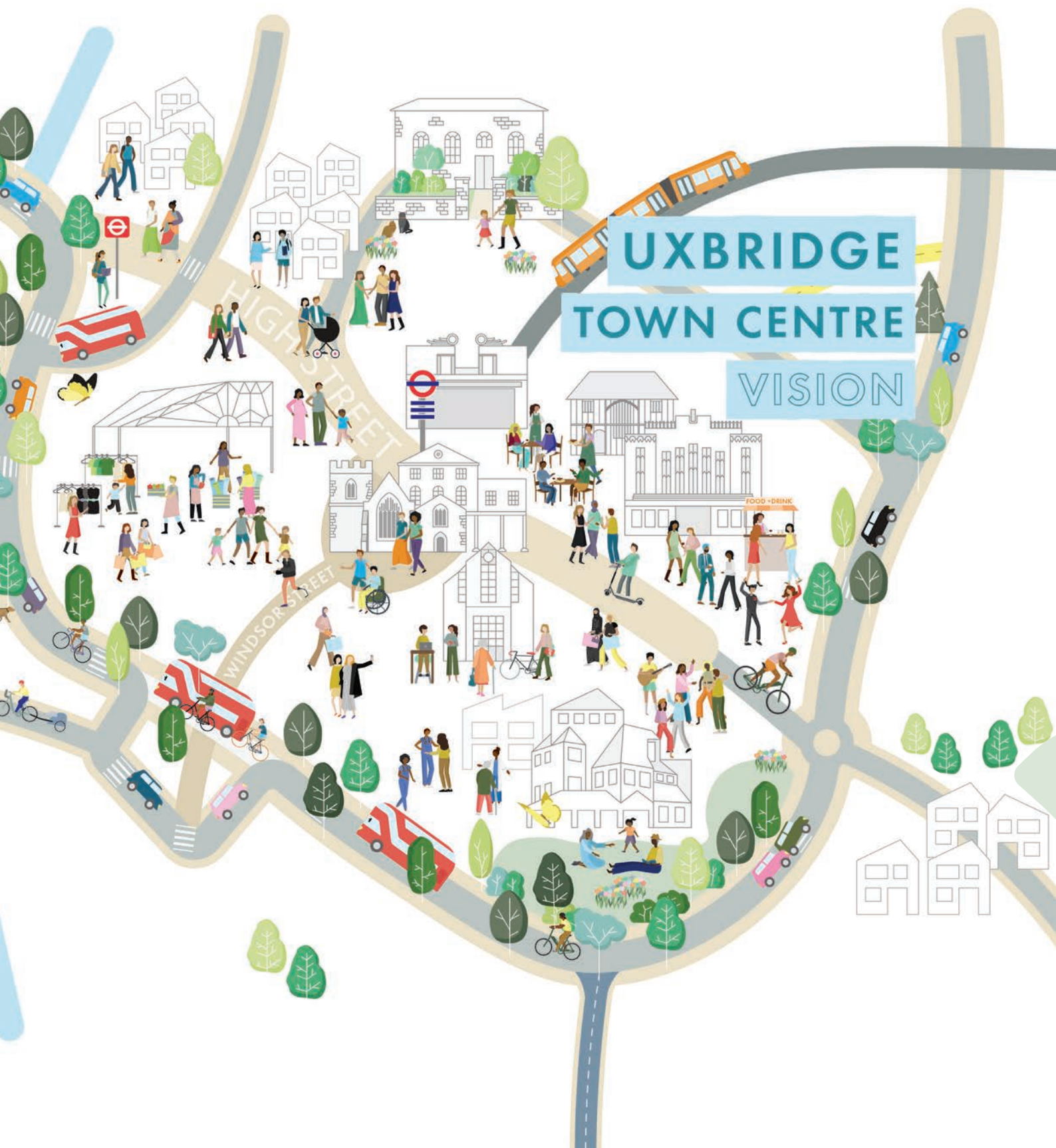
It will be a place where people can **live, work, visit, play, socialise, network, exercise, stay and meet daily needs**.

It will celebrate its past, but live in the present, welcoming visitors and encouraging inclusive community living.

**Sustainability and healthy living will be at the heart of the town's future** with excellent walking and cycling routes connecting neighbourhoods and the town centre, with high quality public transport services.







## 2.2 Issues to be addressed

The Uxbridge Town Centre Vision project started with an extensive analysis of the town centre. At the outset a set of hypotheses about how the town centre performs were established. These hypotheses were informed by early conversations with stakeholders, and were then tested through data analysis, surveys and community engagement.

The result was a set of conclusions that nuances some of the assumptions that many stakeholders had about the town centre:

1. The town centre's economy is not declining, but it is vulnerable.
2. The town centre could serve its local population better.
3. The town centre has a comparatively small population, but this is already growing and there is scope for significantly more.
4. The town centre is not realising its potential, particularly in relation to its built fabric, public realm and overall character - many parts of the centre have hidden qualities that could be much better celebrated.
5. The town centre has been undermined by layers of transport infrastructure, particularly road infrastructure.
6. The town centre has lost some of its innate flexibility over time with the introduction of large format buildings and major roads, but there is scope to re-introduce greater adaptability.

These conclusions informed a set of three core themes that the strategy should focus on addressing:

- Building economic resilience
- Better serving local communities
- Enhancing the Environment

Under each of these themes, the team have developed core principles for future change and strategic moves that should be made to support change on the ground.

Chapter 3 outlines the three key issues that have emerged from the baseline findings, the principles that relate to each issue and strategic moves to address the issue. A breakdown of their relationship can be found on this spread.

### Issue: Building economic resilience



Unlike many other centres, the town centre's economy is not declining, however it is vulnerable. Vacancy rates in the town centre are problematic, both for retail and commercial space.

As the town centre has absorbed previous changes and responded to market demands, the physical nature of the town centre has become increasingly inflexible. Major roads and roundabouts now inhibit access into the town centre and development, whilst large format buildings mean the permeability of the town centre has been reduced with block footprints becoming much larger and the routes through them lost. The vision needs to re-introduce greater flexibility to allow the town centre to more deftly adapt and change to future needs.

There is demand for new activities in the town centre. Local people want to see the town centre provide for greater leisure and cultural uses in particular. Ambitions for existing education institutions to have more of a town centre presence would bring a new element into the heart of the town centre, and the strategy should embrace this opportunity.



Principle: Diversify the offer



Strategic move: Create a focus for leisure and culture



Principle: Re-purpose to meet changing demands



Strategic move: Re-purpose the economy to support office market at the heart of the town centre

## Issue: Serving local communities



There is currently a mismatch between local communities' needs and what the town centre provides. Uxbridge needs to address under-representation of produce, health, beauty and professional services, culture and leisure to rise to the market changes and create a destination that can serve all daily needs for surrounding communities. The town centre should be less dominated by chain retail and more influenced by the demographics of the local population which would suggest greater diversity and the support local entrepreneurs. Local communities including Brunel students are in need of evening social and leisure activities that do not involve drinking alcohol. Young people are typically seeking these activities out in central London rather than Uxbridge, which takes away from the centre's local economy.

In contrast to most other town centres, Uxbridge has a comparatively small residential population. Whilst some conversions and new developments are helping to grow this, there is a need to encourage more people to live in the town centre to both support vibrancy and viability.



Principle: Better serve residents needs



Strategic move: Establish the Civic Centre as a community hub



Strategic move: Future proof public transport accessibility



Strategic move: Introduce new residential into the town centre

## Issue: Enhancing the Environment



The baseline analysis has shown that the town centre has been undermined by layers of transport infrastructure, particularly road infrastructure. Community engagement has also emphasised how local people feel the quality of the environment in the town centre has become degraded, reducing the experience of users. There is a need to address existing conflicts and safety concerns to create safe and attractive walking and cycling routes into the town centre.

Despite having a great historic legacy, the town centre is not realising its potential. In many parts of the centre the true character of the buildings and spaces has been hidden where it could be celebrated. Outside of the town centre, there are fantastic parks and landscape features, but inside the town centre there is limited green space and planting. This poses a risk as the climate changes and new greening needs to be introduced to ensure the centre is attractive and comfortable in the coming decades.



Principle: Restore effortless connections



Strategic move: Improve strategic connections for cycling and buses



Strategic move: Enable local access whilst protecting highway function



Principle: Recapture a network of public spaces



Strategic move: Restore a green character to the town centre and celebrate its wider green links



Strategic move: Release the heart of the High Street and Windsor Street

## 2.3 Town centre strengths

Uxbridge Town Centre has many strengths, as highlighted through the baseline analysis and community engagement to date. The following bullet points summarise the findings:

- The high street is protected from through traffic and largely pedestrianised.
- The bus station is right in the heart of the town centre and right next to the tube station.
- The centre boasts an historic high street with significant sections of historic frontages and buildings intact.
- The town centre has large number of students present within its catchment (Brunel University, Buckinghamshire University and Uxbridge College).
- The countryside is right on its doorstep – three rivers, the Grand Union Canal, London Loop route – 8 mins to Fasnidge Park, 9 mins to Grand Union Canal and River Colne and 11 mins to Dowding Park.
- Has direct public transport connections into Central London and surrounding neighbourhoods (e.g. Hillingdon, Ruislip, Ealing, Harrow and Wembley) via the Piccadilly Line and Metropolitan Line.
- Well connected to the South East and the country as a whole due to proximity of both the M25 and M40.
- Large and growing local economy with higher levels of economic output than competitor town centres.
- Economic mix is dominated by more productive office based sectors including Professional, Scientific and Technical Services and Information and Communication. These sectors are supported by relatively good quality office stock across the centre.
- Hosts a number of high profile economic anchors that drive interest and footfall (e.g. Buckinghamshire New University, Coca Cola, Mitsubishi, Hertz, Herbalife, GiffGaff and General Mills), as well as others within its catchment including Brunel University and the Uxbridge Industrial Estate.
- Serves an important civic function linked to the presence of Hillingdon Civic Centre, Uxbridge Magistrates Court and the Hillingdon Metropolitan Police HQ.
- Home to some manufacturing activity and located close to the North Uxbridge Industrial Estate which is an important economic driver and attractor.
- Comparatively young, diverse and growing population which sustains local expenditure and creates vibrancy.
- Relatively mixed retail offer catering to different groups and demographics via a range of comparison and convenience occupiers. Retail vacancy rates are an ongoing challenge but not as much as in other parts of the country.
- The Chimes offers a comparatively high quality retail environment complemented by other non retail uses including the popular Odeon cinema which is well patronised by students and residents.
- Delivery of large scale residential schemes around the edge of the Town Centre is deepening and extending the town centre catchment.
- Local people are invested and committed to the town centre.
- The library has consistently been identified as one of the strongest features of the town centre. It is well loved by local people and is considered a central hub, an important civic space and an attraction for visitors.
- The town centre is used by a great variety of social groups from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds.
- It is experienced as a functional and practical town centre that people come to for their everyday needs and considered a “convenient” place to do shopping or run errands.
- The high street is highly valued by users as a social space.
- The cultural diversity of the population is starting to be well reflected in food shops and restaurants/cafés.



“Getting to Uxbridge is easy, I’m absolutely happy with the buses.”  
 (Resident, white British woman, 70s)



“The Civic Centre square just reminds me of the nice plazas and squares that you get in other European countries. So it gives us a flavour, especially during the summertime.”  
 (Resident, British-Asian woman, 40s)

“People want to become part of [Uxbridge’s] identity. And that’s predicated primarily on the environment that’s created. One of the factors of environment is architecture, and a branding of the place.”  
 (Business Owner, British-Asian man, 50s)



“People come in and they come in to shop and they come in for the social interaction as well.”  
 (Uxbridge BID)

## 2.4 What we want to know through public engagement

The community engagement findings from stage 1 have been extremely helpful in understanding the needs and desires of the Uxbridge's communities. These findings underpin the Town Centre Vision as it moves forward. The following bullets summarise the suggestions from community stakeholders for the future of Uxbridge Town Centre:

- Balancing future developments with the existing aspects of the town centre that people cherish – both its functional aspects and the features which enable social interactions and participation in the life of the community.
- Developing strategies that expand the town centre's civic and social functions towards an enhanced public realm, easing pedestrian and cycling access, offering more social spaces for encounters and free activities.
- A focus on increasing the independent retail and food offering which takes into account the diverse demographic of Uxbridge.
- Developing strategies to highlight the town centre's important and rich architecture and to inform about the nearby green and blue spaces.
- Enhancing the physical environment of the town centre by incorporating more 'green infrastructure' and creating comfortable, shady spaces and water features.
- Developing a visible and regular programme of community and youth events and leisure that will simultaneously provide natural surveillance and feelings of safety and promote the social life of Uxbridge.
- Develop partnerships with local businesses, corporations and services for training and job opportunities for young people living and studying in the Uxbridge area.
- Continuing to engage Uxbridge's citizens in future planning processes for the area.
- The next stage of this project will look at the vision and objectives that should steer future change. This will involve exploring particular opportunities and understanding the degree of change needed in each location to achieve these objectives.

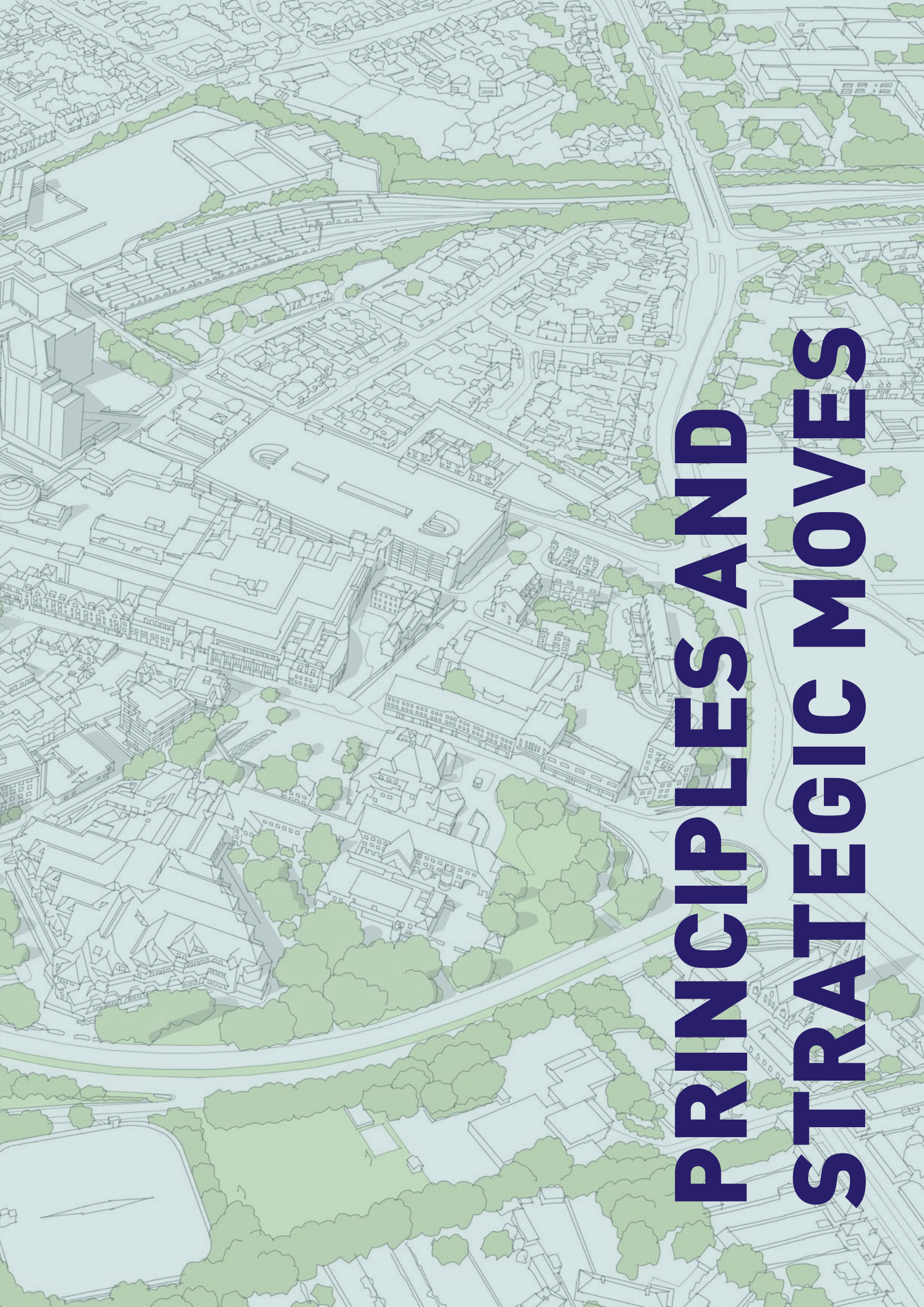
The team has started to identify some principles and key moves that might shape early thinking in the next stage and these are set out here.











# PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIC MOVES

## 3.1 Introduction

This section explores the three key **issues** that Uxbridge town centre is currently facing, as set out in the previous chapter. **Principles** are set out that address each of the issues with **Strategic moves** that are actionable moves to make positive change. This first spread provides a brief summary of each of the issues, principles and strategic moves.

### Issue: Building economic resilience

The town centre is vulnerable due to high retail and commercial vacancy rates. Central Uxbridge is inflexible with a rigid movement network and vacant, large footprint buildings.

#### Principle: Re-purpose to meet changing demands

It is key to work out Uxbridge already has and what its strengths are, to ensure that development is sustainable.

**Strategic move: Re-purpose the economy to support office market at the heart of the town centre**

- Considering the future of large footprint office blocks that are mostly vacant in the town centre to adapt to the market's current position

#### Principle: Diversify the offer

Creating reasons for people to visit and spend time in Uxbridge with a focus on fun, leisure, culture, creativity. This principle is about making the town centre fit for the future.

**Strategic move: Create a focus for leisure and culture**

- Enhancing the leisure and culture offer, particularly focusing this shift around the eastern end of the High Street.



## Issue: Serving local communities

Uxbridge Town Centre's offer is not matching the needs of the local communities; with an under representation of produce, health, beauty and professional services, culture and leisure uses. Uxbridge is dominated by chain retail and not appealing to groups such as Brunel students and those who do not drink alcohol.

### Principle: Better serve residents needs

Ensuring that the day to day needs of different types of people and communities are met within Uxbridge town centre to increase visits and dwell times.

#### Strategic move: Establish the Civic Centre as a community hub

- Considering different ways that the Civic Centre and its forecourt can be better used to encourage community uses and activity in this area of the High Street.

#### Strategic move: Introduce new residential into the town centre

- New homes in the town centre provides the opportunity to support Uxbridge at all hours of the day and introduce a new community.

#### Strategic move: Future proof public transport accessibility

- Remodelling the bus interchange to create a new public square and a set of legible and easily accessible bus stops.

## Issue: Enhancing the Environment

Transport infrastructure dominates the town centre and the quality of the public realm is poor. Residents and visitors feel that public safety and the ability to walk and cycle freely within and into the town centre are key issues that should be addressed.

### Principle: Restore effortless connections

Understanding the important of restoring the quality of the environment and the experience in the town centre is to reconnect the High Street with its hinterland.

#### Strategic move: Improve strategic connections for cycling and buses

- Strengthening sustainable connections from the immediate hinterland into Uxbridge town centre.

#### Strategic move: Enable local access whilst protecting highway function

- Re-prioritise, reallocate and relocate highway infrastructure with the aim of maintaining the route's important strategic highway function.

### Principle: Recapture a network of public spaces

Emphasising the importance of high-quality public spaces that provide a place to dwell and sit aside from shopping and activities.

#### Strategic move: Release the heart of the High Street and Windsor Street

- Supporting local heritage and re-prioritising pedestrian movement in the very centre of Uxbridge.

#### Strategic move: Restore a green character to the town centre and celebrate its wider green links

- Restoring the strategic connections along Canal, to the local parks and complexes and other centres.



# Key issue 1: Building economic resilience





## 3.2 Building economic resilience



### Ensuring a resilient town centre economy

In contrast to other town centres Uxbridge's economy is not declining, but it is vulnerable due to high and ever-rising office vacancies. It also has an over-representation of declining chain retail versus other town centre uses. Diversification of uses and activities in the town centre is needed to ensure the town centre remains attractive and resilient.

Large office buildings pose a particular challenge for the Uxbridge. The town centre has a vast amount of office space, much of it in large format buildings. This space makes an important contribution to the local economy, but represents a vulnerability moving forward. The Atrium and Charter Building have already been re-orientated towards more flexible workspace, but many other buildings present challenges and the vision will need to explore opportunities for adaptation and transformation, including introducing different niche commercial typologies.

### Embracing the significant education sector

Uxbridge is in the enviable position of having two universities and a major college. However, at present the town centre does not benefit hugely from this. Giving these institutions more of a role and presence in the town centre is a major opportunity which should be embraced.

### Diversity of activities

The baseline analysis has shown there is a high proportion of comparison retail in the town centre but an under-representation of leisure, cultural and community uses. Community engagement has reinforced this message that local people would like there to be more to do in the town centre.

*"It's a very nice space if you want to hang out with friends and eat or shop, but there's not many activities you can actually do."*

*(Visitor response to 'What do you like about Uxbridge?' At the Echoes of Uxbridge exhibition)*

*"It is lacking in choices of restaurants. You used to have a Pizza Express ... at the back end of The Chimes, you used to have three restaurants which have closed. So you have very little choice if you want to have a gathering or an occasion, other than fast, convenience food"*

*(Resident, white British woman, 50s)*



Fig 3.1: Office Vacancy Rates by Town Centre (2018-2022) Source: CoStar, 2023

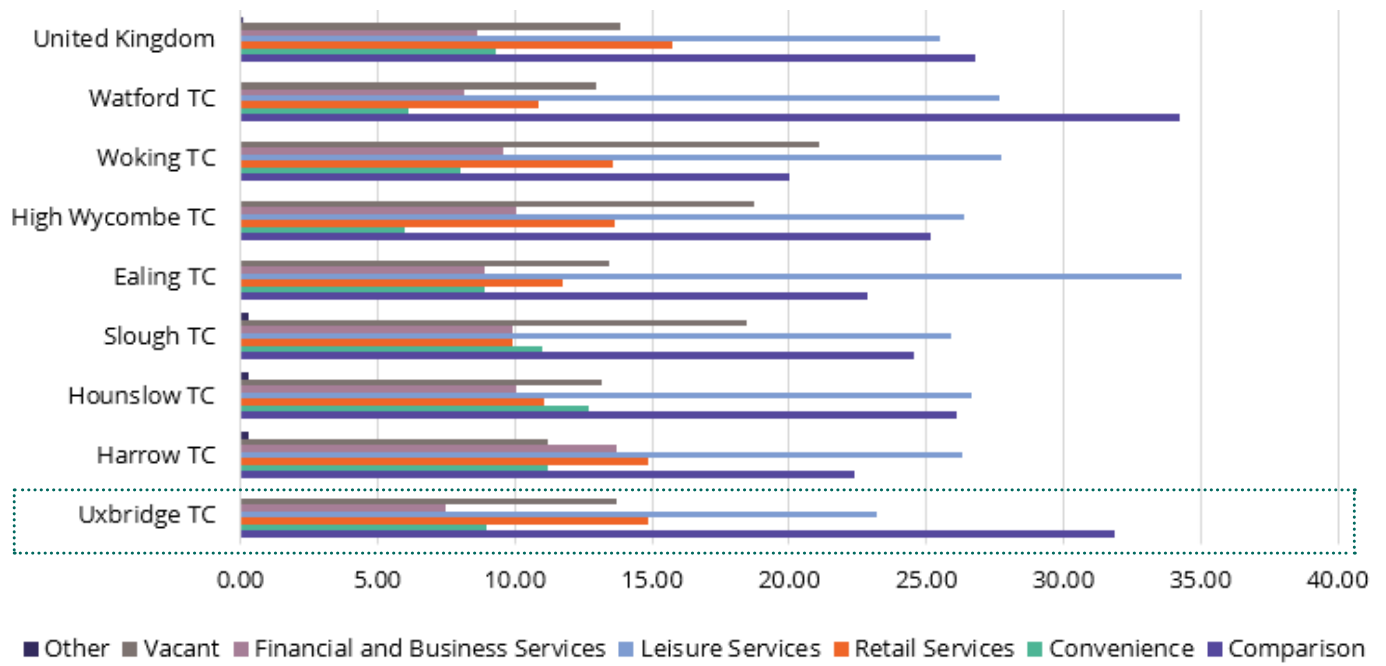
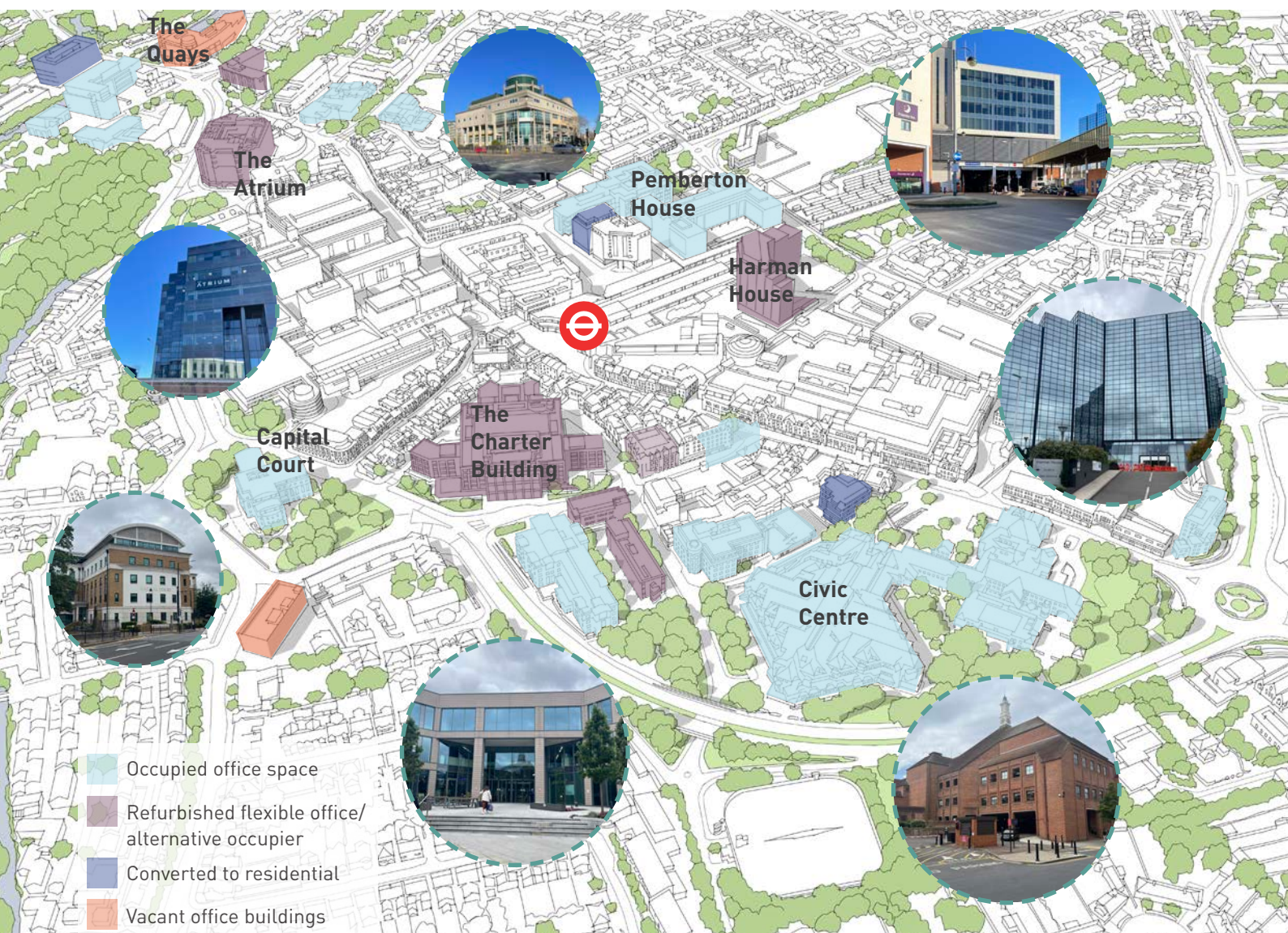


Fig 3.2: High Street Unit Composition by Town Centre, 2022. Source: Experian GOAD, 2023



### 3.3 Principle

## 3.4 Re-purpose to meet changing demands

Re-use precedents: The Foundry commercial and community use building in Vauxhall (image courtesy of Architecture 00); Re-Tuna shopping mall in Sweden (image courtesy of Lina Östling); refurbished Faculty of History, Cambridge; and innovation and workspace in former Urania cinema building in Zagreb (image courtesy of Studio 3LHD and Jure Živković).



The first principle is all about working with what already exists, to be sustainable and avoid major development disruptions in the centre. The strategy should embed the circular economy in its approach and look to re-use and adapt buildings and spaces to better respond to changing market and consumer demand.

This principle will involve the following:

- Re-purpose vacant shop units - identify preferred and viable new uses for existing vacant units, to bring back the High Street and shopping centres to their fullest potential.
- Re-imagine large office buildings - protect the most viable and logical office buildings for employment use, and find new viable uses for others (both those that are currently vacant and

those at risk of vacancy in the short-medium term). This could involve potentially creating a playbook for how to approach the adaptation of office buildings into the future.

- Enhance existing but under-used public spaces including squares, green spaces and hidden spaces. Employ a light touch approach to improvements with the re-use of materials and furniture.
- Improve the environmental performance of existing buildings as part of re-purposing, to ensure they remain attractive in the long term.
- Identify those existing buildings that represent significant re-use challenges and consider future options.

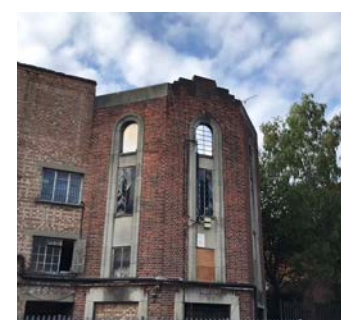
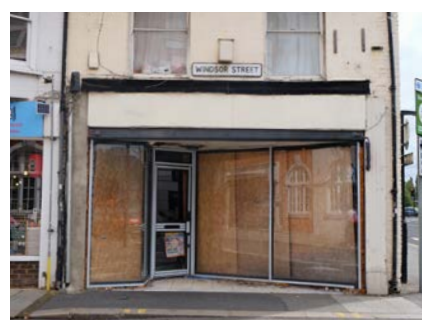






Fig 3.3: Existing assets to be celebrated and/or their use intensified

### Good things already happening

- The Charter Building is a great example of how a large format office building can be re-purposed - into a successful flexible work space in the heart of the town centre.
- The Piazza has seen investment into the historic buildings to create a new, interesting, attractive destination. Further investment and occupiers are needed to restore this area's vibrancy.
- Randall Place Apartments sensitively adapted the building of a former art-Deco department store to create new home.

### Case study: Urania Cinema

- The Urania Cinema in Zagreb has been transformed from its former cinema use into a series of public spaces that are used for cultural events and small offices. The building has kept its original structure but has been adapted to suit the needs of the immediate community and market. The project has successfully integrated new flexible, cultural uses into the existing historic fabric. This is an effective precedent for considering the future of the former Regal Cinema in Uxbridge.

# Strategic move

## 3.5 Re-purpose office blocks outside of the core



A large part of re-purposing in the town centre will be a focus on office buildings. Given the volume of office stock in Uxbridge, a strong strategy is needed.

This strategic move is about considering the future of the large footprint office blocks outside of the centre's core, in order to adapt to the current market and strengthen the town's economic position. This includes the following:

- Re-purpose the economy to support the office market at the heart of the town centre.
- Protect the area's 'best' office stock (i.e. assets that are high quality, flexible, well-located and meet changing occupier needs) while allowing the selective release of less appropriate stock.
- Support existing office buildings within good proximity of the tube station and car parks (such as Charter House and Belmont House).
- Allow underused office blocks outside of this zone to re-purpose to other uses (such as community

services, educational uses and residential flats), as long as support is provided to relocate existing tenants into other office blocks in the area.

A criteria based approach will be established to determine which office blocks should be retained or re-purposed/re-developed. For each block a range of factors will be considered such as the existing vacancy rate, quality, EPC rating and potential for refurbishment. The most important criteria will, however, be the building's proximity to the tube station given the area around this node is likely to be the most attractive in the town centre from a market demand perspective. Maintaining a core of office stock in this zone will also be important for supporting town centre vitality during the working week, particularly during the daytime and early evening.

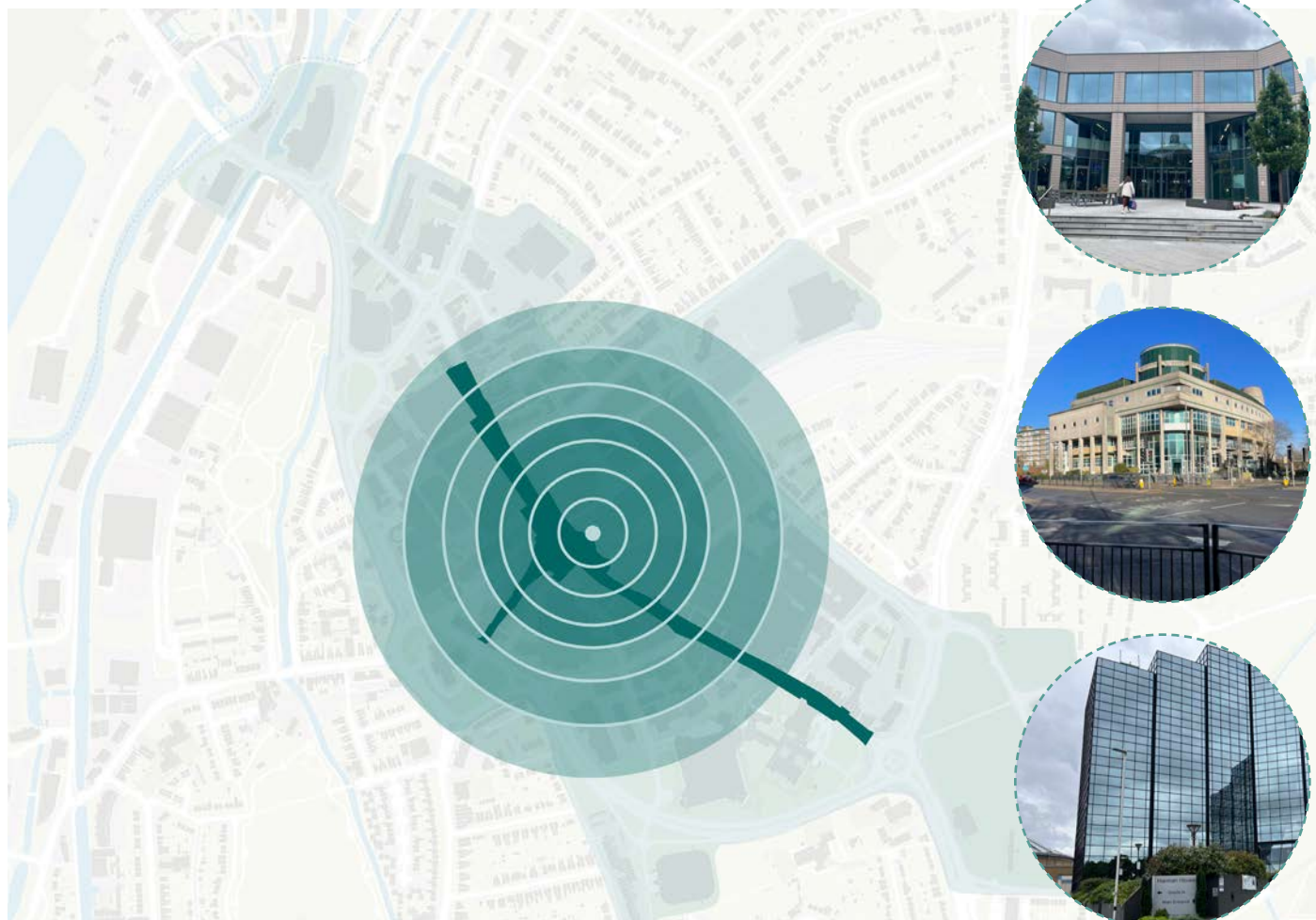


Fig 3.4: Plan showing the proposed strategy to support office stock in proximity to the tube station

## PRECEDENT: Angel Building, London



The building was previously a 1980s post-modern office block, given a new life and look by AHMM. The development includes new uses including a public house, cafe, art spaces and flexible working spaces as well as commercial office spaces. It has responded to the changing markets and brought a new type of visitor to the building aside from office workers. Angel Building has activated previously bare frontages, improved the public realm and widened the pavement width to improve the pedestrian experience.

Sustainability principles are key to this project. Two examples are the structure and the wrapping. The original concrete structure has been retained and extended to save embodied carbon. It has also been wrapped in new glazing, to create a new look and aid with innovative heating solutions. In total, the project has saved 7,400 tons of embodied carbon dioxide, while providing 40 per cent more functional space than in its previous state.

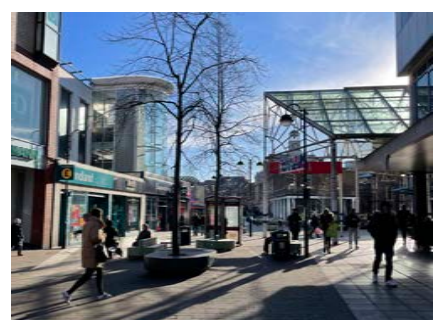
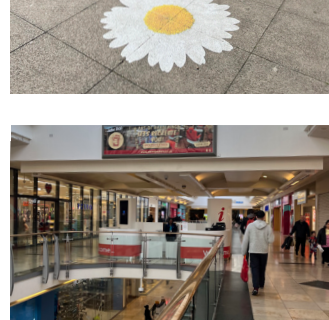
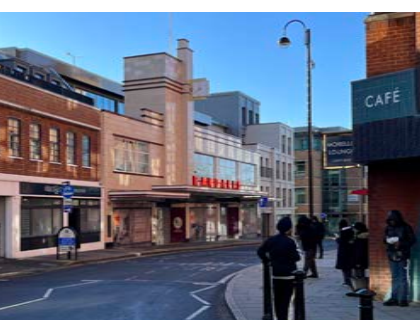
## 3.6 Principle

### 3.7 Diversify the offer



The strategy should be about creating reasons for people to visit and spend time in the town centre beyond meeting their day-to-day needs - with a focus on fun, leisure, culture, creativity. This principle is about trying to make the town centre fit for the future and enhancing the evening and night time offering. This is a priority that came directly from the community engagement, from people of all ages. It will involve the following:

- Introduce more leisure uses, to allow activities in the centre beyond shopping.
- Explore scope for cultural uses as well as establish events programme, in coordination with the BID and Chamber of Commerce.
- Expand the breadth of food and drink - support independent restaurants and food outlets, embrace non-alcohol based food and beverage. This is especially important for young people and university students; as discovered by the community engagement findings.
- Introduce more free events and activities - the vision should identify spaces and intervene to make them work.
- Emphasise the library function and former Regal cinema as key cultural nodes in the town centre.
- Embrace universities as part of the town centre - explore opportunities for Brunel University to have a town centre presence in the form of an Innovation Hub (this would require c. 2,000-3,500 sqm).





### Good things already happening

- The Love Uxbridge BID has held a programme of highly popular events in the town centre, illustrating the demand for these types of activities.
- At the eastern end of The Chimes, the former Debenhams unit is earmarked for new leisure uses. This is planned to include a range of family leisure activities.
- Over the last couple of years the High Street has seen the introduction of food and drink outlets that are less alcohol-focused, such as the various waffle outlets and Bubble Tea shops.

### Case study: Peckham Levels

- Peckham Levels is a major creative and cultural hub that was formerly an underused multi-storey car park. The building now provides a huge diversity in uses from a children’s play area, to SME offices to a 3D printing lab. The benefits of the project include over 450 new jobs, over 20% of studios rented below market price as well as boosting the area’s cultural identity and local economy. Peckham Levels is a strong example of the provision of new uses, diversification of a town centre’s offer, within the parameters of an existing building to support the circular economy.

# Strategic move

## 3.8 Create a focus for leisure and culture



A strong message from community engagement is that as part of the diversification of the town centre people would like to see a much enhanced leisure and cultural offer. This strategic move is about considering a shift in the offer for the eastern end of the High Street towards this leisure and culture demand. This will evolve the High Street offer so it is fit for the future, and better reflects rapidly changing consumer demand for 'experiences' and attracts a broader audience. The strategic move involves the following:

- Establish new leisure and cultural uses in the town centre.
- Focus these uses on the southern half of the High Street and The Piazza.
- Support planned new uses in the former Debenhams unit.

- Re-invigorate The Piazza and link across to a revitalised Civic Centre forecourt for events.
- Adapt the former Regal Cinema into a new leisure/cultural venue.
- Support existing F&B, leisure and cultural uses on the High Street in this section through inward investment and licensing, enabling a vibrant and diverse daytime and evening economy with leisure uses that support physical and mental health.

By concentrating new leisure and cultural activities in this location a new role and vitality can be established for the southern section of the high street. It would build on many of the uses already there and coming soon, and would be supported by investment in existing public spaces to support outdoor events and activities.

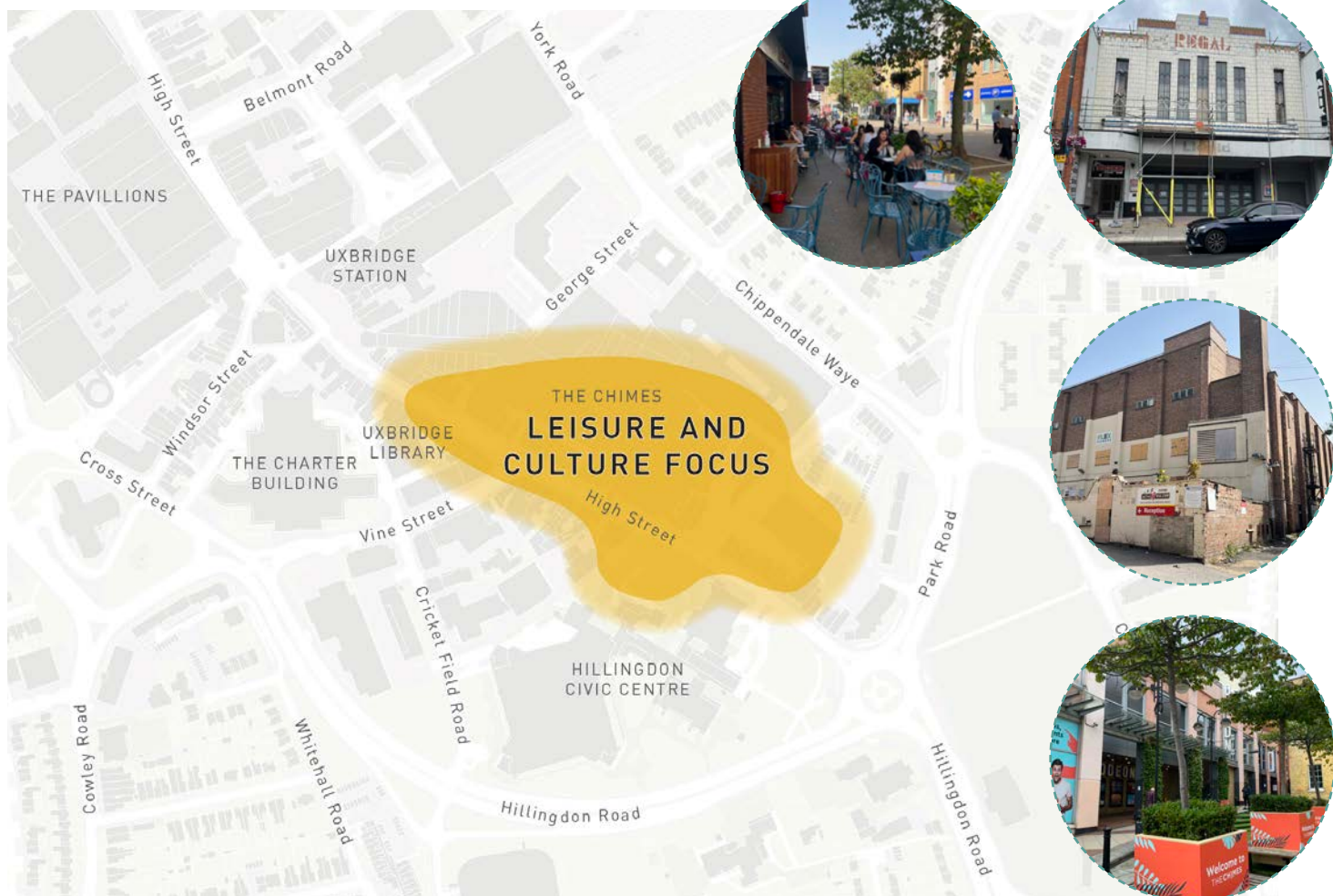


Fig 3.6: Diagram showing the spatial extent of the proposed leisure and cultural use focus

## PRECEDENT: Gravity at Southside, Wandsworth



Gravity is an innovative mixed-leisure facility that includes bowling, various games, mini golf, go karting and more all integrated with new technologies. It provides 100,000 sqft over three floors.

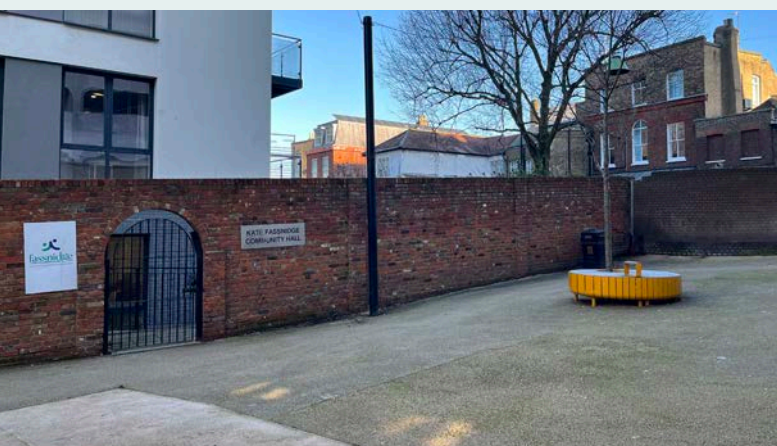
The facility appeals to people of all ages including families and young people. It is versatile in its ability to attract children and families during the day with activities and live music, and young adults at night

with a cocktail bar.

Gravity takes up a significant amount of space in Wandsworth's Southside shopping centre in previously vacant units.

It has addressed vacancy issues, provided a new type of leisure activity as well as attracting more people into Wandsworth town centre.

# Key issue 2: Better serving local communities







# 3.9 Better serving local communities



## A town centre that addresses its local population

The baseline analysis found that the town centre could serve its local population better than it currently does. It was clear that the range of uses in the town centre has not adjusted to the changes in catchment population over the last 10-20 years, nor to some of the wider market trends. The community engagement confirmed that while much of the local population is loyal to the centre, they do not feel it meets their needs fully.

### Addressing under-represented uses

Produce, health, beauty and professional services, as well as culture and leisure uses are currently under-represented in the town centre. When compared to other similar sized town centres in the wider area, Uxbridge has significantly less of these uses and services.

The town centre is the most accessible node locally and therefore is a very logical location to boost community services such as health care. The opportunity to establish an NHS health hub in the town centre should be embraced to help meet local demand and ease access to the range of NHS services.

### Diversifying the offer to meet local ethnic and cultural demographics

There is a healthy diversity in offer of independent food shops along Windsor Street and in distinct areas such as the Arcade. Providing a variety in offer of the retail stores and services to better suit the demographics of all local communities would strengthen the town centre's ability to be a destination for all.

Changing lifestyle trends as well as changing demographics in the residential neighbourhoods around Uxbridge mean there is much greater demand for evening economy activities that do not involve

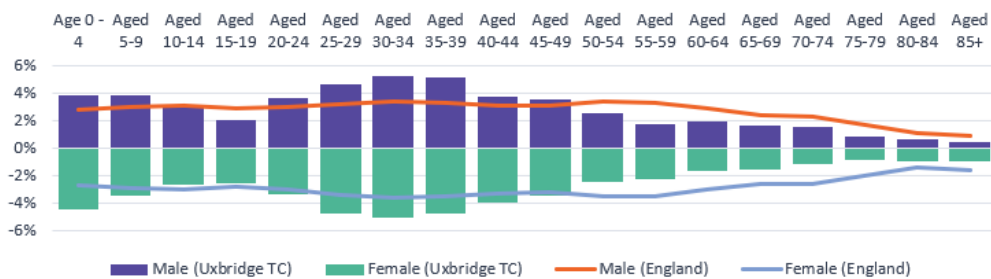


Fig 3.7: Age profile of Uxbridge Town Centre's immediate catchment (2020)

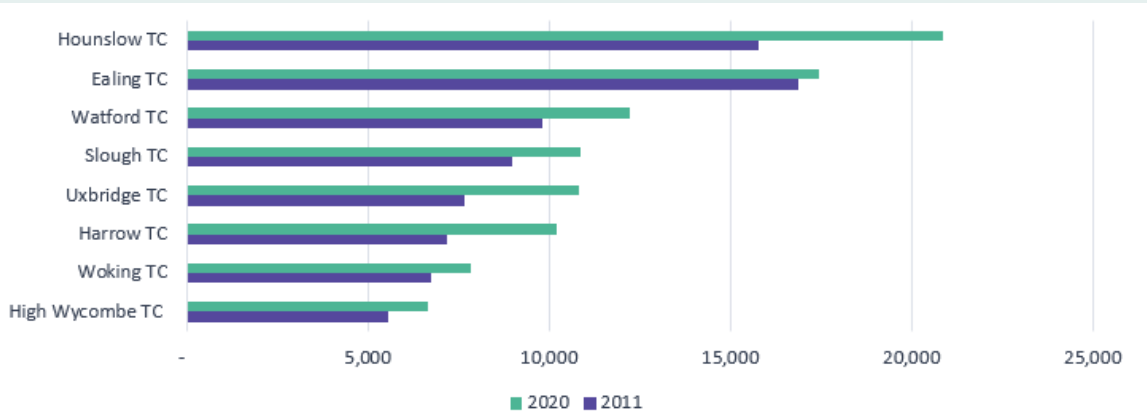


Fig 3.8: Population living within the centre by Town Centre (2011 and 2020)

drinking alcohol. Uxbridge is well located to meet this significant demand.

### Supporting bus travel as a key transport mode

Uxbridge’s location on the boundary between London and South Buckinghamshire means in many instances buses are the most important public transport service. There is a need to ensure the town centre embraces this reality and makes arriving, travelling and interchanging by bus a smooth and attractive experience. Many local people expressed concern about the quality of the Bakers Road interchange, in particular its safety after dark.

### Investing in civic pride

Local people are loyal and invested in Uxbridge town centre, but many have found it increasingly difficult to feel proud of the town centre over recent years. Residents and local businesses would like to see investment into interventions that will support civic pride such as event spaces and an events programme, communication and promotion of activities, signage and maps.

### Meeting the needs for a growing population

The baseline analysis highlighted the comparatively small population that live in the town centre compared to other town centres such as Watford or Ealing. There are significant housing needs locally and the town centre could offer a great location for sustainable living. Some residential development has come forward in recent years, but there is scope for significantly more. Any new housing development in the centre should be closely informed by the nature of housing needs, ensuring it provides the best quality housing in the most appropriate locations for the people that can most benefit from a town centre location.



Fig 3.9: NHS Diagram outlining the planned strategy for health care across Hillingdon, with the scope for Uxbridge to be one of three Super Hubs in the borough

*“One of the things I would focus on is making Uxbridge more exciting. Obviously, there are shops that are easy to use but how can you make it more exciting?”*  
 (Andy Sharma, Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce)

*“I know that footfall is up, but that doesn’t necessarily convert to spend. And I think we need as a town centre to strengthen our retail and hospitality offer. Because I think people are here, but getting them to part with their money ... So we need to make sure that offer is here in the town centre and they don’t go elsewhere to spend the money.”*  
 (Mike Crane, Uxbridge BID)

## 3.10 Principle

### 3.11 Better serve residents' needs

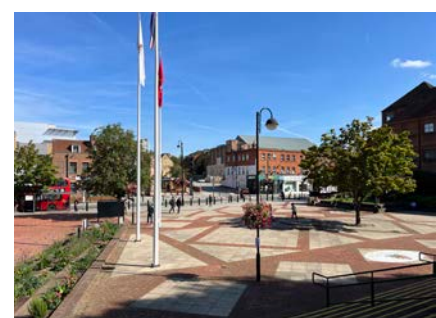
Community precedents: Town centre living in Hounslow; F&B with local market in Southwark; refurbished Westgate shopping centre in Oxford; and reworked retail and leisure in Walthamstow (all images © Allies and Morrison).



The town centre must meet the day-to-day needs of the local population. It is about making sure people can buy food, see their GP, visit the bank, get their medication, borrow a book etc. This will give Uxbridge Town Centre a new role for its local communities, being able to fulfil more of their daily needs. This will involve:

- Re-orientate the mix to make it more locally focused and inclusive.
- Address under-representation of produce, health, beauty and professional services, culture and leisure uses.

- Continue to diversify what is on offer in Uxbridge to meet local ethnic and cultural demographics.
- Introduce more community uses, in particular establish an NHS Super Hub within the town centre (the NHS Super Hub requires 2,000 sqm).
- Address the lack of homes in the town centre and provide new housing to serve local population's needs.
- Reduce the extent of core retail uses - consider defining areas and frontages that make sense for core retail, and let less viable locations move away from retail use to find more suitable functions.



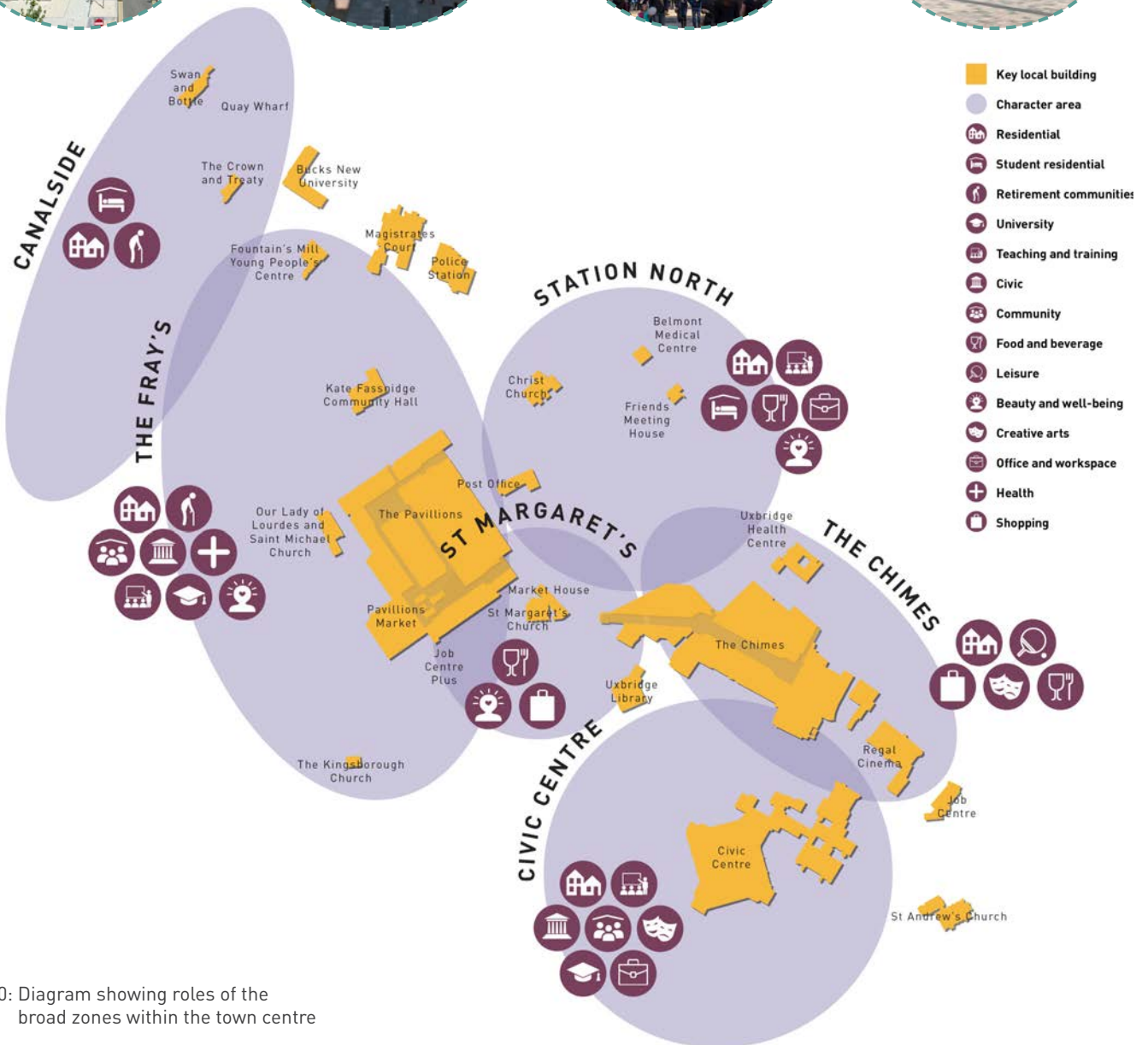


Fig 3.10: Diagram showing roles of the broad zones within the town centre

### Good things already happening

- St Andrew's Park and Randall Place Apartments are new residential developments in and on the edge of the town centre that have brought new residents into the town centre.
- The NHS is planning to restructure healthcare throughout the borough, and sees Uxbridge Town Centre as a good location for a Superhub facility.
- Ossulton Court Almshouses to the west of the town centre is a high quality development of apartments for local elderly people.

### Case study: Lampton Road

- Lampton Road, Hounslow is an example of integrated town centre living, on the site of an outdated and inefficient 1970s building. The homes are affordable, well integrated with the surrounding blocks, well connected by foot into Hounslow centre and have a good level of greenery. The homes come in different forms and have provided housing for a diversity of household types in a central location, strengthening the local economy. This is a positive example when considering the potential for Uxbridge town centre to cater for a range of housing needs in a high quality format.

# Strategic move

## 3.12 Establish the Civic Centre as a community hub



A strong message that came through from the community engagement was the need to better provide for community uses and services in the town centre. An equally common comment was how people found the Civic Centre to be an unwelcoming building and space. This strategic move is about reconsidering and applying ambition to the future role of the Civic Centre. This involves the following:

- Establish the town centre as a the focus for community services and activities with the Civic Centre playing a crucial role as the focus for civic activities.
- Opening up the Civic Centre campus as a welcoming hub - bringing in more services beyond Council departments and reworking the forecourt and reception area to be much more community orientated.
- Opportunity to incorporate a new NHS Superhub as part of this hub either within a vacant campus building or a large unit on the High Street.
- Use of vacant high street spaces for community uses - groups, activities, services, attractions, and encourage new community ideas such as a mending and upcycling hub.
- Revamping the Civic Centre forecourt space on the High Street into a vibrant community space would re-establish it as the focus for larger events and could include outdoor cinema, outdoor theatre and music, as well as a complementary external market space to the Pavilions.

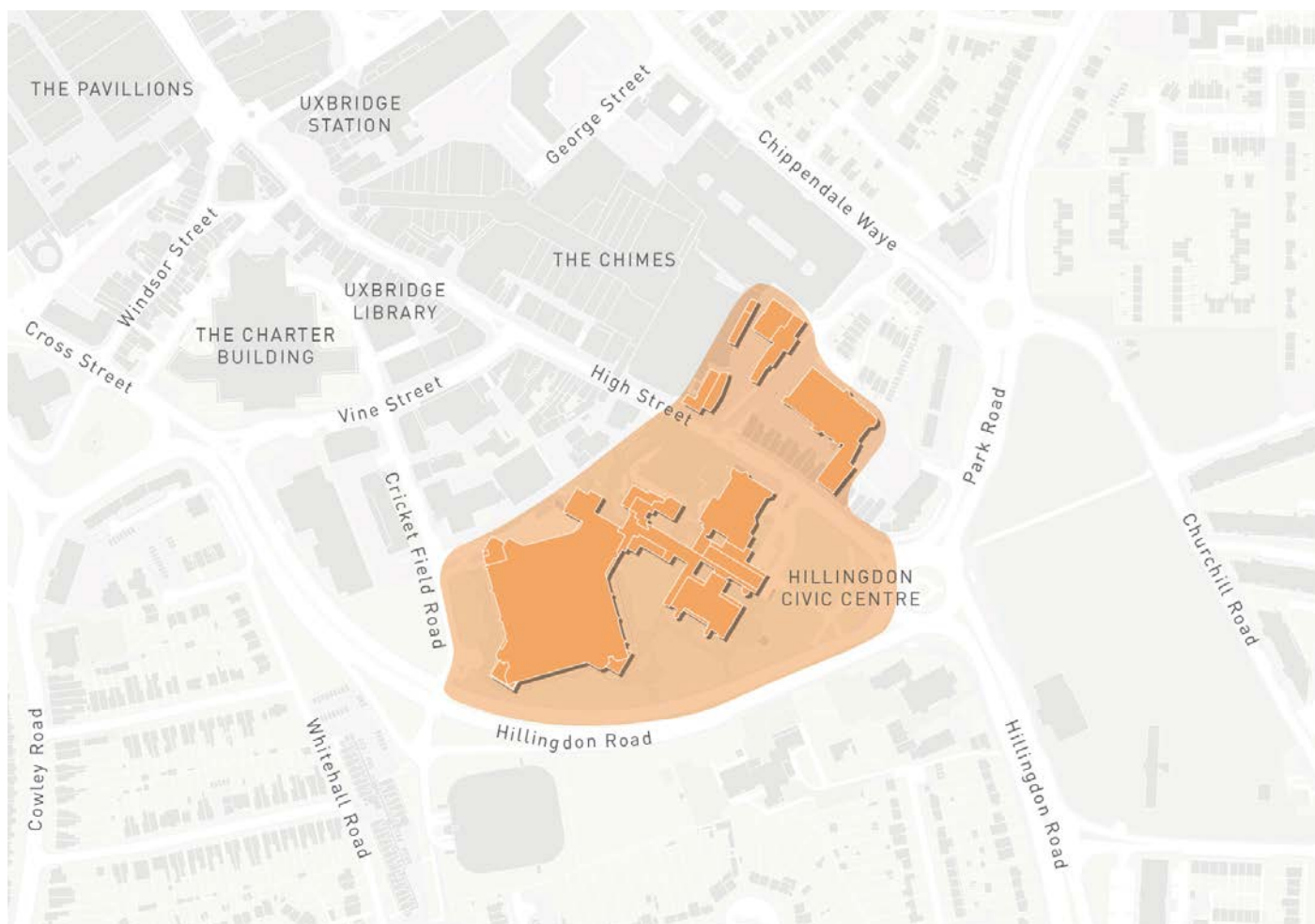


Fig 3.11: Plan showing the focus for the community hub around the Civic Centre

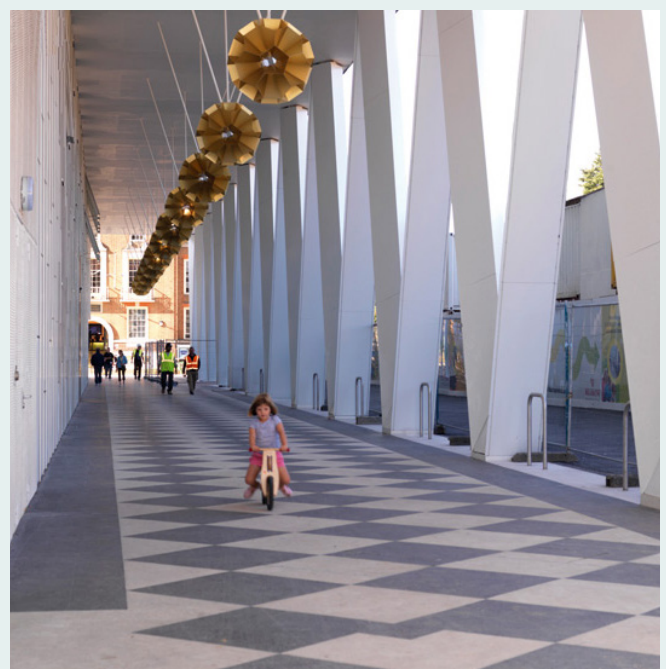
## PRECEDENT: Barking Town Square



Barking Town Square was in need of a welcoming civic space, as previously the space was used as a parking space. It has been transformed into an attractive, human-scale area with a strong identity.

There are high-quality planters and street furniture which allow for sitting and dwelling as well as a large space that is now used for public arts and events.

This has improved the interface between Barking Town Hall and the public realm - a great precedent for the Civic Centre forecourt and surrounds.



## Civic Centre Square

Relatively modest interventions to the Civic Centre forecourt could have a significant impact in both opening up the Civic Centre as a welcoming community hub and creating a space for cultural events and community activities. The interventions could include:

- Rationalising some of the planters to open up the space - creating clearer sight lines to entrances and a more flexible and larger open area for events.
- Introducing a lightweight structure at the western edge of the square to provide a covered cafe and community space fronting onto the space.
- Introducing banner posts along the edge of the square to promote and advertise events.



Fig 3.12: Illustrative sketch of how the Civic Centre forecourt could be transformed



Fig 3.13: Existing view of Civic Centre forecourt



# Strategic move

## 3.13 Introduce new residential into the town centre



Introducing new residential into the town centre creates the opportunity to support the centre at all times of day and bring a new community into the town centre. This strategic move involves:

- Encourage residential homes into the town centre on a more significant scale than has happened to date.
- Introduce high quality and well-designed schemes in the short-medium term to set the tone and ensure town centre living is well considered before adding volumes of new homes.
- Grow the residential population within the town centre boundary providing for a range of housing needs including:
  - Flats with good private and communal open space;
  - Student residential developments;

- Smaller house types, not just flats - such as mews and narrow townhouses;
- Retirement communities; and
- Specialist products - in particular affordable/social housing.
- Ensure enhanced links are delivered to properly link emerging residential developments such as St Andrews into the town centre.

There are a number of vacant or underused buildings that would offer good opportunities for well designed conversions to residential. Existing buildings such as the former Paralex building and The Atrium could be converted to residential to serve community needs. Other buildings such as Fountain's Mill and Beaufort House would offer great scope as student residential conversions for post-graduate accommodation.



Fig 3.14: Plan showing the ambition to explore the introduction of new homes in the town centre

## PRECEDENT: Lampton Road, Hounslow



Lampton Road, Hounslow is a housing development on a Council owned site adjacent to the town centre. A series of housing blocks arranged around courtyard spaces create medium - high density homes next to Hounslow town centre. A range of different housing typologies enables the scheme to cater for a wide range of households and housing needs, all with private outdoor space.

Each of the blocks represent different precedents that could be introduced on infill or redevelopment sites in the town centre.



## Fountain's Mill

The Fountain's Mill building is a great heritage asset, but one that has sadly been vacant for some time. The re-use of this building could significantly enhance the northern end of the High Street and help support the green link connection along the Fray River. The following could be considered:

- The Mill building would make a great home for student residential provision, creating space for post-graduates from local universities with the scope to have communal facilities at ground floor.
- There would be scope to introduce a sensitive extension in the yard space, fronting on to the High Street to extend the use of the site.
- The piece of leftover land on the north side of the Mill building could be converted into a new pocket park that would set up the link along the Fray River.

## Short term residential potential

The conversion of existing and underused buildings in the town centre could deliver much needed housing in the short term. For example, together, the Fountain's Mill site and Beaufort House could deliver around 120 post graduate student residential units. Other buildings could deliver much needed residential homes. For example, the conversions of the former Paralex building, The Atrium and Harman House together could deliver over 390 new residential flats alongside refurbished office space and community uses. Just these five sites illustrate the potential to realise town centre living in the short to medium term.



Fig 3.15: Illustrative sketch showing how the Fountain's Mill building could be restored and extended as a student residential hub in the town centre

Fig 3.16: Existing view



# Strategic move

## 3.14 Future proof public transport accessibility



A key focus for future proofing public transport in Uxbridge is to remodel the bus interchange as an efficient and attractive through street. This will release turning space to create a new public square and a set of legible and easily accessible bus stops. The existing bus garage would be relocated to a new all electric bus garage facility away from the town.

Alongside remodelling the bus interchange, there is also a need to re-plan existing bus routes to improve the coverage around the town centre and wider communities not currently well-served by bus services.

Across the town centre there will be improvements to bus legibility, take up and reliability of services through the introduction of orbital bus stops and integrated cycle facilities (hire/stands) and information hubs around the outside of town centre, alongside improved walking and cycling routes from these hubs to the core.

Where possible, additional bus routes would be extended and created that better link up the town centre to the wider region including the Home Counties, Brunel University, health care, schools and leisure facilities.



Fig 3.17: Plan showing the proposed bus orbital route and town centre interchange

## PRECEDENT: Stockton-on-Tees High Street



Stockton-on-Tees High Street public realm scheme includes a bus boulevard along its length, where all bus stops (and a taxi rank) are on-street, in a highly visible, accessible, reliable, and safe arrangement. Bus shelters, seating and information are all up-to-date and accessible to all. The bus stops also incorporate cycle parking and there is an active travel hub nearby, which provides information on walking/cycling routes, cycle training and

maintenance support. The ambition is to take some of these bus principles from Stockton-on-Tees and apply them in Uxbridge, enabling a greater number of people to access and use the local bus network via a highly visible orbital route system around the town centre with improved walking and cycling routes to/from these stops, integrated cycling parking and visitor information.

# Key issue 3: Enhancing the Environment







# 3.15 Enhancing the Environment



## Realising the town centre's potential

Uxbridge is a historic market town with a fantastic setting at the edge of London and the Colne Valley. The High Street is populated by a great variety of buildings and spaces that give it an attractive underlying character. However, the town centre is not realising its potential. This is particularly true in relation to its built fabric, public realm and character - many parts of the centre have hidden qualities that could be much better celebrated.

Local people are keen to see some of the most historic parts of the town centre better supported, such as Windsor Street. There is also a need to address concerns around safety, particularly after dark and on routes into and out of the town centre.

*“Would I want to walk at nine o'clock at night to get to the car park? ... If you think about the walk from the Civic Centre... You have to cross that great big piazza but then you cross the road and then you've got to walk down an alleyway to get into the car park.”*

*“We would like to see improvements to the underpasses and walking routes into the town centre”*



- Important pedestrian and cyclist links into the town centre
- Areas severed by the major highways, junctions and poor provision for pedestrians and cyclists
- Pedestrian and cyclist collision hotspots (Crash Map website)
- Important junctions / crossing decision points that currently do not adequately cater for pedestrians and cyclists
- Major developments / gated land impacts on pedestrian and cyclist permeability and legibility and creates personal security issues (alleyways)

Female students said they tend to 'organise' a group of friends to come back from a night out in London to walk back to Brunel University's campus because of safety concerns.

73% of consultees said they would feel comfortable bringing children to the High Street and that it felt safe and family-friendly.

But after dark people's views change and many commented on the unsafe links into the town centre.



## Reclaiming space for people

Over the years the town centre has been undermined by layers of transport infrastructure, particularly road infrastructure. This means that space for cars has increased significantly often to the detriment of space and connections for walking and cycling.

Uxbridge's location means cars will continue to be a significant and necessary form of transport for people accessing the town centre and passing through this part of the borough. The vision must therefore ensure cars are well provided for and that congestion is ameliorated rather exacerbated. However, there is significant scope to give some space over to other modes of transport and to re-introduce connections. Creating routes both within and into the town centre will help encourage more sustainable travel and produce a better and safer pedestrian and cycle experience.

Beyond movement, there is also scope to better cater for people within the town centre. Currently, there are very limited green spaces that local people can use and the shelter afforded by street trees is very localised.



# Principle

## 3.16 Restore effortless connections

Connection precedents: Greened alleyways in Stockholm; accessible and well lit underpass in Umeå, Sweden; cycle lane and street planting on Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow; and greening and improved bus, public realm improvements and road realignment in Clapham Old Town.



A key principle to restore the quality of the environment and its experience in the town centre is to reconnect the High Street with its hinterland. This is a priority following various layers of change over the years leading the centre to be relatively disconnected from its surroundings. These include major transport infrastructure including the ring road (A4020), and large impermeable blocks. The intention is to make Uxbridge Town Centre a more accessible, permeable and attractive place to visit through easier movement. This principle will involve the following:

- Prioritise walking and cycling access into the town centre, making it effortless to walk or cycle from surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Create easy and smooth walking and cycling routes across the major highways encircling the town centre - this will include both pedestrian crossings and higher quality underpasses.
- Re-establish historic connections and desire lines that have been severed, ensuring the High Street is properly fed by secondary and tertiary streets enabling easy movement within the town centre and it's large blocks.
- Enhance connections and wayfinding to green and blue assets outside the town centre, as many see these assets as 'hidden gems'. This will make it easy and obvious how to get to the surrounding parks and waterways from central Uxbridge.
- Recognise that access by car to the town centre is still important and ensure car parking provision is well integrated and fit for purpose for the future.

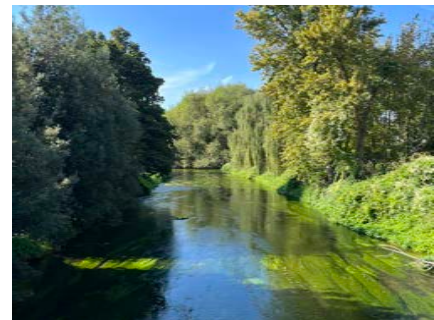




Fig 3.18: Re-connecting the town centre to surrounding communities (please note the walking and cycling framework plan on page 76 provides further detail)

### Good things already happening

- Improvements to the town centre’s public realm have been delivered following the 2016 Town Centre Strategy and 2017 Uxbridge Change of Heart report. This includes the first step in improving the link between the centre and Fassnidge Park - with a new mural, signage and play equipment along the side of Tesco’s.

### Case study: Clapham Old Town, London

- A new style of side road entry treatment/crossing was designed to ensure pedestrian priority. The new crossing was completed through the following actions: removal of a gyratory system, addition of cycle facilities, widened pavements, street trees, street furniture, public space and raised parking. This initiative has calmed traffic, improved the pedestrian and cyclist experience as well as allowing new space for the spill out of cafés and restaurants which has increased activity. This is a great precedent for encouraging pedestrian-focused connections.

# Strategic move

## 3.17 Improve strategic connections for cycling and buses



This intervention would help strengthen the sustainable connections from outside the immediate hinterland into and around the town centre, and support better access to strategic connections for residents living within the immediate hinterland. It would involve establishing new and upgraded cycle routes from the north and south into the town centre, and establishing a ring of accessible bus stops for all local residents. The move would include the following:

- Improve cycling and bus strategic connections between the town centre and wider employment, education, leisure and residential areas.
- Connections should support improved bus journey times, bus routes and stops, as well as consistent, high-quality cycling infrastructure including cycle parking at key transition points.
- There should be emphasis on improving the links for cycling between the Brunel University campus and the town centre (as part of the wider West Drayton-Brunel-Uxbridge link).
- The strategic connections should seamlessly join with local 'quiet' routes for pedestrians and cyclists to access the town centre safely and conveniently.

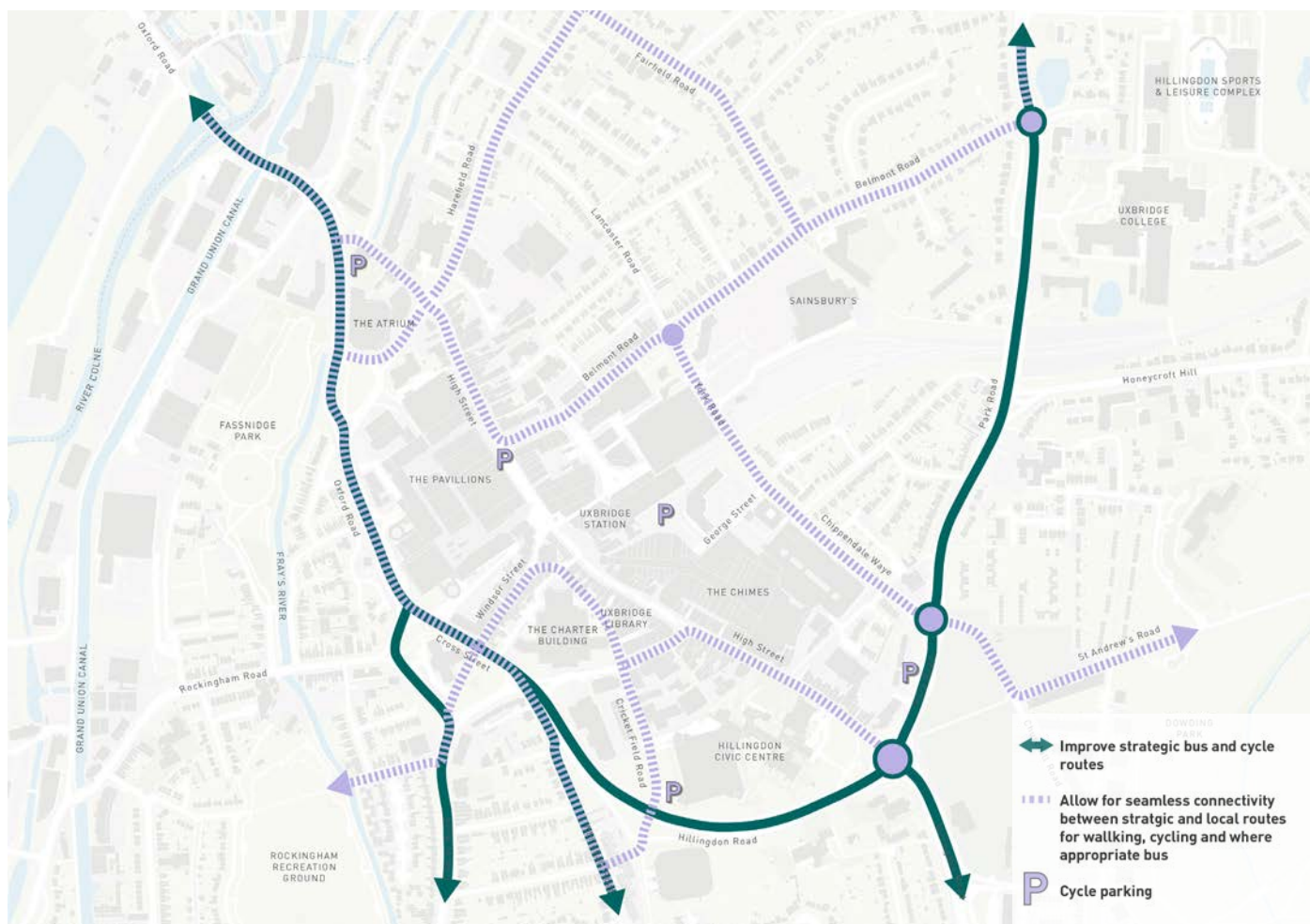


Fig 3.19: Diagram showing strategic cycle and bus routes

## PRECEDENT: A43 Lyon, France



The A43 flyover in Lyon severed movement, reduced air quality and was a visual eyesore. Its removal connected neighbourhoods, reduced vehicular dominance and improved the pedestrian and cyclist experience greatly. The A43 route remains today, allowing for two lanes of traffic in each direction as well as wide pavements, cycleways and bus lanes. The project has succeeded in reducing the issues of an overly large vehicular road whilst still allowing for the smooth movement of vehicles. It is an interesting example when considering the potential to improve the Oxford Road environment.

# Strategic move

## 3.18 Enable local access whilst protecting highway function



Re-prioritise, reallocate and relocate highway infrastructure with the aim of maintaining the route's important strategic highway function, whilst re-prioritising the need to improve local access.

The benefits of this strategic move include:

- Improving the town's profile and creating a positive image to encourage more visitors rather than simply through traffic
- Improving health and well-being through reducing the impacts of strategic traffic on air quality, road safety and active travel
- Enabling the re-purposing and redevelopment of existing buildings and sites as well as enabling new development through the release of highway land for this function
- Enabling better integration of currently underutilised, poor quality and unsafe public and green spaces

- Enabling better integration with emerging development sites such as St Andrew's
- Creating a more inviting 'street environment' rather than simply a highway route for through movement
- These strategic moves could be achieved through greater provision of at-grade on-stage crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, traffic calming (speed reductions), reallocation of road space for bus priority and cycling measures, public realm and street greening interventions.

Example intervention: A short term priority is to enhance the connection from St Andrews. Interim improvements to the underpasses are essential, followed by the introduction of a new at-grade pedestrian crossing across Park Road.



Fig 3.20: Diagram showing proposed new set of pedestrian linkages across major highway infrastructure



## PRECEDENT: Highbury Corner, Islington



Highbury Corner was a congested gyratory with a poor collision record and it severed pedestrian and cyclist access to Highbury and Islington Station. The scheme involved closing the western arm to traffic and a new public space introduced enabling the Highbury and Islington station forecourt to provide safer and more enjoyable access to the station and high street. Two-way signalised traffic and segregated cycle lanes in both directions were introduced for the three remaining arms of the gyratory improving bus legibility, accessibility,

cycle safety and traffic flow. New one-stage pedestrian and cyclist crossings replaced the staggered crossings enabling direct and safe access for all. The scheme is a good example of what could be achieved on Oxford Road, notably the gyratories at the Harefield Road and Cross Street junctions, where there is a desire to improve local access by walking and cycling between the town centre, surrounding neighbourhoods, green space, monument and help enable the future (re) development of surrounding buildings.

## 3.19 Principle

# 3.20 Recapture a network of public spaces

Public space precedents:  
Designing space for girls in a park in Bredäng, a suburb of Stockholm; Foodhall in disused bus shelter, Elephant and Castle; Five Corners Square in Warsaw, Poland; and greening public space at Eastern Curve Garden, Dalston.



The third principle emphasises the importance of a good quality network of public spaces to the vitality of the town centre. The provision of high-quality, desirable and connected public spaces gives the public spaces to dwell and enjoy the town centre away from shops and activities. This includes green spaces, hard public spaces and covered areas within the Chimes and the Pavilions. Achieving this principle will involve:

- Enhance existing hard spaces to widen their appeal and functionality - such as the space outside the station, Bakers Road, and the space outside Tesco's.
  - Reclaim existing green spaces to ensure they serve the town centre and people's needs - such as the Civic Centre Gardens, Friends Garden and Memorial Gardens.
- Create new spaces for greenery and socialising - this could include carving out new spaces as part of remodelling buildings, creating new squares and pocket parks as part of redevelopment.
  - Plant up and green streets - street trees should be added wherever they can be accommodated, and where trees aren't appropriate other greening should be introduced to help build in resilience to climate change.

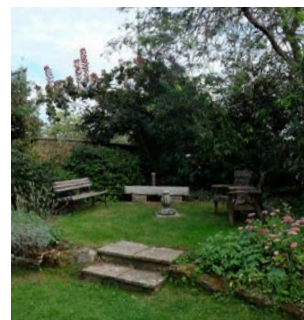




Fig 3.21: Built and green public spaces in Uxbridge, as well as pedestrian and local routes

### Good things already happening

Improved public realm has been delivered following the 2016 Town Centre Strategy , including:

- The first step in improving the link between the centre and Fassnidge Park which now includes a new play space;
- Introducing street furniture and lighting outside the entrance to the Pavilions and outside of Tesco. This has given these areas an ability to provide spaces for dwelling and resting.

### Case study: Dalston Curve Garden

- The Dalston Eastern Curve Garden was formerly a strip of railway industrial land that has been transformed into a public open, green space by local residents and architects. The Curve Garden holds community events, has a cafe, displays public art and has spaces for sitting, dwelling and socialising. It has succeeded in greening a part of Dalston’s town centre that was previously lacking in nature and softness. It can provide inspiration for other town centres, such as Uxbridge.

# Strategic move

## 3.21 Release the heart of the High Street and Windsor Street



A major opportunity to enhance the space for people in the town centre is right at the heart of the High Street. Outside the station we can create high-quality, clutter free public realm in the heart of the town centre environment that reflects the local heritage and better provides for the station arrival experience.

This move would remove vehicles from the High Street and Windsor Street and create a calmer and more welcoming arrival experience outside the main station entrance. This space would be freed up by removing existing street furniture and clutter including taxi drop-off and cycle hire/stands.

A new high-quality station/interchange hub through the redesign of the station environment (see earlier strategic move) would include dedicated taxi/drop-off,

sheltered cycle and information hub(s) to remove the conflict of these movements currently taking place outside the main entrance.

By removing vehicles from Windsor Street this street could be transformed into a high-quality public realm scheme including increasing footway space, carriageway reduction, and introducing traffic management measures to better manage when deliveries, servicing and parking can take place ie. outside of busy visitor periods. The existing restaurants, cafés and community spaces could spill out onto the released space and new planting introduced - creating a much more attractive setting for the historic buildings here.

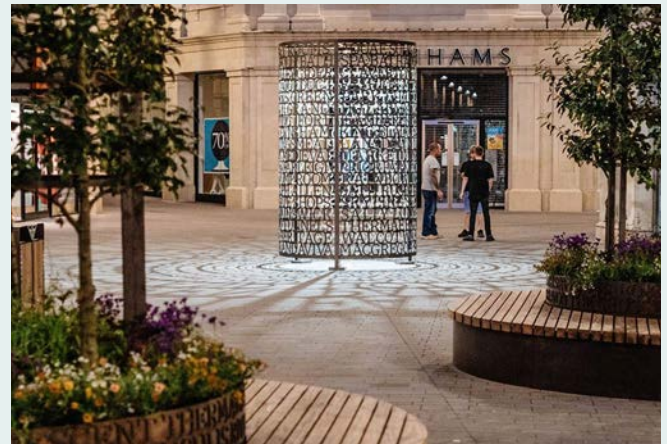


Fig 3.22: Plan showing proposal to relocate vehicular drop off/pick up for the station to release space at the heart of the town centre for people

## PRECEDENT: Bath, Somerset



Image © Chapman Taylor Architects



Bath's central shopping area is the Southgate shopping centre, which lies in close proximity to Bath Spa station. It acts as a pleasant gateway into the town centre from the station and celebrates the city's heritage.

Attractive spaces have been created adjacent to the station including a square which acts as a meeting and dwelling place. The square has been enhanced through the introduction of greenery, public art, street furniture and lighting.



## Station Square

Station Square is the first space that many people come across when they arrive in Uxbridge from the station, car parks and the bus station. Today, the historic station exterior and local market are the highlights of the space - celebrating local heritage and supporting local businesses. However, the square generally lacks greenery in the form of trees and shrubs, allowing the hard surfaces to dominate. The taxi presence adjacent to Market House jams this part of the High Street and Windsor Street with vehicles, reducing the ease of pedestrian movement and adding air pollution.

The sketch shows various moves that would transform this space. In the background, the image shows a more activated frontage to the shops on the station's exterior with colourful awnings and no vacancies. Additionally, the ground floor of Market House has been activated to include spill out spaces. There are trees, shrubs and street furniture added throughout the area making the pedestrian experience more pleasant and encouraging dwelling. The area has been pedestrianised to allow for free movement - creating a more people-friendly and calm atmosphere.



Fig 3.23: Illustrative sketch showing how the space outside the station and Market House could be transformed

Fig 3.24: Existing view



# Strategic move

## 3.22 Restore the town centre's green character and celebrate its wider green links



This strategic move involves restoring the strategic connections along Canal to north and south as well as link to Uxbridge Common/Sports Complex, West Drayton etc. This involves the following:

- Improving new green spaces in the town centre
- Recognise the extraordinary position Uxbridge enjoys in the wider network of leisure routes.
- Enhance links from town centre out to these routes and improve wayfinding and promotion of them

Example intervention: A short term priority is to raise awareness of the proximity of the leisure routes passing close to the town centre. This could be through improved signage, or more simply through the production of a map centred on the town centre showing the walk and cycle times to local destinations via these routes.

Key connections include:

- Grand Union Canal
- London Loop
- Fray's River

Strategic green routes  
Green corridors from town centre to link into wider network

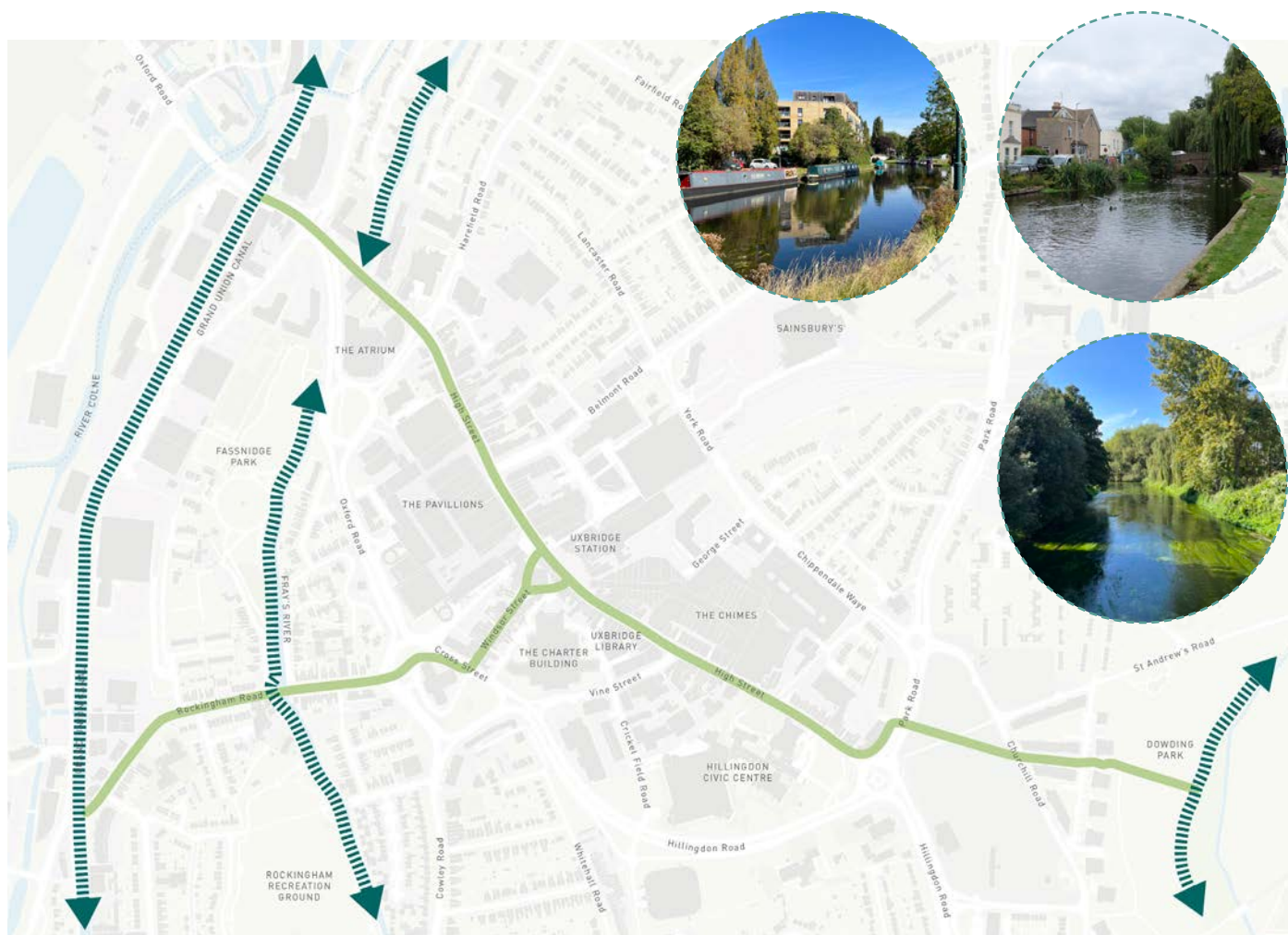
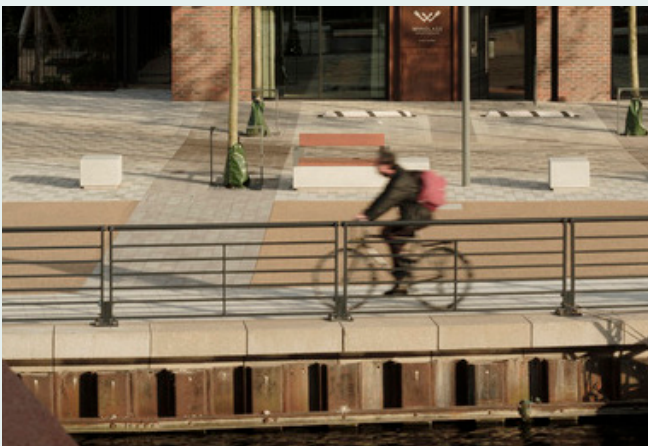
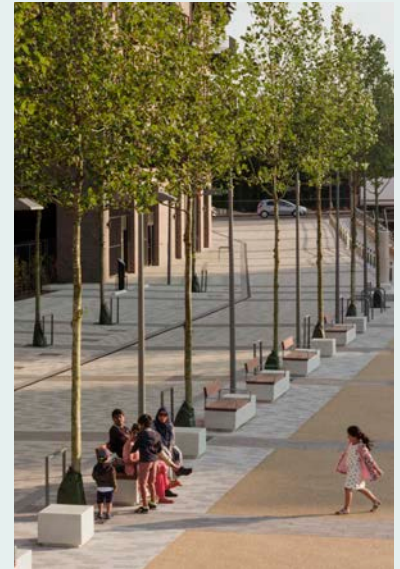


Fig 3.25: Plan showing routes to link up to strategic leisure connections



## PRECEDENT: Hale Wharf, London



Hale Wharf is situated on a slender island on the River Lea. It is primarily a new housing project to meet the needs of this changing part of north-east London, however part of the project has been about creating new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections.

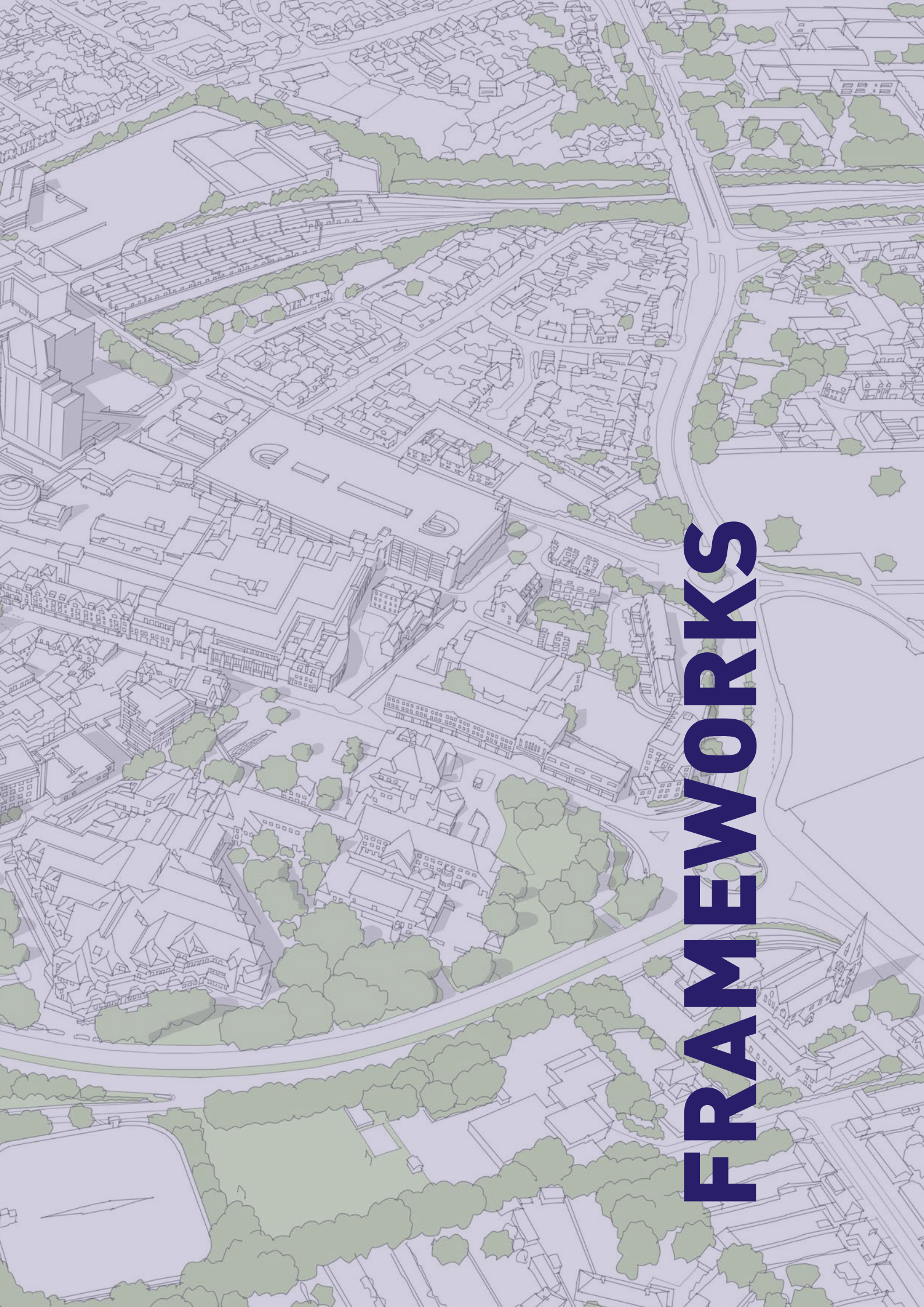
The scheme opens up access to a new waterside setting, long inaccessible and underused, with new pedestrian and cycle bridges that will bring people in and improve connectivity between Tottenham Hale and the Lea Valley Park.

Hale Wharf is a good example of the regeneration along a blue network while delivering housing and connecting places together.





4



# FRAMEWORKS

## 4.1 Movement framework

### Strategic movement opportunities

Several important strategic opportunities were identified within the baseline review to help support Uxbridge as a thriving town centre and one fully accessible by active and sustainable transport modes, including:

- Improving sustainable connectivity with Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire through quality bus and cycling partnerships
- Championing the TfL 'Superloop' orbital links including to central London, Harrow and Hounslow ensuring bus priority and bus stop improvements are sought
- Creating a high-quality bus and cycle link to West Drayton station
- Mitigating and managing the impacts of strategic traffic on the network including road upgrades and junction improvements to smooth traffic and reduce congestion
- Ensuring growth and development can be accessed by active and sustainable modes of transport, addressing severance caused by major highway infrastructure as part of opportunity site development
- Enabling sustainable connectivity with open and green space

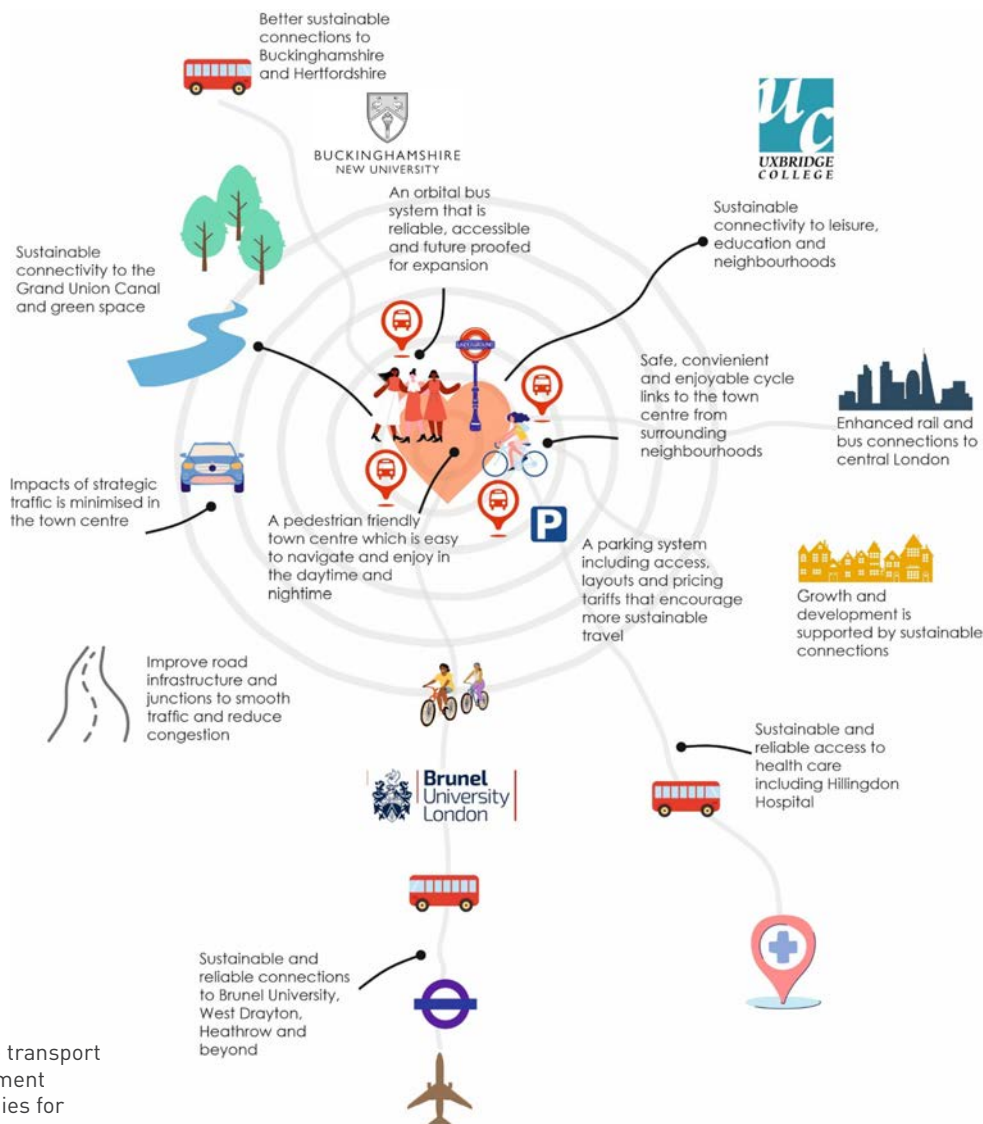


Fig 4.1: Area wide transport and movement opportunities for change



### **Rebalancing Movement and Placemaking Priorities**

The ambition is to rebalance movement and access priorities of different transport modes accessing the town centre over the life of the vision. A zonal system could be implemented, whereby in the central core pedestrians are prioritised, moving out to cycling, bus, highways and parking on the outer rings.



### **Connecting Uxbridge to its Neighbourhoods**

A major element of the vision is to create high-quality pedestrian and cyclist links to and from the town centre with surrounding neighbourhoods and other key attractors including schools, colleges, Brunel University and leisure facilities. This should include improving existing routes, junctions and crossings as well as identifying potential new links to improve pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, safety and legibility.



### **A Place for People**

Through the re-prioritising of movement in the town centre, there is an opportunity to return streets and spaces around the town centre to people and placemaking, including Windsor Street, town centre mews and alleyways. This would require the relocation of parking, reallocation of road space, removal of superfluous street furniture, public realm, lighting and greening improvements, as well as reconsideration of building plots and access arrangements.



### **Connecting Uxbridge to the Grand Union Canal and Greenspace and Leisure**

The ambition is to significantly improve existing links to and from the town centre to green space and the Grand Union Canal, as well as identifying opportunities for new accesses and routes for walking, cycling and buses to these important assets. Measures should also look to improve the quality of these green and blue spaces.



### **Future Proofing Buses**

Creating a bus system that is fully operational, legible, reliable and accessible now and in the future, should form a major role in shaping the vision of the town centre. This could include the replanning of the bus routes, relocation of bus stops and in the longer-term relocation of the bus garage to create a 21st century, efficient and fully integrated station interchange.



### **Development-Enabling Sustainable Parking and Deliveries Strategy**

There is a need for a development-enabling sustainable parking and deliveries strategy for the town centre. This would address the existing negative impacts of parking, improve parking facilities, particularly for sustainable vehicles and disabled users, and find long term solutions to support development. It also needs to support regeneration objectives and encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

Cycle and pedestrian lane with modal filter in Walthamstow, London; shared surface high street in Vienna, Austria; Bus stops in Bourg-en-Bresse, France; integrated car, cycle and pedestrian movement and planting along A43 in Lyon, France

## Overarching transport strategy

### Existing issues

Uxbridge is currently very car-dominated. Park Road, Hillingdon Road and Oxford Road sever neighbourhoods to the east, south and west of the town centre, preventing safe and accessible local walking and cycling routes. Bus routes are insufficiently provided for the north, northeast and southwest of the town and there is an over concentration of bus stops along the High Street and Belmont Road around Uxbridge Station. This leads to congestion, reduced air quality and poor user experience.

### The ambition

The goal is to establish a movement strategy that works efficiently, safely and sustainably for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and vehicles. Walking and cycling routes will strategically connect to wider green routes, provide accessible links to local neighbourhoods through safe junction crossings, improve the High Street and Windsor Street experience by minimising vehicle use and enhance secondary and tertiary informal and meandering passageways throughout the town centre.

Reducing vehicle dominance in Uxbridge is key to improving the town centre environment. A parking strategy will be undertaken by Hillingdon Council to better understand where parking is over provided to manage and consolidate it to reduce traffic congestion, recycle underused space and support the economic vitality of the town centre. Greater emphasis will be targeted at improving access to public transport, in particular, improving the visibility and accessibility of local buses that offers a balanced service to all neighbourhoods in Uxbridge. A new bus link between York Road and Belmont Road and re-providing bus stops along Chippendale Way will help to relieve the existing pressure on highways and increase visibility and integration with tube and rail links.

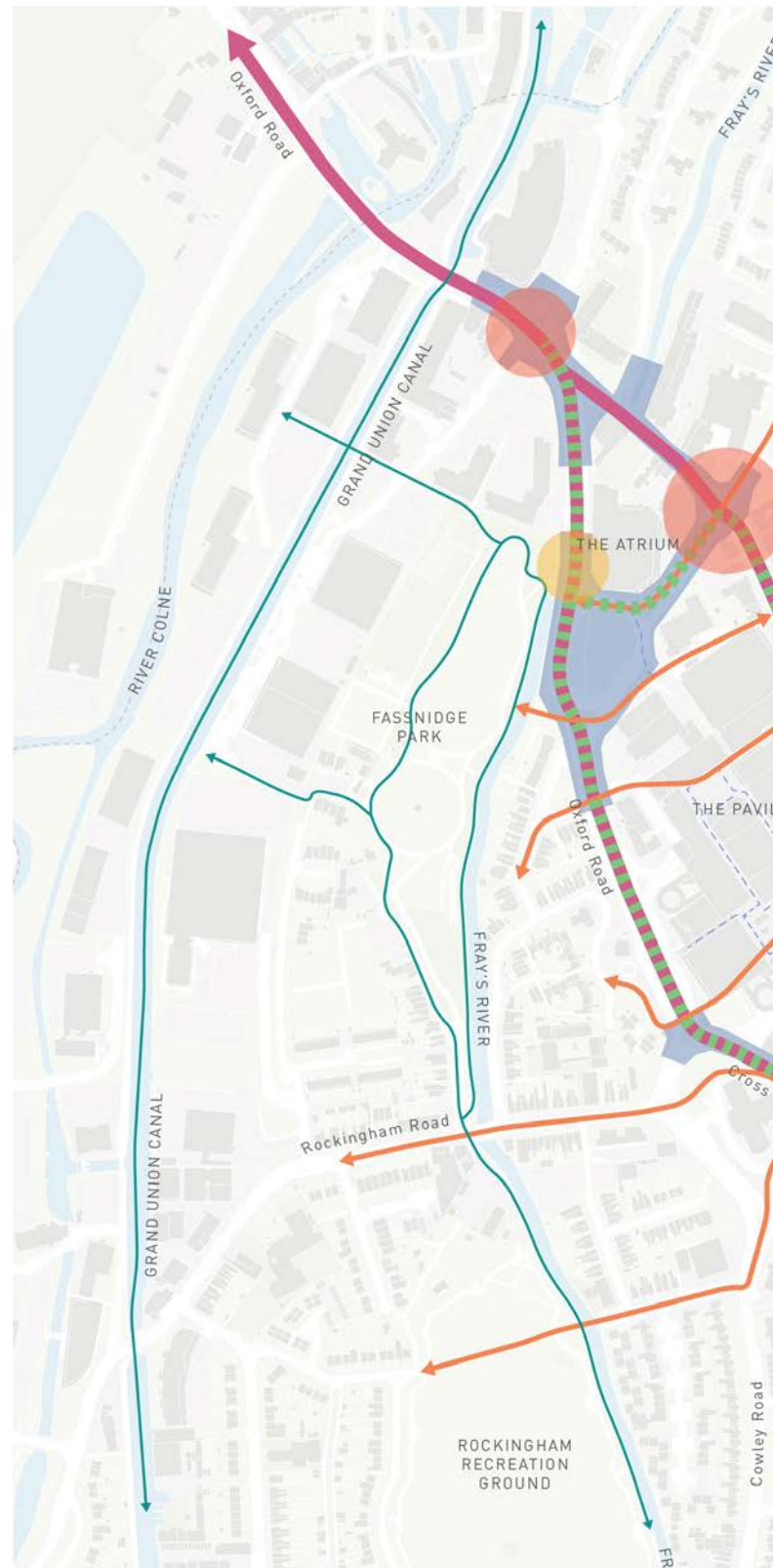
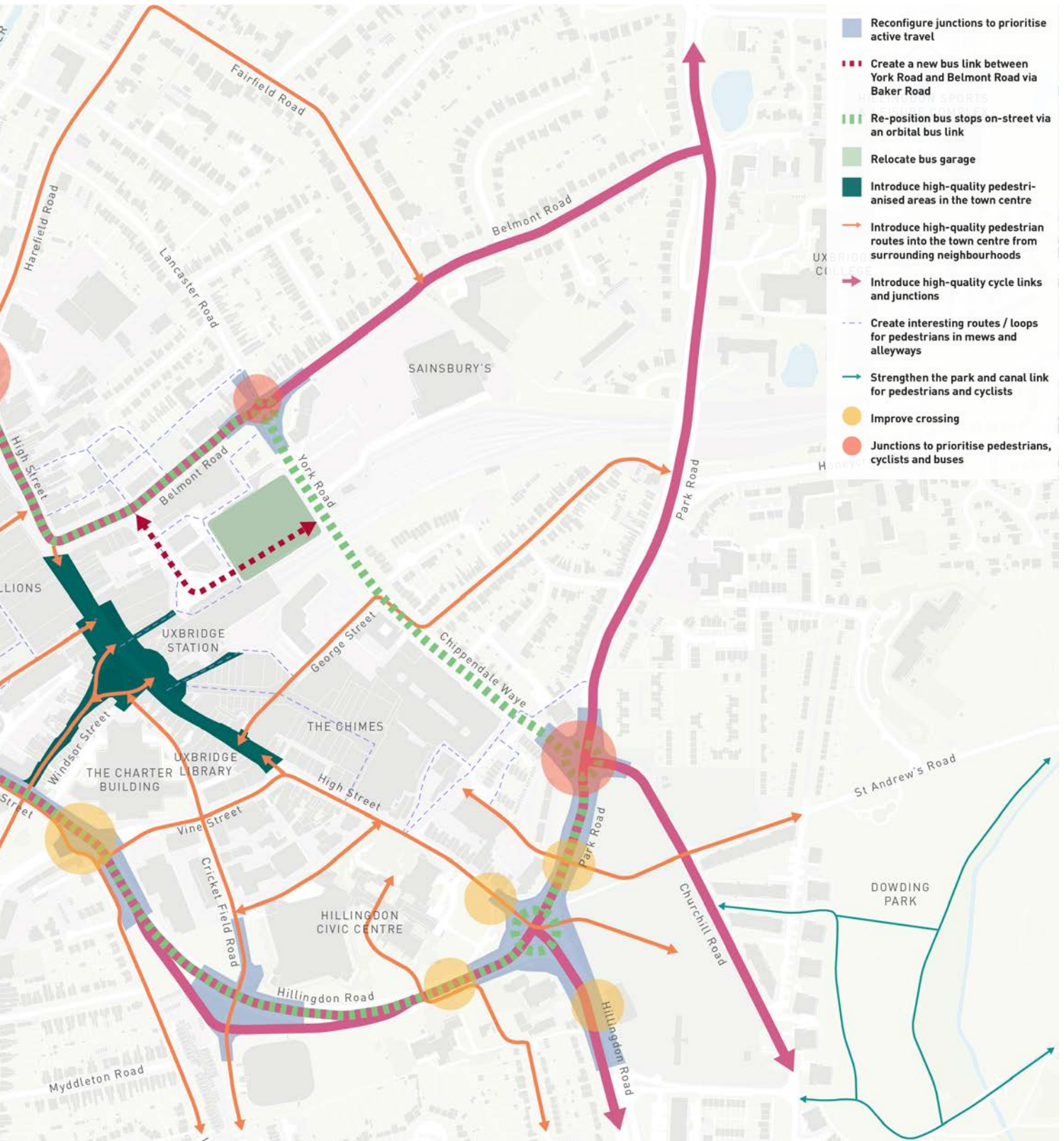


Fig 4.2: Uxbridge's overarching movement strategy



Pedestrianised high street with street trees, cycle lane and bicycle parking; cycling modal filter in Walthamstow; greening and improved cycle and pedestrian space in Brooklyn, New York, USA; and improved public realm for pedestrians and cyclists alongside new planting in Marylebone, London.

## Walking, cycling and public spaces

### Existing issues

Uxbridge is surrounded by green and blue space, including Fasnidge Park, Grand Union Canal and Rockingham Recreation Ground to the west and Uxbridge Common to the east. However, these important assets are difficult to get to, and in some cases are in visible/hard to find on foot and by bicycle.

Key attractors on the outskirts of the town centre including Brunel University, leisure facilities and Hillingdon Hospital are also not very well connected by walking, cycling and public transport.

### The ambition

The ambition is to re-establish and reintegrate important green, blue and public spaces into the town centre.

The aim is to also create high-quality connections to attract visitors outside of the town centre, including Brunel University and Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Complex.

- Improve existing crossings for pedestrians and cyclists
- Introduce new crossings for pedestrians and cyclists
- Re-design junctions to enable at grade pedestrian and cyclist crossings
- Public realm improvements
- ↔ Potential new pedestrian and cyclist links as part of regeneration
- Relocate street clutter, taxis and drop-off to make way for a high-quality station arrival area
- Introduce high quality strategic cycle links and junctions
- Introduce high quality town centre links for pedestrian and cyclists
- - - Create interesting routes / loops for pedestrians in mews and alleyways
- Introduce quality leisure and park routes with links to the Grand Union Canal for pedestrians and cyclists
- Strengthen the canal link for pedestrians and cyclists
- Create a cluster free pedestrian and cyclist-friendly environment on the High Street
- Mixed priority route that enables pedestrians, cyclists and buses convenient and safe access
- Reconnect the monument, Windsor Street and St Margaret's Church to the town centre through road realignments, major public realm improvements and the introduction of time-restricted access for deliveries, servicing and emergency vehicles only

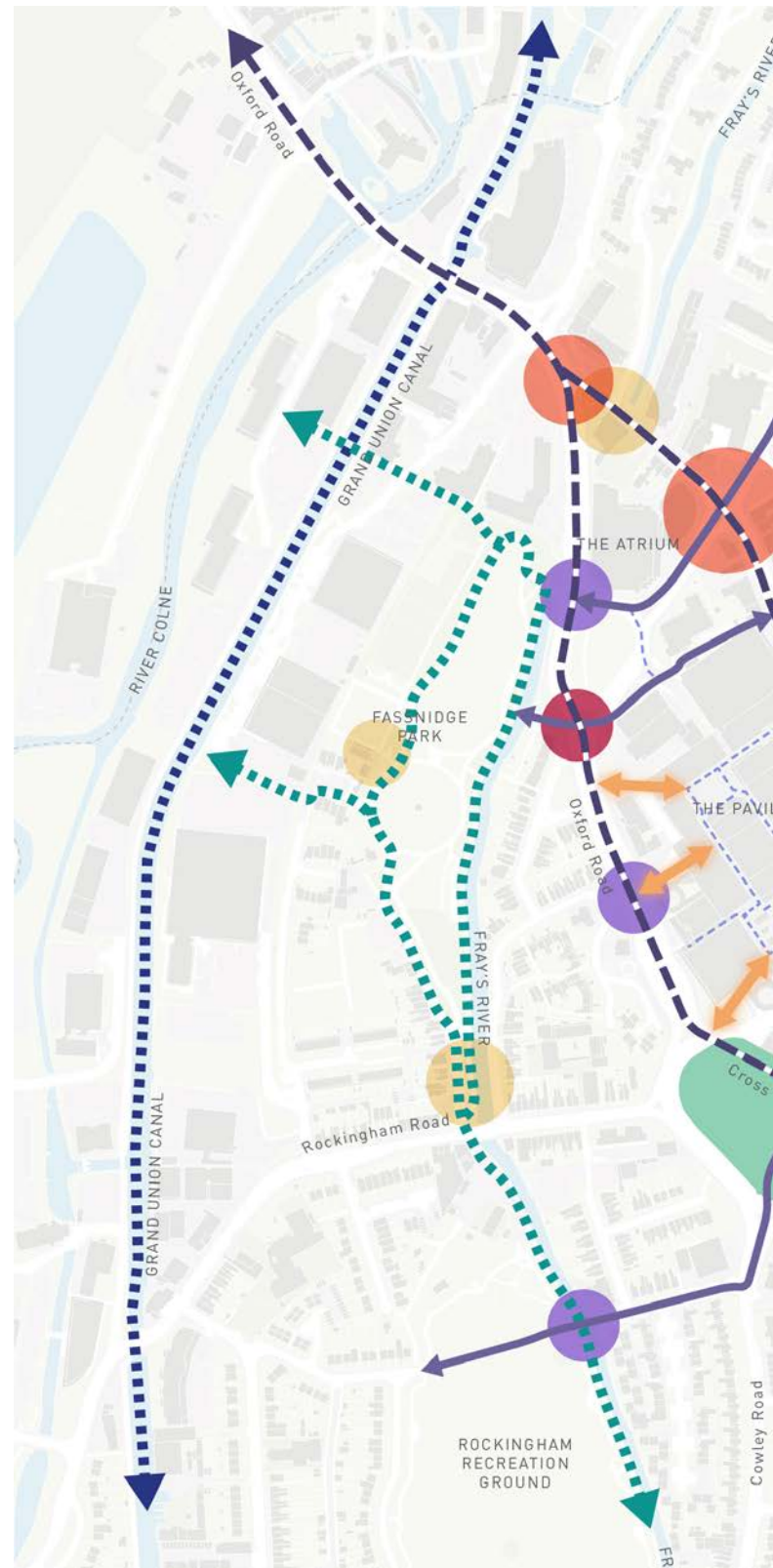
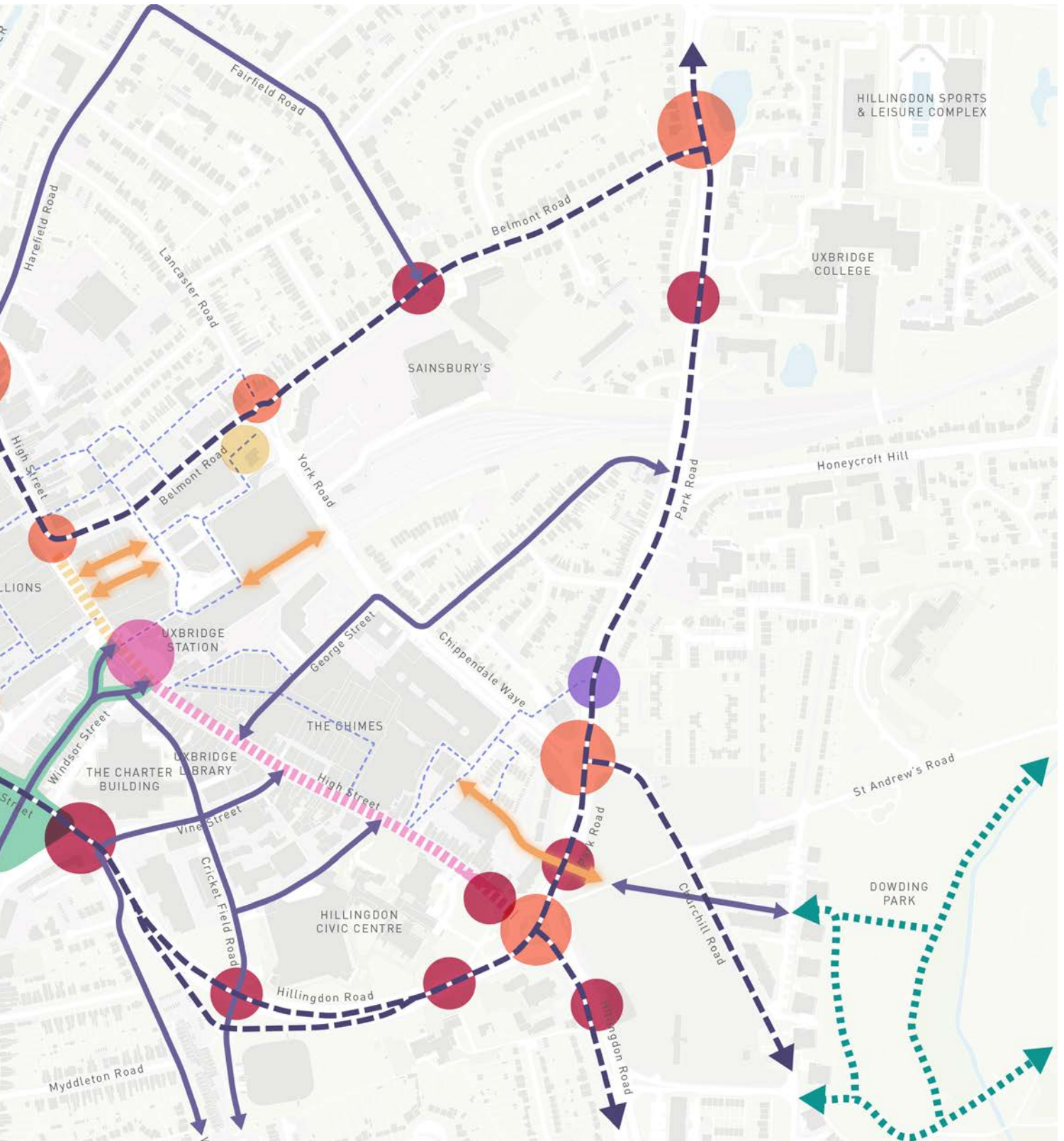


Fig 4.3: Uxbridge's walking and cycling strategy





Examples of a high quality bus stops and hubs: Szell Kalman Square in Budapest, Hungary; Stockton on Tees, UK; bus stop with 'smart roof' containing lighting and speakers to signal approaching buses in Umeå, Sweden; integrated bus hub in Croydon, including cycle parking, cycle hire and Wi-Fi on an orbital route around the town centre.

## Buses - from a complex to a comprehensive network

### Existing issues

Currently all buses travel through the constrained space next to Uxbridge station, where people are also trying to access the station and the town centre

The existing layout and system impacts bus operations, causes delays and road safety due to the lack of space

There is currently little or no bus service provision to the north, northeast and southwest of the town centre, impacting on local access from these areas

There is no opportunity to expand routes within this currently situation.

The existing network of buses creates a significant amount of pressure in one location, whilst other areas have little or no service provision.

### The ambition

The ambition is to create a bus network that enables existing buses to operate in an efficient and safe manner; makes buses more visible and in prime location to maximise passenger take-up; provides a balanced level of service to neighbourhoods that surround the town centre as well as into the home counties; provides sufficient flexibility and space to future-proof the introduction of further new services; provides suitable bus service operation facilities in a more appropriate location.

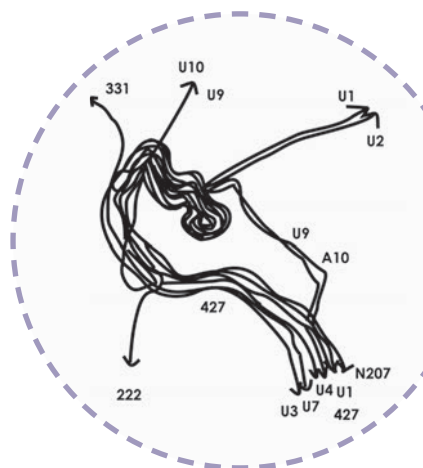


Fig 4.4: Existing bus network

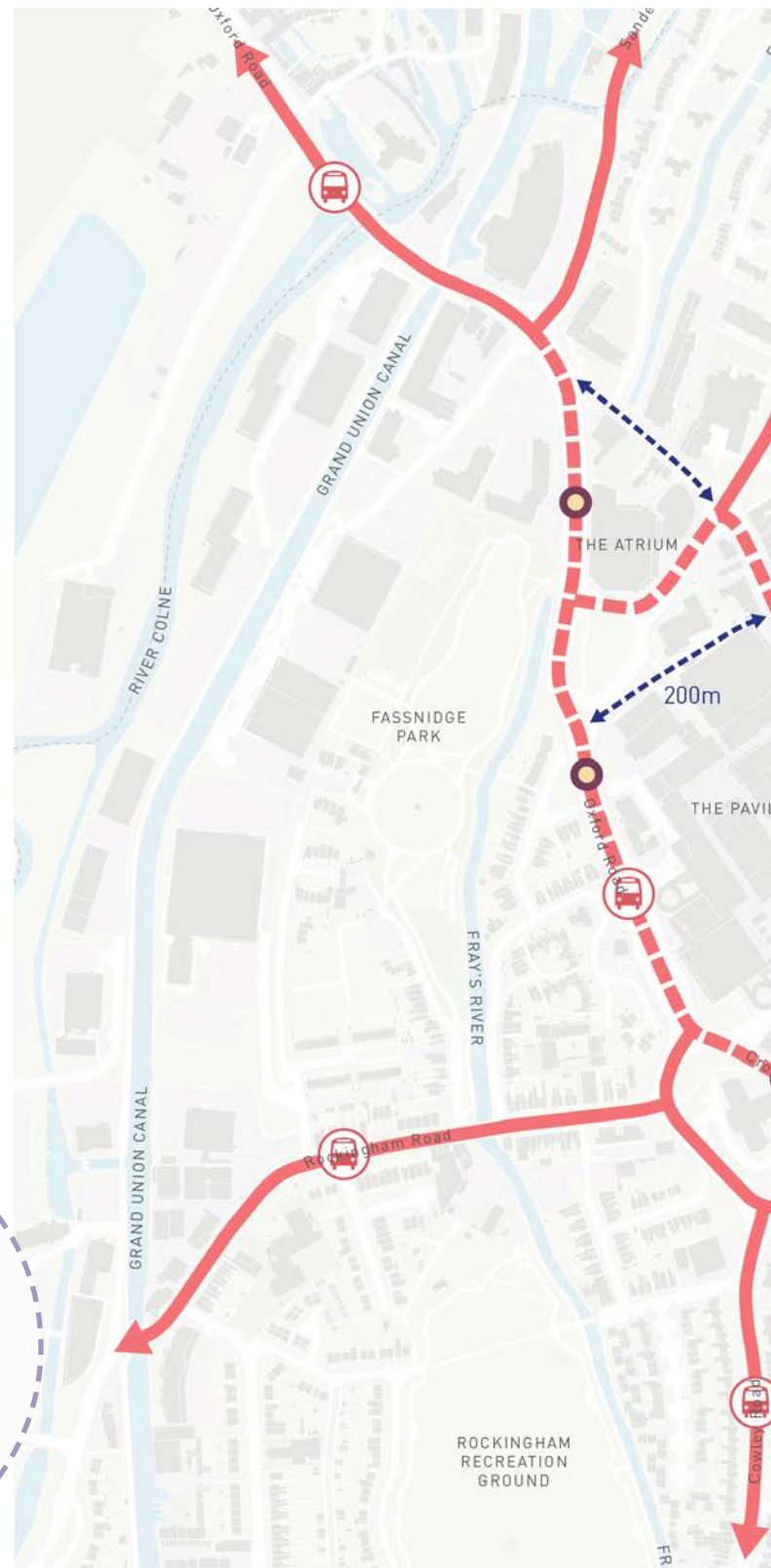
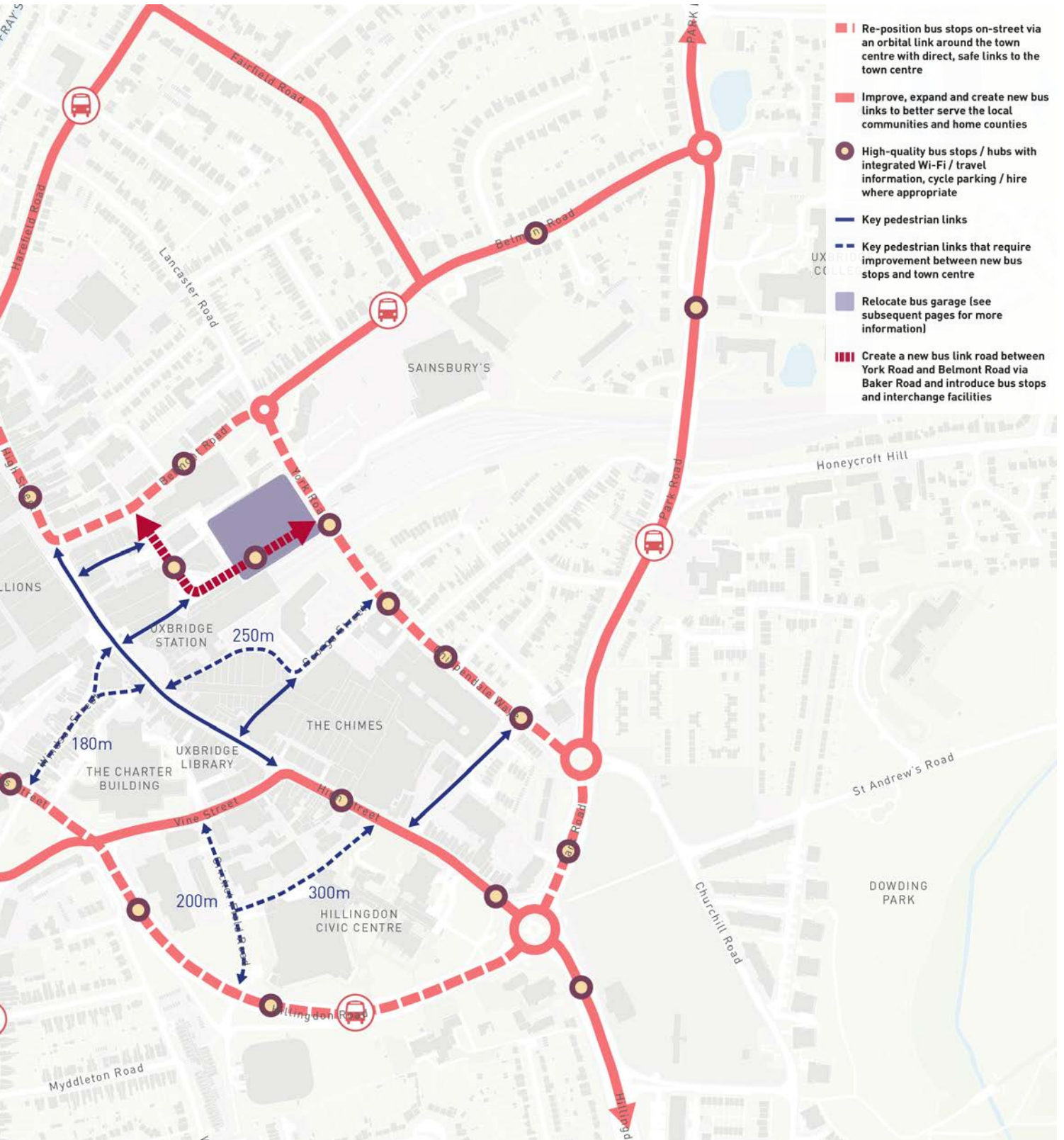


Fig 4.5: Uxbridge's bus strategy - a bus system fit for a long future



## Delivering the ambition

To deliver the ambition will require imagination, innovation and a move away from traditional approaches to design.

### Key objectives

- Uxbridge station interchange hub - Create a much enhanced two-way interchange by opening up the Bakers Road link to York Road.
- Uxbridge station multi-modal hub - Create a station multi-modal hub where taxis, drop-off/pick up, cycle facilities and information is provided and in turn enabling the full closure of the High Street outside the town centre.
- Orbital bus system - Create a highly visible orbital bus route system including bus priority around the periphery of the town centre with high quality bus hubs and quality links for pedestrians and cyclists to/from these hubs to the town centre
- Bus garage - Relocate the bus garage to a more suitable location which better supports bus operations.

### The benefits

This bus-enabling ambition and approach would have significant benefits for the town centre, wider regeneration, socio-economic and environmental objectives and short-medium length non-car journey-making. Related benefits include:

- Enabling existing buses to operate more efficiently, effectively and safely
- Raising the profile, visibility and priority of buses to create a more accessible and legible service
- Generating more revenue for buses through increased patronage and profile
- Enabling greater coverage and expansion of existing routes to provide access to neighbourhoods currently inaccessible to public transport
- Future-proofing further routes as there is greater capacity to run more services on an orbital system
- Improving the quality, safety and personal security in and around the station environment
- Providing greater opportunities for placemaking, sustainable regeneration and environmental improvements through the relocation of buses and release of land presently occupied by buses.

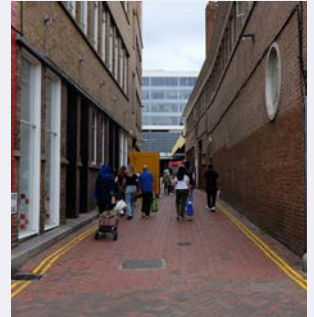


Fig 4.6: Uxbridge existing situation

## Uxbridge station environment and interchange

### Existing issues

Currently the station and interchange environment is compromised by clutter. Too many different types of users are competing for space, characterised by overbearing buildings and dark alleyways creating an unsafe and uninviting environment.

### The ambition

The ambition is to create a high-quality, better integrated, less cluttered and confusing station and interchange environment, including both the High Street and Bakers Road. The environment should be calm, clear and safe for pedestrians and cyclists and better manages vehicular access. Creating a new dedicated taxi/drop-off and cycle hub to the southeast of the station (accessed from York Road) will alleviate the pressure of vehicles in front of Uxbridge Station on the High Street.

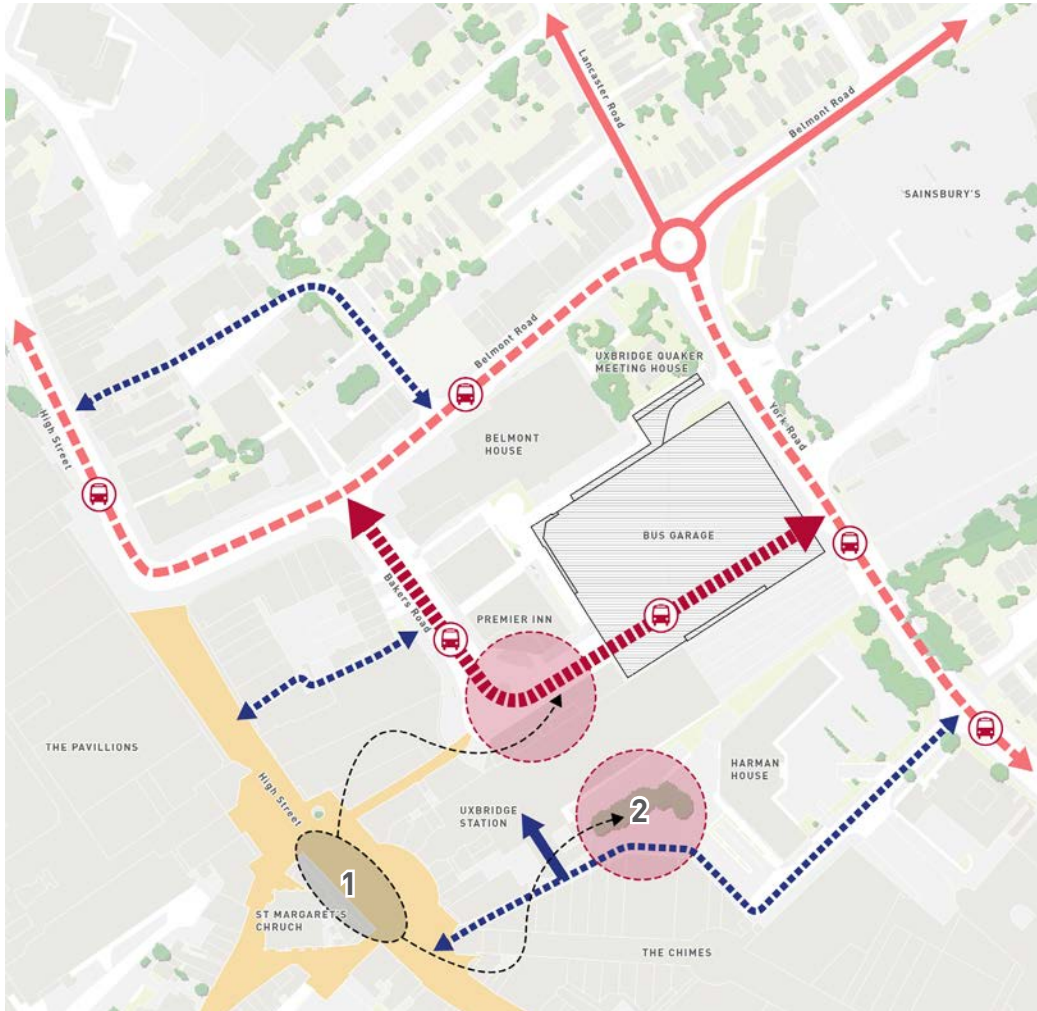
### The benefits

The benefits of replanning the station interchange and arrival areas include the following:

- Enabling a safer and more inviting station interchange environment that is easier to navigate particularly for vulnerable road users
- Enabling public realm to be improved through the relocation of movement activities to more appropriate locations, namely the relocation of vehicle drop-off/pick up and taxi movements on the High Street outside the station
- Enabling the relocation of the bus garage, stops and accesses provides a greater opportunity for significant public realm improvements including a potential station square and new bus and taxi link
- Enabling land release for new and more appropriate development, better pedestrian and cyclist links and public realm.

**Re-imagine the Baker Street environment including relocation of the bus garage and bus stands to create a more inviting arrival and interchange.**





- ▬▬▬ Re-position bus stops on-street via an orbital link around the town centre with direct, safe links to the town centre
- ▬▬▬ Improve, expand and create new bus links to better serve the local communities and home counties
- ⊗ High-quality bus stops / hubs with integrated Wi-Fi / travel information, cycle parking / hire where appropriate
- - - Key pedestrian links that require improvement between new bus stops and town centre
- Relocate the bus garage to another location where bus operations and standing can be undertaken more effectively
- ▬▬▬ Create a two-way bus and taxi link only between York Street and Belmont Road via Baker Street through the removal of the bus garage
- Relocate the taxi / drop-off area in front of the station (High Street) and close this section to vehicular access except emergency vehicles, refuse vehicles and time-restricted / controlled deliveries and servicing
- Potential for a multi-modal hub including taxi / drop-off area next to Uxbridge Station at the back of the Chimes Shopping Centre (currently occupied by a parking area)
- Potential opportunity to open a new entrance to the station from this edge
- Pedestrianised High Street environment

### 1. Existing taxi/drop-off/pick-up area



### 2. Potential new multi-modal hub area



Fig 4.7: Relocating taxi/drop-off to a dedicated area next to the station would significantly improve the station environment and interchange experience for all users. The potential to open up the north side of The Chimes could also be explored to support this.

Transforming roundabout to a shared surface square in Bacup, Lancashire; Preston improved public realm and street tree planting; The Cross, Worcester cycle hub; and public realm transformation with pedestrianisation, planting and seating at Strand and Aldwych in London.

## Sustainably connecting Uxbridge town centre to its communities

### The existing situation

Currently the highway network that surrounds the town centre acts a useful mechanism that keeps strategic movements out of the town centre. However, it creates a significant barrier to local connectivity and prevents communities that surround it from accessing their town centre by foot or bicycle safely.

### The ambition

Whilst recognising the importance of the strategic network, the ambition is to better balance the need to keep the network moving with greater local pedestrian and cyclist access that better connects the town centre with its communities. This could include:

- Partial removal of links or road reallocation on the gyratories on Oxford Road/Hillingdon Road with space given back to bus priority, pedestrians, cyclists and linking up green space and historic streets
- Replacement of roundabouts or the signalisation of roundabouts and introduction of at-grade crossings to reduce crossing distances and improve cyclist road safety. Consideration to bus turnaround should be considered if roundabouts are to be replaced with signalised junctions.
- At-grade, one-stage crossings should be introduced on Park Road, Oxford Road and Hillingdon Road linking up key wider attractors including Brunel University and leisure facilities.

The strategic highway network creates a significant barrier to local, sustainable access with a negative impact on the environment, road safety.

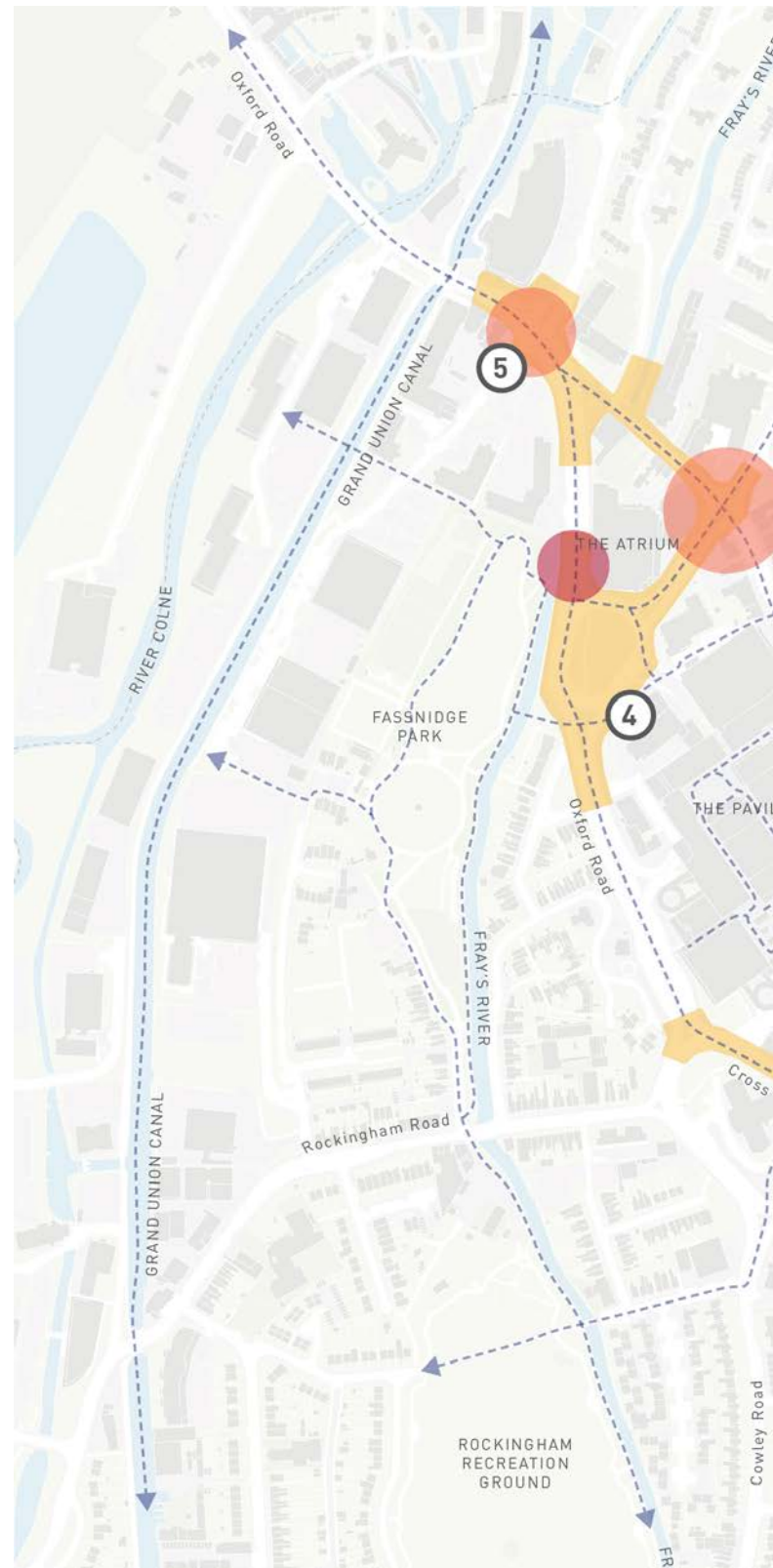
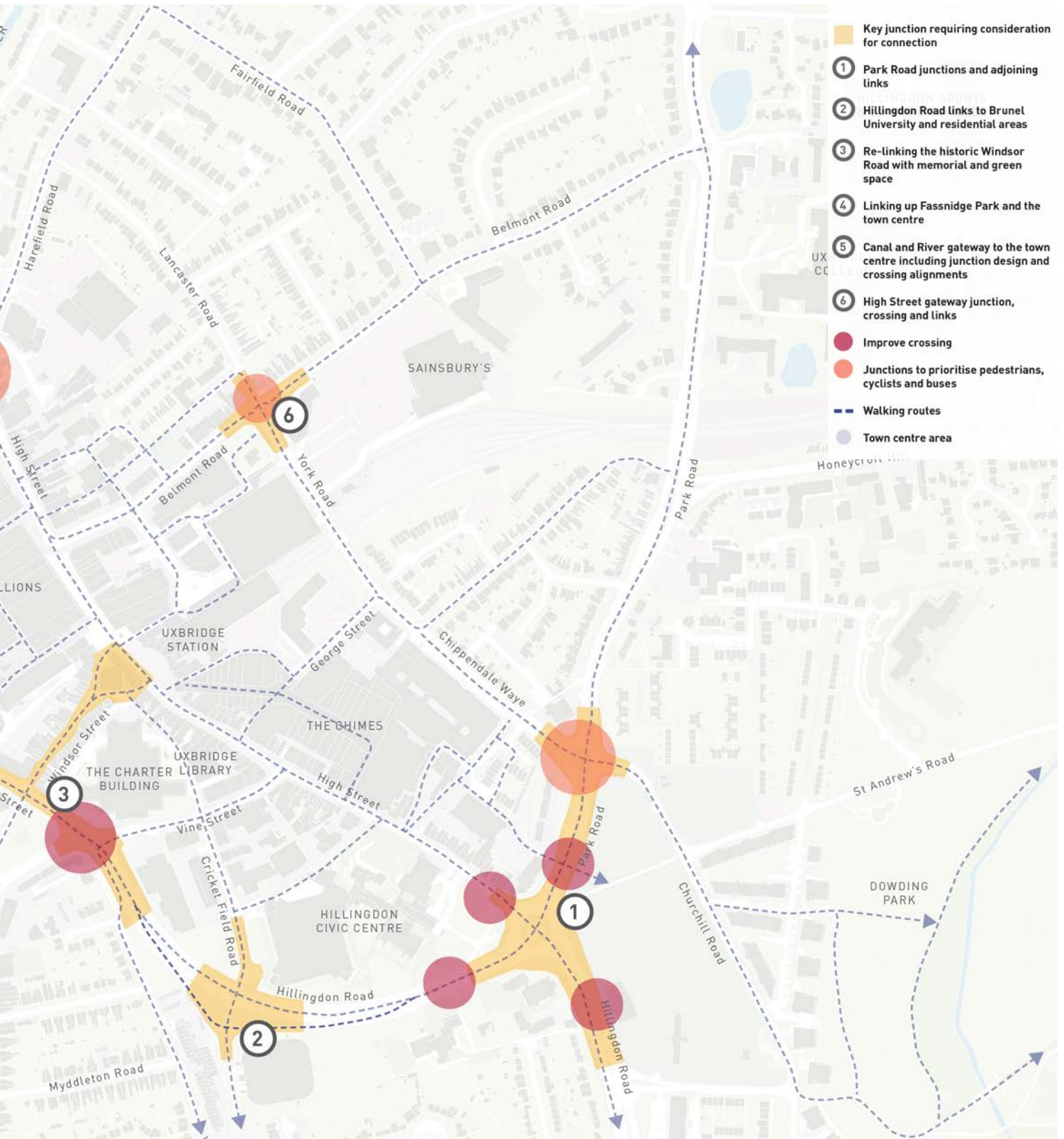


Fig 4.8: Key junctions which could be enhanced to better facilitate all modes





## 4.2 Land use framework

The aim of this framework is to increase the number of people using, enjoying and benefiting from the Town Centre by providing a more diverse set of uses that respond to these challenges and meet the demands of local people and businesses.

Drawing on the economic, social and commercial analysis undertaken as part of the evidence base analysis, the types of uses that could be introduced to help achieve this aim are set out the table below. These include residential and non-residential uses, and those presented either offer opportunities for the Town Centre or are under-represented at present. Increasing these types of uses will complement existing uses in the Town Centre including its civic, retail, community and office assets.

This land use framework addresses four distinct but overlapping challenges facing Uxbridge Town Centre. These include but are not limited to:



The need to evolve the High Street offer so it is fit for the future, better reflects rapidly changing consumer demand for 'experiences' and attracts a broader audience.



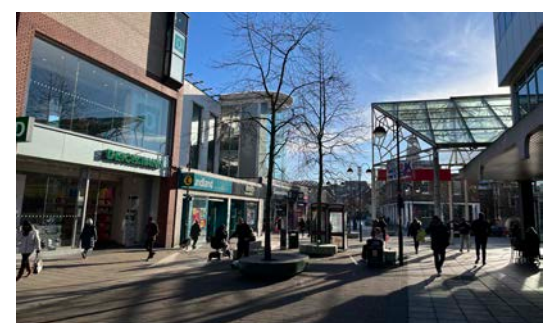
The need to better meet the day-to-day needs of Uxbridge and Hillingdon's residents and provide uses that are welcoming to all members of the community.



The need to address the under supply and lack of diversity of residential accommodation in the Town Centre and its catchment.



The need to maintain a strong and diverse local economy while also addressing the oversupply of office space.



Use Type	Examples	Justification
Leisure	E.g. Competitive socialising (shuffleboard, darts, arcades, axe throwing etc), gyms, spas	Under-representation of leisure uses Lack of uses catering to student population Weak evening and night time economy Strong emerging market area nationally that will diversify offer
Food & Beverage	E.g. Restaurants, bars, cafés, pubs	Under-representation of F&B uses Weak evening and night-time economy Opportunity to capitalise on overnight stays linked to Wembley Increasing demand from consumers for authentic experiences
Personal Services	E.g. Hairdressers, barbers, dry cleaners, beauty salons, financial/legal services	Under-representation of services that meet the day-to-day needs of local people Over-representation of chain retail targeted at regional market High demand from consumers for services that cannot be delivered virtually
Health	E.g. Pharmacies, health hubs, opticians, physical/mental therapists	Under-representation of services that meet the day-to-day needs of local people Ambitions from local NHS bodies to open 'super-hubs' within communities Increasingly ageing population
Culture	E.g. Commercial theatres, community theatres, independent cinemas, museums, galleries	Lack of any cultural and creative uses Weak evening and night time economy Few non-retail anchors that attract people from outside the local area to visit Growing idea of town centres as 'playgrounds' for all
Education	E.g. Higher education teaching, learning and study space (i.e. Brunel University)	Brunel University lacks presence in the town centre Ambitions from Brunel University to bring teaching and accommodation into the town centre
Commercial Space	E.g. Innovation hub, maker space, creative studio, 'conventional' industrial	High levels of office vacancy Opportunity to diversify economy Need to enhance entrepreneurialism and cater to smaller businesses Aspiration from Brunel University to open a new innovation hub
Hotels	N/A	Opportunity to capitalise on proximity and connectivity to both Wembley and Pinewood Studios Strong take up of rooms at existing hotels Under-representation of hotels versus other town centres
Retirement Communities	I.e. Integrated retirement communities and retirement homes	Projected proportional increase in people aged 65+ in Hillingdon Potential offered by 'grey pound' Remains a buoyant and viable market
Student Accommodation	I.e. Purpose-built student accommodation, co-living and university accommodation	Brunel University plans to grow student population Lack of student accommodation locally particularly in town centre Increasing presence of international students at Brunel University Presence of Buckinghamshire New University in town centre Continues to be a resilient and growing residential market sector
Market Products	I.e. Market sale (including houses), built to rent and co-living	Lack of housing in town centre compared to competitor centres Opportunity to increase footfall and town centre expenditure May help increase average household incomes locally, and therefore town centre expenditure
Specialist Products	I.e. Affordable/social (including houses), and discount market sale	Access to housing is a key driver of deprivation locally May help to sustain the town centre's relatively young population

## Use suggestions for character areas

From a spatial perspective, some of these uses are more suitable for certain locations than others. As summarised on the diagram below, this is because different parts of the Town Centre have distinct characteristics that make them more appropriate for certain uses.

Taking the four challenges in turn, the most suitable part of the Town Centre for uses that will help evolve the High Street offer is the area in and around the Chimes. This is because it is already the Town Centre's main retail heart, which should be maintained, and there is an opportunity to introduce more leisure, cultural and F&B uses to the area – it is already home to the Town Centre's most important leisure assets (i.e. Odeon, Library, Morello Lounge) which creates a good starting point to create a new cluster of activities that diversify the local offer, encourage linked trips and create a stronger evening and night-time economy.

The area in and around the Pavilions, in contrast, is a suitable location to introduce more uses that meet the day-to-day needs of the local population (e.g. health hubs, opticians, community uses, pharmacies, therapists, hairdressers, barbers, dry cleaners, beauty salons etc). This is because it is a central and easy-to-access location, but also because it has a large number of retail and office assets that are struggling from changing consumer and weakening market demand – these can be re-purposed, re-focused and/or re-developed to support these service-oriented uses. Some of these buildings, particularly those on the periphery, may also be suitable for further educational uses should Brunel University want to expand into the Town Centre.

The Civic Centre also provides opportunities to better meet the needs of the Uxbridge and wider Hillingdon community. At the moment it is home to the London Borough of Hillingdon and a small number of other public services – while it is technically open to the public, it is fairly inaccessible and closed off particularly as many services located within the complex are not public facing. There is a clear opportunity to introduce other civic and community uses into the complex to increase its social impact and draw more people to the Town Centre. Potential uses relate to culture, education, health and other public services.





Fig 4.9: Diagram showing suggestions for key uses that should be encouraged within the town centre's distinct character areas

Windsor Street sits between the Chimes, Pavilions and Civic Centre and provides a mix of independent restaurants, pubs, shops and personal services. This offer is distinct from the rest of the Town Centre and should be maintained and enhanced to improve its functioning and attractiveness. The characterful streetscape lends itself to alfresco activity typically associated with cafés, bars, restaurants and pubs.

### Addressing housing needs

In terms of addressing the under supply of residential uses in the Town Centre, there are several locations that present opportunities. The areas around the Chimes and Pavilions, for example, both offer opportunities given their proximity to the tube station as well as the presence of opportunity sites, but the area to the west of the town centre around Bakers Road, Belmont Road and Bakers Yard offers the most comprehensive option. This is because the area has several prominent blocks that are ageing, at risk and/or not providing an optimum physical solution. There is an opportunity to comprehensively re-develop this area to make it a more welcoming and attractive gateway, while also providing residential uses and local services that support the needs of residents and commuters.

There also a number of specific sites dotted across the Town Centre that could be utilised to provide more residential accommodation. These includes the former Wickes site, which could incorporate both houses and flats, the Sainsbury's site, and ageing office blocks that are suffering from low occupancy rates – particularly those in and around the Civic Centre area.

The area either side of the canal side toward the north of the Town Centre could also accommodate residential uses – the presence of both the canal and Fassnidge Park would be highly attractive to the market. These areas do, however, also present a good opportunity to diversify the Town Centre's economy as they could be re-purposed and/or re-developed to provide industrial and light industrial type uses over time. Their location on the edge of the Town Centre within close proximity to the M40 and M25 would make them attractive to industrial occupants if office uses in the area begin to suffer vacancy challenges.

### Employment uses

Across the rest of the Town Centre it will be important to retain some employment uses to maintain the area's strong and powerful economy. The proposed strategy is to protect the area's 'best' office stock (i.e. assets that are high quality, flexible, well-located and meet changing occupier needs) while allowing the selective release of less appropriate stock.

The most attractive area for office occupiers will be offices within easy reach of both the tube station and car parks, meaning that buildings such as the Charter Building and Belmont House should be retained and promoted. Blocks facing vacancy challenges on the periphery of the Town Centre, however, could be selectively re-purposed as long as support is provided to relocate existing tenants into other office blocks in the area.

Where office blocks are to be re-purposed, consideration should be made to whether any other types of employment use could be considered. In central locations it might be attractive to create new mixed schemes that incorporate several floors of high-quality modern office space, with the rest of the space used for residential and/or other uses. There may also be scope to consider other employment typologies such as creative studios, maker spaces and more industrial type typologies depending on the appropriateness of the location.

When considering employment uses the aim should be to address the high levels of office vacancy while maintaining and diversifying the existing economy. Careful monitoring of total office floorspace, office occupancy and economic performance will need to be undertaken to maintain a good balance. If occupancy levels increase significantly following the release of a few large blocks, for example, a more protectionist stance may be required to ensure the local economy remains robust. This is important as it is will be essential to maintain a strong day-time workforce to drive footfall, spend and support Town Centre performance.



Fig 4.10: Uxbridge existing situation

## 4.3 Sustainability framework

### Climate mitigation

There are a number of measures Uxbridge Town Centre can adopt to help mitigate the risks of climate change.

- Improve the energy efficiency of poor scoring buildings - both domestic and non-domestic. Key buildings that require improvement are The Chimes, The Pavilions, Pemberton House and 159 - 163 High Street.
- Retain as much as possible of the existing built environment - what exists is the most environmentally friendly option! Refraining from knocking down and starting again can hugely help to mitigate climate change.
- Refurbish or retrofit existing buildings which are underused and outdated - this includes ensuring spaces have the flexibility to adapt in the future without requiring major redevelopment
- Diversify town centre uses to help enable the refurbishment of vacant buildings - introducing new uses to diversify the town centre will enable a more resilient local economy to ensure a thriving town centre. Vacant spaces offer this opportunity to future proofing the town centre.

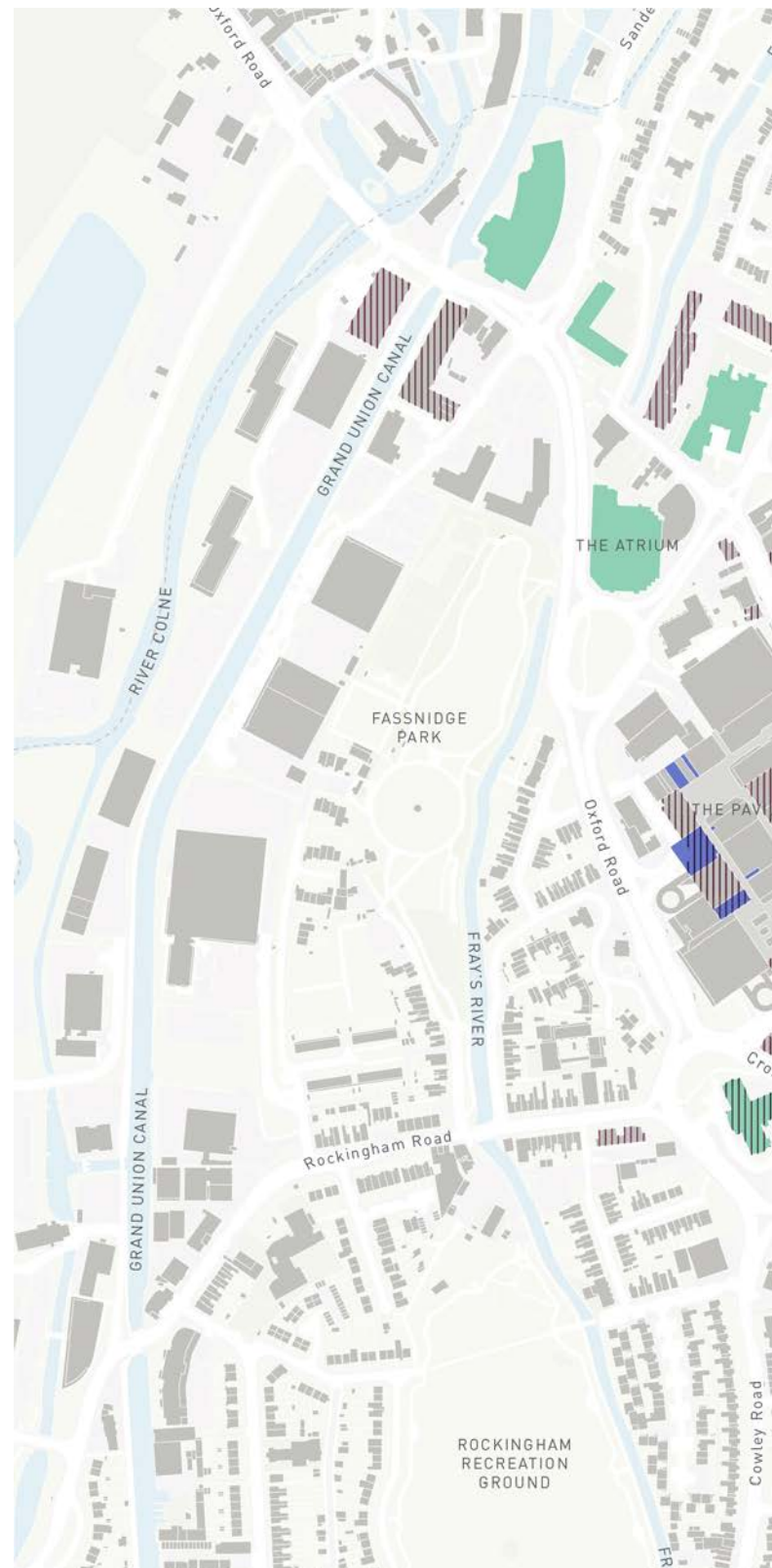
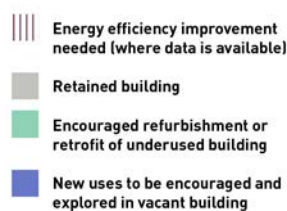
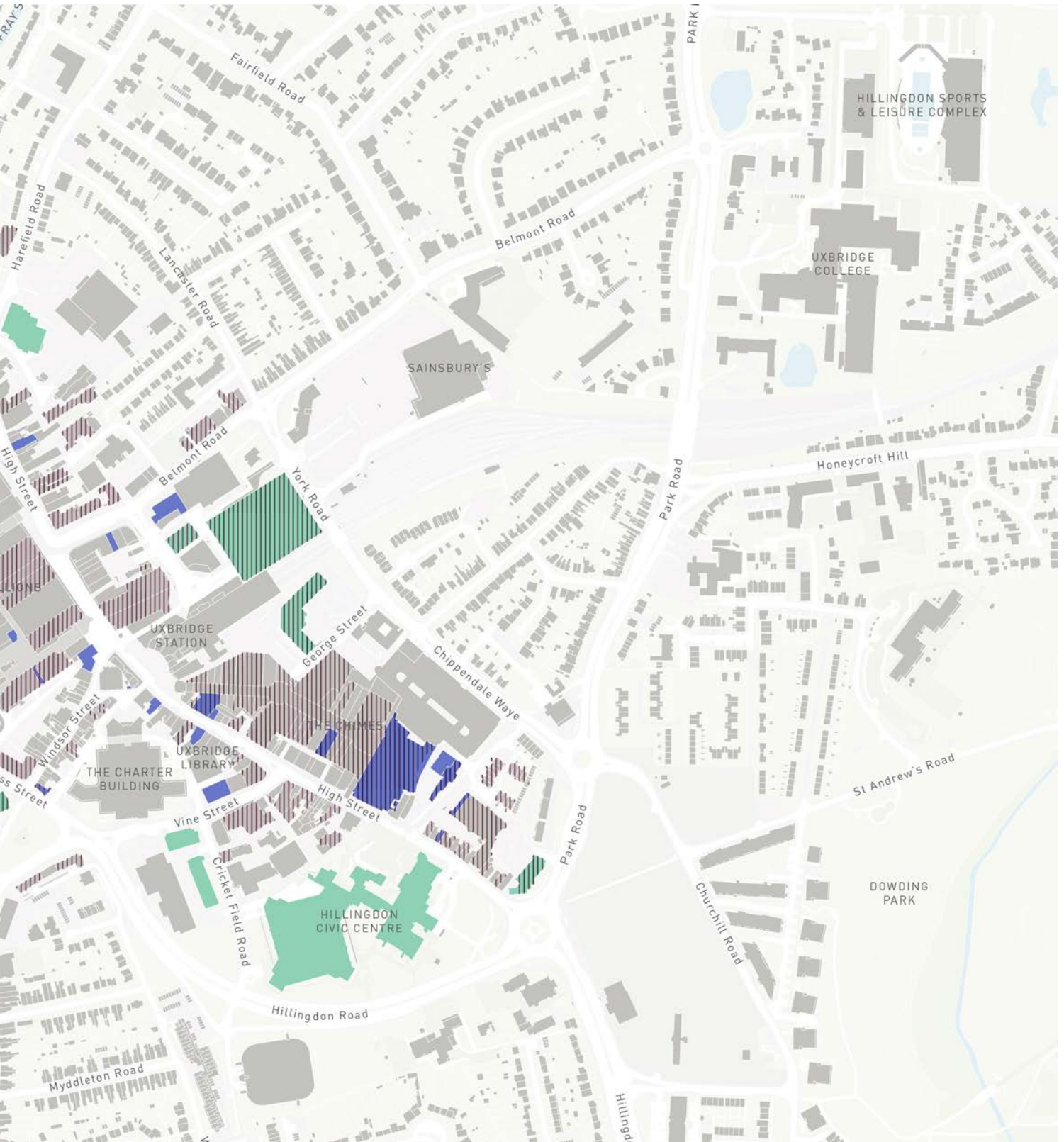


Fig 4.11: Opportunities for Uxbridge to help mitigate the climate emergency





## 4.4 Sustainability framework

### Climate adaptation

There are two key ways that Uxbridge can adapt to the changing climate, this includes:

- Street planting and greening - introducing greening into the town centre will help to reduce the risk from the increasing extreme weather events, improve biodiversity, reduce urban heat island effect by creating shading and reducing heat absorption and mitigate flooding through incorporating permeable surfaces. At the same time, greening improves the physical environment for the local community and visitors, contributing to a positive sense of place and identity. Oxford Road, Belmont Road and Park Road are classed as a high priority for street tree planting. Where tree planting is not possible, such as some stretches of the High Street, other greening measures should be introduced such as pots with high-pollinator plants, helping to support a resilient ecosystem.
- Create a range of different public spaces - having a variety of public spaces with different functions and features contributes to a more resilient and adaptable urban environment. These spaces not only provide immediate benefits in terms of climate adaptation but also contribute to the long-term sustainability and well-being of communities. The Pavilions, The Chimes and Uxbridge Station offer a variety of covered spaces, providing shelter from potential extreme weather events. The removal of vehicles from Market/Station Square and Windsor Street to create high quality public realm will improve air quality, the safety of pedestrians and increase its cultural and aesthetic value.

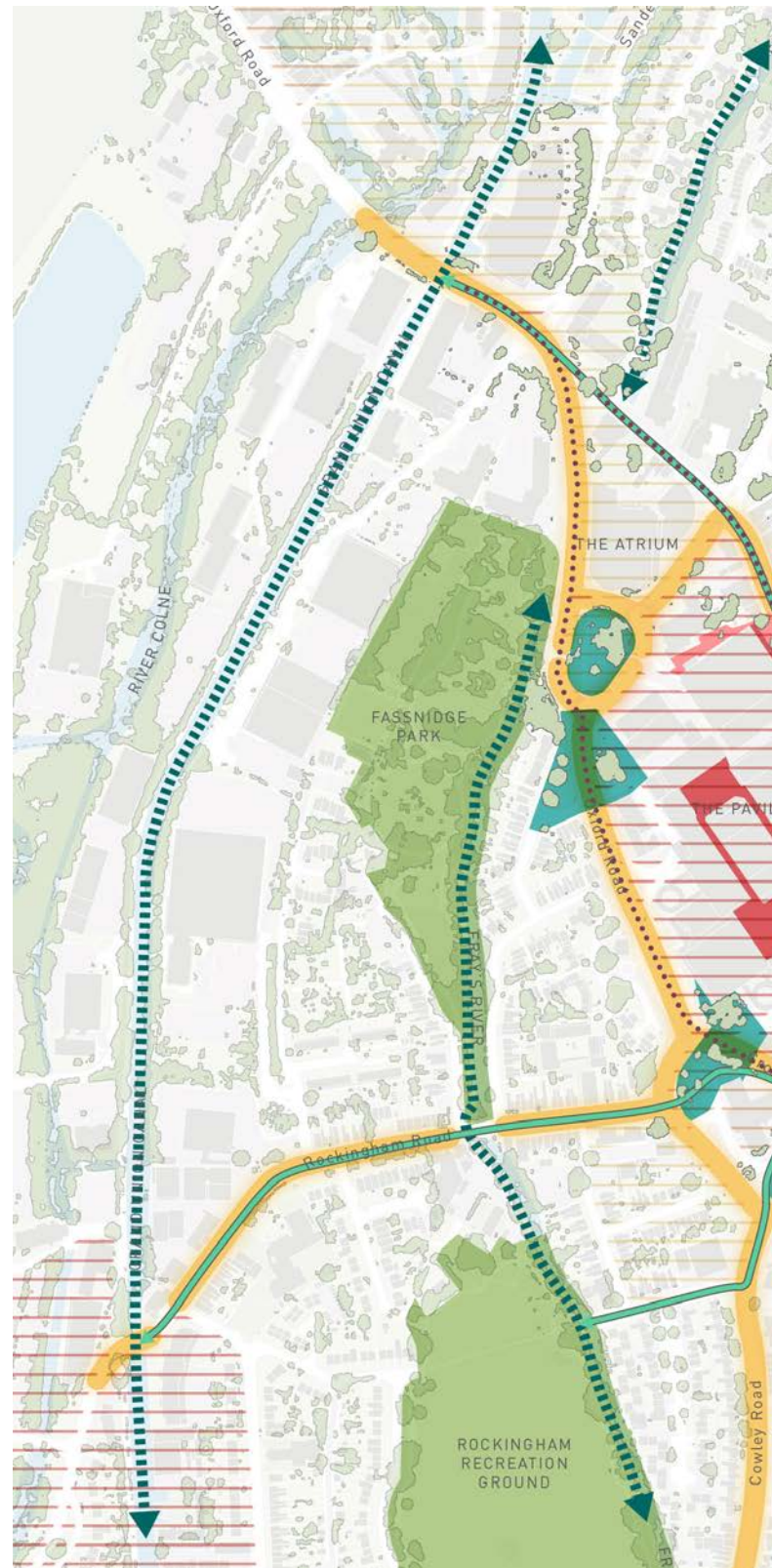
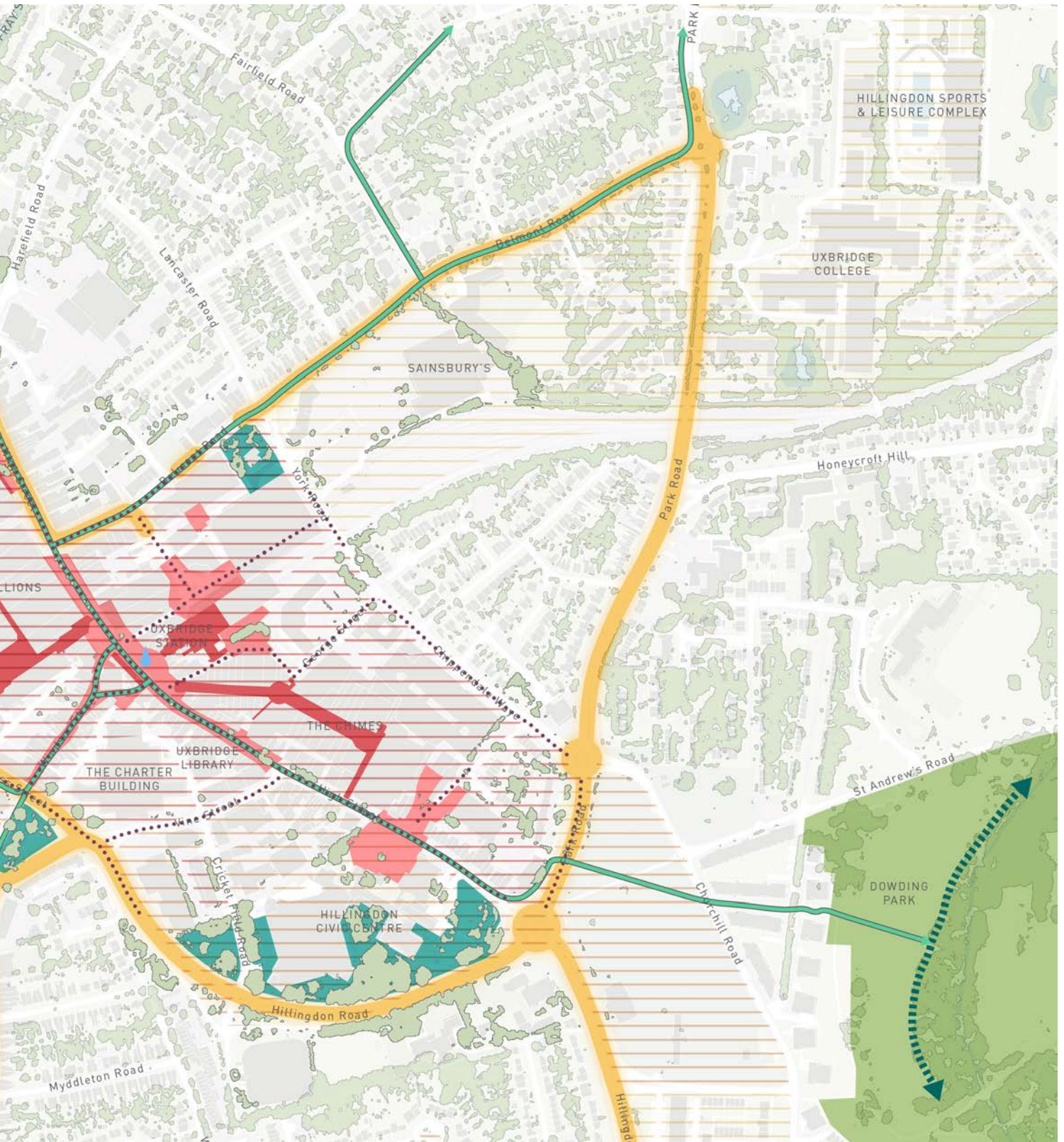
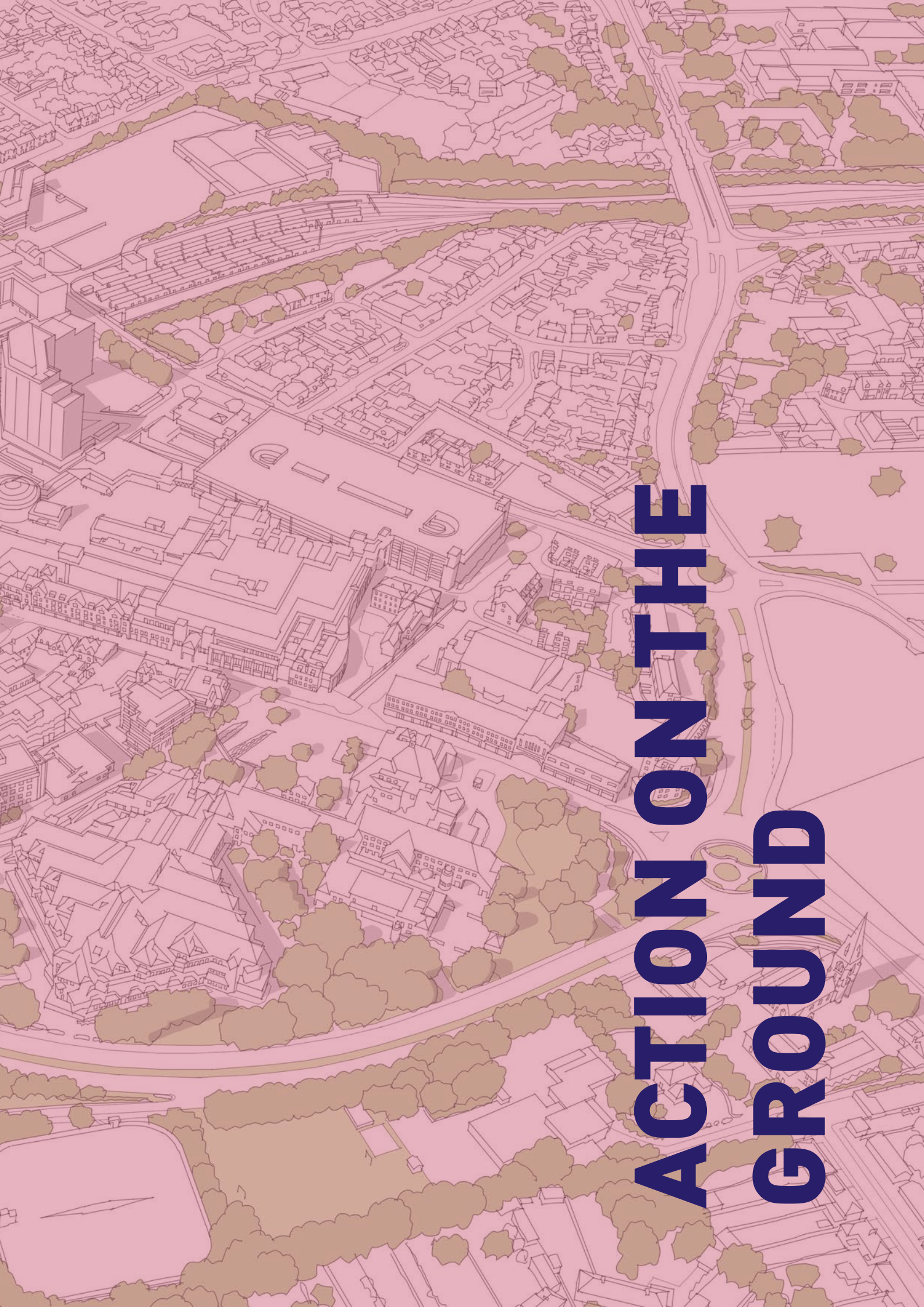


Fig 4.12: Opportunities for Uxbridge to adapt to the climate emergency









# **ACTION ON THE GROUND**

## 5.1 Delivery Strategy

This vision document establishes the need for, and focus of, change in Uxbridge Town Centre to ensure it remains a relevant, resilient and vibrant place that meets the needs of current and future residents.

In thinking about delivering the aspirations identified it is important to recognise that there is no set 'end point' to change and that it is the process itself that will deliver benefits for both residents and businesses.

It is also worth noting that change needs to be more than just about physical intervention – the scale, nature and use mix of the Town Centre means that activity needs to be coordinated across a broad range of domains (shown in the diagram below) if its potential is to be realised.



Delivery therefore needs to take place in a holistic, staged and iterative way with fundamental 'catalyst' interventions coming forward over the shorter-term followed by more transformational change over the medium and long-term.

Bringing forward change in this way is important for Uxbridge as most current uses are viable and confer a strong value to sites in terms of their existing use. This sets a strong threshold for future development to meet if it is to be considered viable, with the value of new development needing to be greater than the existing use value.

Short-term action is therefore crucial to enhancing viability through improving and diversifying the town centre offer – demonstrating or revealing demand for a new range of uses and activities that retain and attract more users.

This is therefore the primary focus of this delivery strategy, though some consideration is given to medium and longer-term change.

### Short Term Intervention

Over the short-term a range of physical and non-physical interventions need to come forward to build more market interest and confidence in Uxbridge.

Delivering a mix of targeted interventions will help to attract more people to use the Town Centre and create a stronger identity ultimately improving both the demand and viability position for medium- and longer-term development.

### Place Management

This process needs to start with stronger place management to improve the look, feel and function of the Town Centre and shift perceptions among residents, businesses, visitors and investors.

This will firstly involve LBH convening a refreshed Town Centre Forum made up of both officers and relevant local stakeholders.

Officers from Economic Development, Planning, Community Safety, Environmental Health, Licensing, Street Cleansing, Events, Communications and Regeneration will come together with important stakeholders (e.g. Love Uxbridge and the Metropolitan Police) to promote a 'One Uxbridge' approach to management and delivery with a focus on bringing forward the aspirations of this document.

Fundamentally this group will ensure that the overall quality, cleanliness and safety of the Town Centre are at the highest possible levels to ensure that people have positive perceptions of the area.

This coordinated approach will allow a wide range of existing budget expenditure and future funding streams to be coordinated and combined to help support delivery – achieving greater impact than a single budget on its own.

Moving beyond 'Business as Usual' this group will also focus on coordinating and supporting a broader range of activities and events to take place in the Town Centre to encourage more people to visit and dwell.

It will also positively support and promote new activities to be established in the town centre, creating a single/coordinated point of access for operators to address licensing, planning and other procedural matters in a positive and streamlined way.

The Forum will become the key entity in steering the activation, programming and management of the town centre. It should begin to build relationships with key businesses and landowners, shaping a shared approach to activities and build trust and confidence in the change process.

There are a wide range of activities that could be introduced to begin to shift the perceptions of the town centre, from seasonal activities to outdoor music - the Civic Centre, Piazza and area outside the tube station present the best spaces for this type of activity. An events calendar will be curated and managed between partners drawing on inspiration and learning from other town centres around the country.

This activity will take place under a new or improved 'place brand' that stakeholders will work together to create. This 'brand' will provide an umbrella under which events, promotion, campaigns and activities can sit under to reinforce the image and identity partners are looking to portray.

These represent the first 'fundamental' steps that LBH and its partners will take to delivering change in Uxbridge over the short-term, but there are a range of other 'catalyst' interventions that will be prioritised as set out below. These are interventions that members of the Town Centre Forum can implement to create the right platform for future growth and development.

## Meanwhile Activation

Uxbridge Town Centre needs to diversify its offer to better meet residents' day-to-day needs, respond to increasing consumer demand for experiences and address the oversupply of office space. A wide range of alternative uses are set out earlier in this document to achieve this and build resilience.

Demonstrating local demand for these alternative uses can, however, be difficult meaning that the viability of delivering permanent accommodation for such activities is challenging and can dissuade land and asset owners from bringing such uses forward.

The provision of meanwhile uses, either through re-use of existing buildings or delivery of lower cost temporary buildings, can allow markets to be tested and demand grown organically within the Town Centre. By demonstrating demand and market value, assumptions can be demonstrated assisting in future viability assessments for longer-term development.

The delivery of such initiatives is likely to require specialist support in set up and operation, engaging established operators who have the experience and knowledge to work with local business networks to identify occupiers to populate spaces.

The most powerful meanwhile intervention proposed in this report is to run a scheme focused on supporting the diversification of the High Street. This is to involve supporting independent entrepreneurs to trial new businesses concepts in vacant market stalls and shops on a temporary basis, and providing direct support to enable them to set up and sustain these entities.

Beyond this there are opportunities to test a range of other interventions on a meanwhile basis from community spaces to niche workspace typologies that do not yet have a presence in the Town Centre (e.g. creative studios).

## Tactical Public Realm

The Town Centre would also benefit from tactical upgrades to elements of its public realm to improve the actual or perceived 'quality' of the area. This is particularly the case around the bus interchange, Civic Centre and to the east of the Pavilions.

Addressing this is likely to require upfront investment from LBH and other partners, as well as investment in longer-term management to ensure a continued sense of 'quality'. Whilst the former may need grant funding, BID revenue could contribute to the ongoing maintenance.

While this type of investment is not insubstantial, it should be looked at as a long term investment given its potential to increase property values. This can help to make medium- and longer-term development more viable and may lead to higher rateable values and therefore business rates for LBH.

One of the most impactful opportunities identified in this document involves supporting the owners of The Chimes to reinvigorate and upgrade their Piazza to make it a more welcoming and higher-quality area catering to and attracting new leisure and evening economy uses.

If this is complemented by significant enhancements to the look, feel and function of the Civic Centre forecourt this could help transform the look and feel of the eastern end of the Town Centre making it into a much more investable proposition.

This document also proposes significant greening of the Town Centre through the use of planting and the introduction of micro-forests. This could significantly enhance the appeal of the Town Centre, while also helping it adapt to the impacts of Climate Change.

Beyond pure public realm enhancements this investment should be expanded to celebrate key assets such as heritage buildings, leisure destinations or potential 'events' spaces.

One of the biggest opportunities identified in this report is the removal of vehicles from parts of the High Street and historic Windsor Street to make them more welcoming and pleasant. While this is not necessarily a 'short term' intervention, trials and tests can be implemented over a short period to investigate the potential impacts of introducing a more permanent scheme.

## Enabling Movement

A small number of tactical enhancements to walking and cycling infrastructure would similarly be beneficial to encourage more people to visit and use the Town Centre regularly.

At the moment the dominance of Oxford Road creates a strong physical and psychological barrier to those living around the Town Centre, including students at Brunel University. It feels unsafe and unpleasant to access the Town Centre by foot or bicycle discouraging some people from visiting, or pushing them to visit less regularly via car.

Making it easier for people to visit the Town Centre will be beneficial from a vitality and viability perspective as increased visitation often translates to greater expenditure supporting business performance.

A key intervention identified in this document that will make a significant difference over a short time frame involves creating a number of easy and smooth walking and cycling routes across the highway encircling the Town Centre. This includes, but is not limited to, an improved pedestrian crossing linking up to the new St Andrews Park development either through improvements to the underpass or a new controlled surface crossing. Whatever the solution it is imperative that this is implemented quickly to embed 'good' habits.

Enhancing connections and wayfinding to 'hidden' green and blue assets outside the Town Centre will also be beneficial to encourage visitation and linked trips. If people see these spaces as part of the Town Centre 'offer' they are more likely to visit and dwell.

## Proactive Planning

Positive and proactive development management will also be prioritised over the short-term to ensure that emerging schemes align as strongly as possible with the aspirations of this vision.

Rather than being a 'closed shop', LBH and other members of the Town Centre Forum will engage positively with developers to try and maximise the value of any development activity to the Town Centre. Open dialogue will be promoted to try and achieve optimum outcomes.



There are a small number of specific development opportunities that will be prioritised for discussions in the short-term. Examples include liaising with the landowners, developers and/or agents of The Chimes, Pavilions, Quays, Hertz House and the former Xerox site – all of which are in the process of developing plans for their futures.

In these types of scenarios, LBH and other stakeholders will work together to:

- Capture and steer emerging proposals through early/pro-active 'pre-planning' engagement and more formal pre-application discussions.
- Set up a Design Review Panel to review and improve emerging scheme proposals.
- Shape proposals and secure high-quality detailed/specifications through the effective use of planning conditions and obligations, and adoption of a Design Code for the Town Centre.
- Use planning conditions to minimise disruption during construction.

### **Medium to Long Term Intervention**

Bringing together this diverse mix of short-term interventions will create a better platform from which to catalyse medium- to long-term change in Uxbridge.

Together they will improve the Town Centre which will generate interest and enhance viability, ultimately encouraging private sector development activity.

Catalysing this is important because many of the issues identified earlier in this document require transformational development schemes if they are to be addressed. For example:

- Development is required to increase residential accommodation within the Town Centre and introduce other new uses that are of a significant scale (for example health, community or education activity)
- Retrofit or re-development is needed to address the oversupply of traditional format office space.
- Re-development in certain areas will create space and capacity for new community and workspace uses.
- Development can generate financial contributions to help fund improvements to infrastructure (e.g. active travel).

Publishing this document, convening a Town Centre Forum and delivering short-term interventions represent important first steps in encouraging development as they set the tone for the area - they demonstrate an appetite from LBH and partners for change, which will increase interest from the private sector.

LBH and partners will not, however, sit still over the medium- to long-term and leave the Town Centre to market forces. To deliver optimal outcomes, and ensure development aligns with the aspirations of this document, they recognise that there is a need to be proactive in terms of both engagement and delivery.

At the simplest level they will continue to engage proactively in terms of planning as identified under the short-term actions. Over the medium term, however, the planning framework will be further strengthened and become more directive.

Ideally this vision will be developed in more detail before being adopted as part of the evidence for the renewed Local Plan. More detail should be provided on specific sites/areas before being adopted in policy and explained through a Supplementary Planning Document. This would set clear expectations about what is considered acceptable to guide development.

LBH and partners will also help to address market failures that are blocking development and/or the delivery of optimal outcomes. They recognise the importance of playing an 'enabling' role to leverage as much value as possible from the private sector.

At the simplest level LBH and partners will engage closely with developers to understand what their barriers are to delivery. Where appropriate they will work with them to address these – particularly where they relate to the public realm and/or infrastructure.

Rather than assume the private sector should fund solutions in all instances, public sector partners will work collaboratively to explore options and potential solutions that help to bring development forward where there are clear market failures.

This does not necessarily mean LBH will put forward their own resources, but they will actively support developers to access other public funds or broker relationships with public bodies such as TfL and the GLA where it is in the wider interest of the Town Centre.

Several pieces of enabling infrastructure have been identified in this report that need to be addressed over the medium- to-long term. For example, changes to roundabouts, crossings, and bus routes are required to deliver a better functioning Town Centre and to free up land and space for development.

LBH and partners will also work closely with landowners to encourage them to bring forward joint schemes that deliver greater value for the Town Centre than individual developments. Opportunities for marriage value will be sought, particularly where they deliver valuable and integrated solutions.

This is most likely to be achieved around the bus interchange and tube station which, while primarily owned by TfL, has a diverse mix of ownerships. Bringing forward this 'quarter' in a coordinated manner could unlock significant value for the functioning of the Town Centre and its user base.

Where there are particularly complex ownership dynamics, LBH will consider land assembly processes where it enables better outcomes. This is best undertaken when sites in third party ownership are not coming forward for development due to their complexity.

To do this LBH will consider using Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers where necessary in order to achieve comprehensive schemes. A more detailed masterplan and feasibility exercise for these sites would have to be undertaken to achieve this.

Where appropriate LBH will also investigate whether there are options to use their own land and assets to increase positive outcomes from emerging schemes. Different delivery mechanisms will be considered in these circumstances from joint ventures to development agreements.

They will also explore the feasibility of directly delivering schemes on their own sites and assets. This includes, most notably, Fountain Mill which has been earmarked for residential accommodation. LBH could bring this forward themselves, or enter into an agreement with a third party to convert and extend this building/or re-develop the site.

## Funding Sources

A wide range of public and private funding sources will be needed to deliver the interventions set out in this vision.

Where possible funding will be secured from private sector developers, both via direct delivery on development sites and through S106 agreements and CIL monies.

However, in some circumstances public sector funding will be needed particularly to forward-fund the short-term interventions and/or to optimise outcomes over the medium-to-long term. Some example sources of funding that could be considered are set out below:

- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (prioritising investment in community and place).
- Brownfield Land Release Fund (targeting Council-owned small sites where viability issues have prevented their development).
- Homes England Brownfield Infrastructure Land Fund (designed to support provision of infrastructure to unlock housing-led development on brownfield land).
- Community Ownership Fund (supports community groups to take ownership of assets and amenities at risk of being lost).
- Affordable Homes Programme (grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing for rent or sale).

LBH will also consider its own borrowing potential and risk profile to understand the role it could take in direct delivery.

It will be important for LBH to continuously review the funding sources available to support the delivery of objectives as the options available will change over time. Some competitor councils have appointed dedicated officers to track, monitor and oversee funding opportunities which may be an option for LBH.

This vision can also be used to engage with and lobby Government departments to secure funding over the medium- and longer-term. Important Government departments to place focus on as delivery of the vision evolves include, but are not limited to:

- Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities – Focus on development sites, public realm, movement, non-physical interventions and high street diversification interventions.
- Department for Transport – Focus on movement.
- Department for Business Energy Industrial and Strategy – Focus on movement.
- Department for Education – Focus on education.
- Homes England – Focus on development sites, public realm, movement, non-physical interventions and high street diversification interventions, plus affordable homes delivery.
- Historic England – Focus on development sites and protection of town centre heritage.
- Natural England – Focus on public space.
- National Lottery – Focus on non-physical interventions and high street diversification interventions.

It would be prudent for LBH to develop an engagement and awareness raising programme with these departments to ensure the borough is in the best place possible to secure future funding.

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