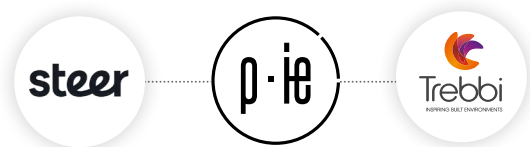


Holmfirth Town Centre

Blueprint



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01

Introduction

Executive Summary

Kirklees Council recognises that an opportunity exists to develop a long-term shared blueprint vision for the town centre of Holmfirth - to create the town that its residents envisage - a lively, attractive and sustainable town, rooted in history.

In March 21, Kirklees Council Cabinet endorsed a plan-led approach to invest in this local centre. Initially, £1.5million has been identified to support the delivery of priority projects.

This document has been prepared to help define this vision, establish a number of key projects to focus on and set out a strategy to deliver them.

The blueprint sets out 5 priority projects that will help deliver meaningful change. These 5 projects are:

1. Re-development of Towngate into a new public space, whilst retaining the bus services and creating new mixed use buildings
2. Re-development of Hollowgate into a quiet route prioritising pedestrian and cycle movement and creating more space for businesses whilst still retaining some vehicular access
3. Creating a number of key gateway spaces signalling the arrival to the town centre
4. Re-design of streets with more accessible and safe pedestrian and cycle infrastructure
5. Enhancement of the biodiversity and accessibility of the River Holme corridor

These proposals could be delivered alongside each other or in subsequent steps, as each might be a catalyst for further change in the town. The projects will go some way in making the town more resilient to the effects of climate change and will enable more sustainable lifestyles. Viability and funding is always a challenge for public sector led projects and collaboration with community groups and private sector will be necessary to deliver the blueprint vision. Holmfirth has passionate and experienced community groups who, working with Kirklees Council can draw on a range of funding opportunities to deliver the projects. This process will require strong buy-in and leadership and, with these in place, has every chance of success.

Introduction

This blueprint document has been prepared to explore the opportunities for change within Holmfirth town centre.

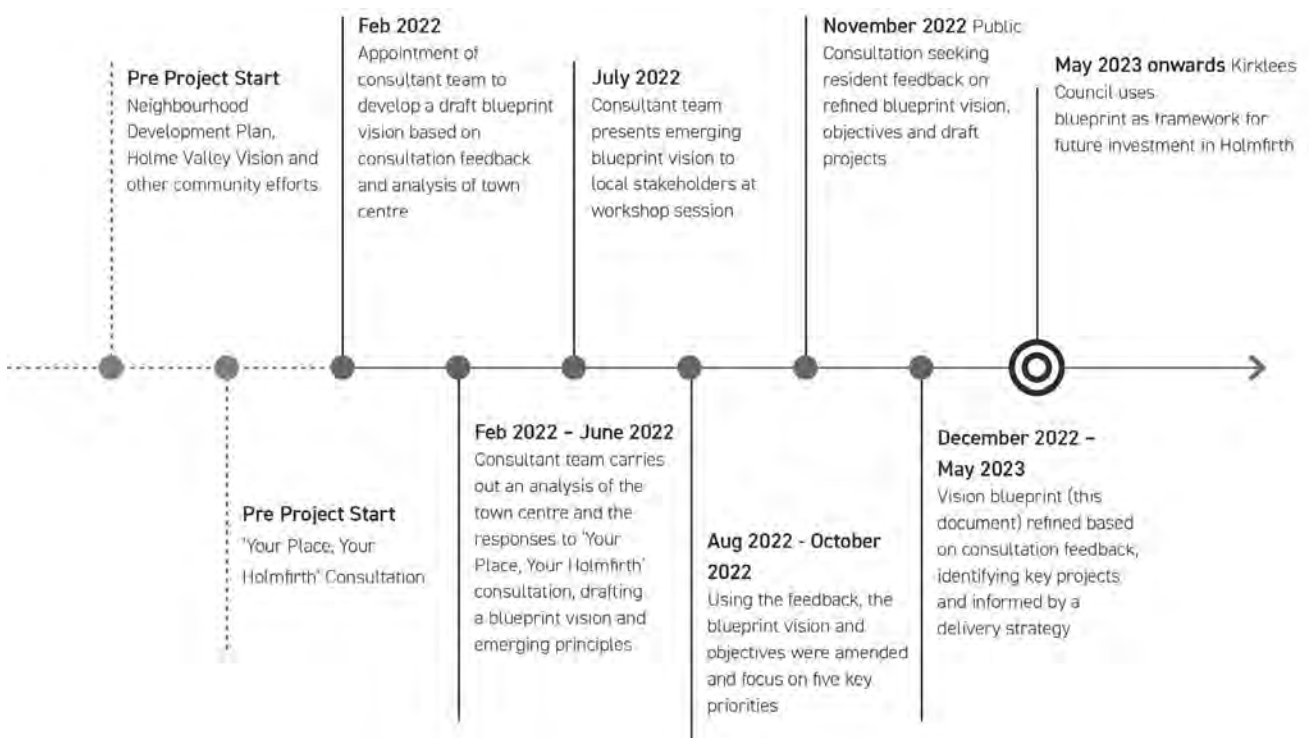
Kirklees Council is committed to investing in its local centres to ensure they have a sustainable future and can adapt to a changing environment. Creation of simple, transparent and deliverable plans lies at the heart of this process.

This vision is intended to help define such a plan for Holmfirth and sets out:

- Key constraints facing the town, assets and where positive change might take place
- The wider town context and existing work undertaken by the Council and community groups
- A number of potential projects
- A summary of the consultation process undertaken and key outcomes
- A strategy for the long term delivery of the vision

The area this vision is focused on is shown on the following page, and includes Holmfirth's main high street spaces, riverside and public areas.

The time line below illustrates the iterative process that has led to the blueprint. This process is underpinned by community engagement using the Council's 'Place Standard Approach' to allow a better understanding of how citizens feel about their town centre. This feedback has been used to inform actions and priorities, delivering a more rounded approach. More information on public and stakeholder engagement can be found in Section 5 and the Holmfirth Town Centre Vision Consultation Results document, prepared by Steer, February 2023.



The document is structured around 6 sections:

- Following this introduction, section 2 provides a summary of the town's planning, environmental and social context, with particular focus on the quality of the streets and spaces in the town
- Section 3 sets out a blueprint vision and key objectives that will help to deliver this vision
- Section 4 provides a brief summary of the stakeholder and public engagement undertaken throughout the development of the blueprint vision
- Section 5 identifies key projects that will help deliver the blueprint vision and sets out broad principles for how these could be delivered
- Section 6 provides a brief conclusion to the blueprint
- More information on the site analysis, stakeholder and public engagement is provided within the appendices of this document





02

Understanding the Town Centre

Key Constraints and Opportunities

The blueprint is built upon a robust understanding of the physical conditions of Holmfirth and expressed views of the community.

The analysis undertaken is set out in full in Appendix A of this document and covers the following areas:

- Key issues and Opportunities (first impressions)
- Land Uses
- Green Infrastructure
- Civic Space
- Public Rights of Way
- Cycling Experience
- Bus Services
- Car Parking
- Road Safety
- Planning
- Heritage

In summary the key constraints that were identified were:

- Traffic on the streets in the town centre
- Amount of informal parking around the centre
- Narrow footways and lack of cycling infrastructure
- Lack of safe crossings
- River hidden and disconnected from public space
- Poor sense of arrival into the centre
- Poor quality public realm undermines high quality townscape
- Lack of a central public space
- Some vacancy in larger town centre buildings

The key opportunities that were identified were:

- Reuse of vacant buildings and industrial land
- Improve access to the River Holme Corridor
- Improve existing active travel links within the wider area
- Improve the experience of travelling through the town on foot or by bike
- Create a new civic space at the 'heart' of the town
- Enhance existing night-time offer
- Reduce the amount of informal parking
- Remove 'eyesores' by supporting sensitive redevelopment of key sites

The following section presents a visual summary of Holmfirth's public realm and the key spatial opportunities that were identified.

First Impressions

The town benefits from a wealth of heritage, character and historic buildings within its centre, contributing to its attractiveness and sense of place.

The beautiful moorland landscape that surrounds it further enhances this. The centre benefits from many independent businesses and a strong sense of pride from local shops and community groups.

However, there are challenges too. Streets within the town centre are dominated by traffic and spaces where people can stop and enjoy the town are small, isolated and often poor quality. Getting around can be difficult, and some of the town's best features are not celebrated.

Some of the **key challenges** are highlighted on page 11, alongside opportunities that inspired the vision and objectives.

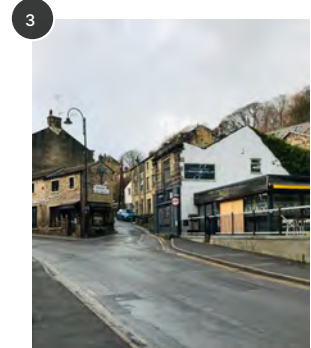




1 Bus station and Towngate car park. When used for the Food Festival the space is transformed - could this space be redesigned permanently to allow people to stop, enjoy the river and views of the town centre?



2 Balancing the needs of through traffic and town centre users is vital. The proposed Market improvement scheme will bring benefits to pedestrians moving around the town centre. Could wider pavements, better crossings and more space for pedestrians improve movement in the town centre?



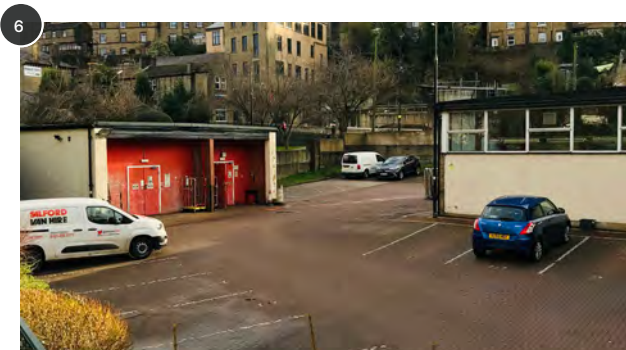
3 Is there a strong sense of arrival to the town centre? Could we provide a better welcome by celebrating the town's character and identity at the points where people arrive into the centre?



4 The main streets are dominated by traffic and there is not much space for people. Could more be done to increase space for pedestrians/ cyclists and make the centre more accessible for all?



5 The River is currently hidden behind walls and is an eyesore. It feels disconnected and not part of the spaces and streets around it. The River Holme could be a great natural resource - could we open up views in, help improve the river environment and perhaps create ways of getting closer to the water's edge?



6 There are some businesses and facilities in the town centre, that take up a lot of space. They are quite different to, and less attractive than the rest of the town. Could we find alternative locations for these in less central locations, and use this land for other things?



7 Car parking - Could off-street car parking be better signed and a better experience provided for users? Could some of the on-street car parking in the town centre be put to better uses? Aside from accessible spaces - is parking in the central streets really necessary?

Identified Opportunities Town Centre

The town centre can be made to work better for people travelling by foot or on bike and create spaces for dwelling and enjoying everything Holmfirth has to offer. The key opportunities are to:

- Create distinctive and attractive spaces, promote a positive pedestrian environment by reducing the impact of traffic.
- Celebrate entrance to the town by defined gateway points.
- Promote public realm links to wider destinations.
- An opportunity to put the River at the heart of the town and promote biodiversity.
- Create development site opportunities, and opportunity for a hub and new destinations in the town.

Key

- Gateway
- Development Opportunities
- * Event space and car park
- Connections along green / blue corridors
- Pedestrian desire lines

- 1. High Street**
Vibrant shopping street - improve public realm / reduce impact of roadway - provide additional crossing points, Consider 20mph zone.
- 2. Towngate Park**
Opportunity to reconnect to the river and reduce the space used for the car park and bus station, whilst creating new links across to Norridge Bottom
- 3.** Potential for a step free route
- 4. Town Square**
Forming the heart to the central area - reduce traffic dominance and promote pedestrian and cycle movement.
- 5. Hollowgate**
Quiet lanes with river edge - tightening road layout and discourage through traffic - consider access only / road closure and promote walks along the river.
- 6.** Enhanced arrival experience - widened pavements / new crossing to link spaces
- 7.** Potential enhanced pedestrian links to school
- 8.** Wide junction creates opportunity - potential for 20mph zone



Identified Opportunities

Valley Links

Looking more widely, there are opportunities to link the town centre to the wider valley landscape. The key opportunities include:

- Maximise valley connectivity - promote green movement along corridor, connect with Park and Walk opportunities.
- Promote cross valley links - to surrounding high ground, local facilities / destinations and woodland.
- Promote town centre as the hub of this movement network.
- Utilise development opportunities along this main movement corridor - potential to expand - create 'hubs' of activity.

Key

-  Central enhanced shared user route
-  Connections to valley landscape
-  Existing green spaces
-  Other green infrastructure
-  Development opportunities

1. Central riverside enhanced shared user route - well surfaced and well signed



Connecting the Opportunities

Gateways and Retail Frontages

Key gateways could signal the arrival into the town centre. Shop frontages could also be improved around these spaces.

Moving Around

Accessible routes to green space

Moving Around

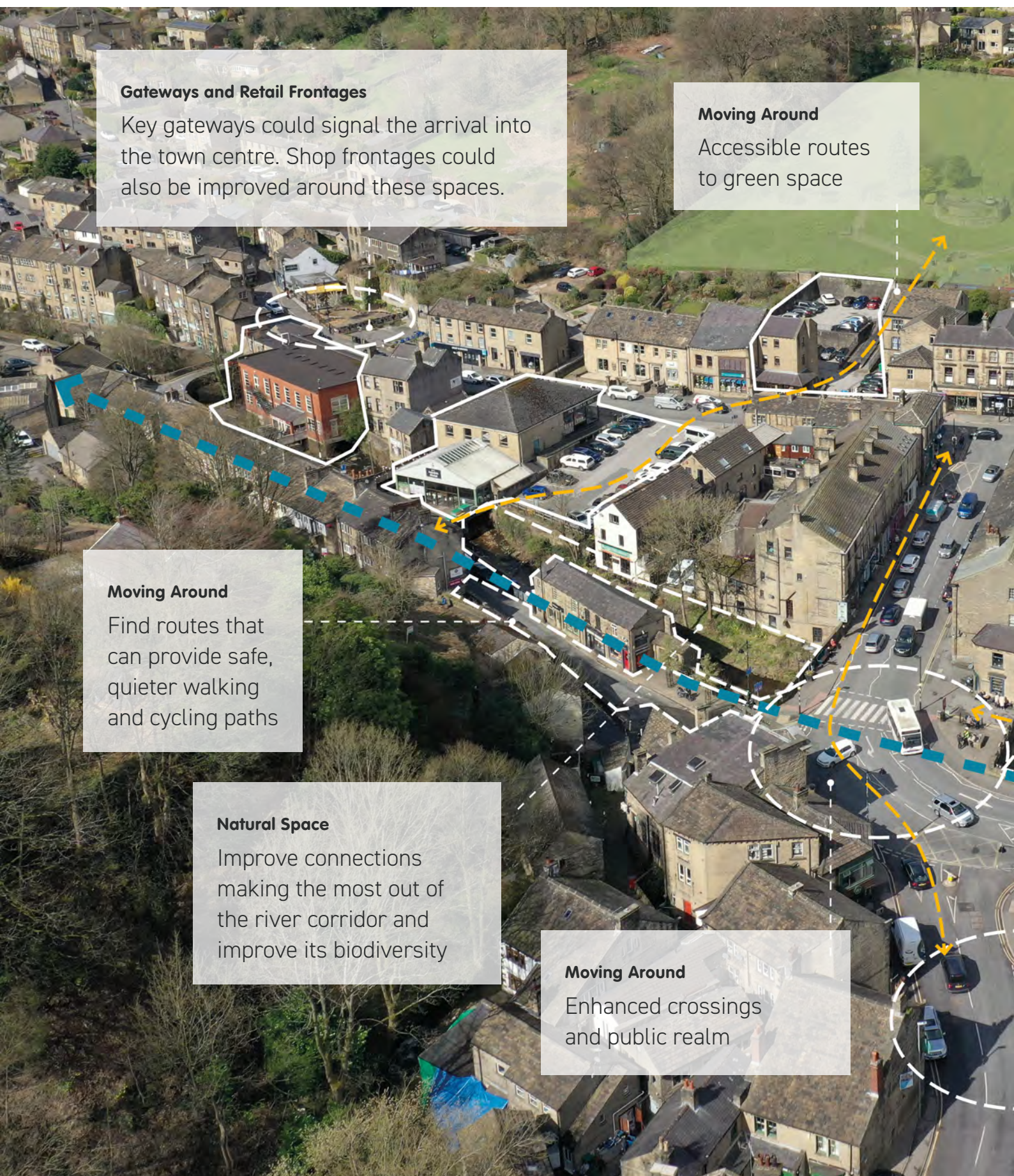
Find routes that can provide safe, quieter walking and cycling paths

Natural Space

Improve connections making the most out of the river corridor and improve its biodiversity

Moving Around

Enhanced crossings and public realm



Play and Recreation

Better maintenance and improved sports facilities

Work and Economy

Explore potential development sites - investment in new markets, provide affordable/mixed housing and key services

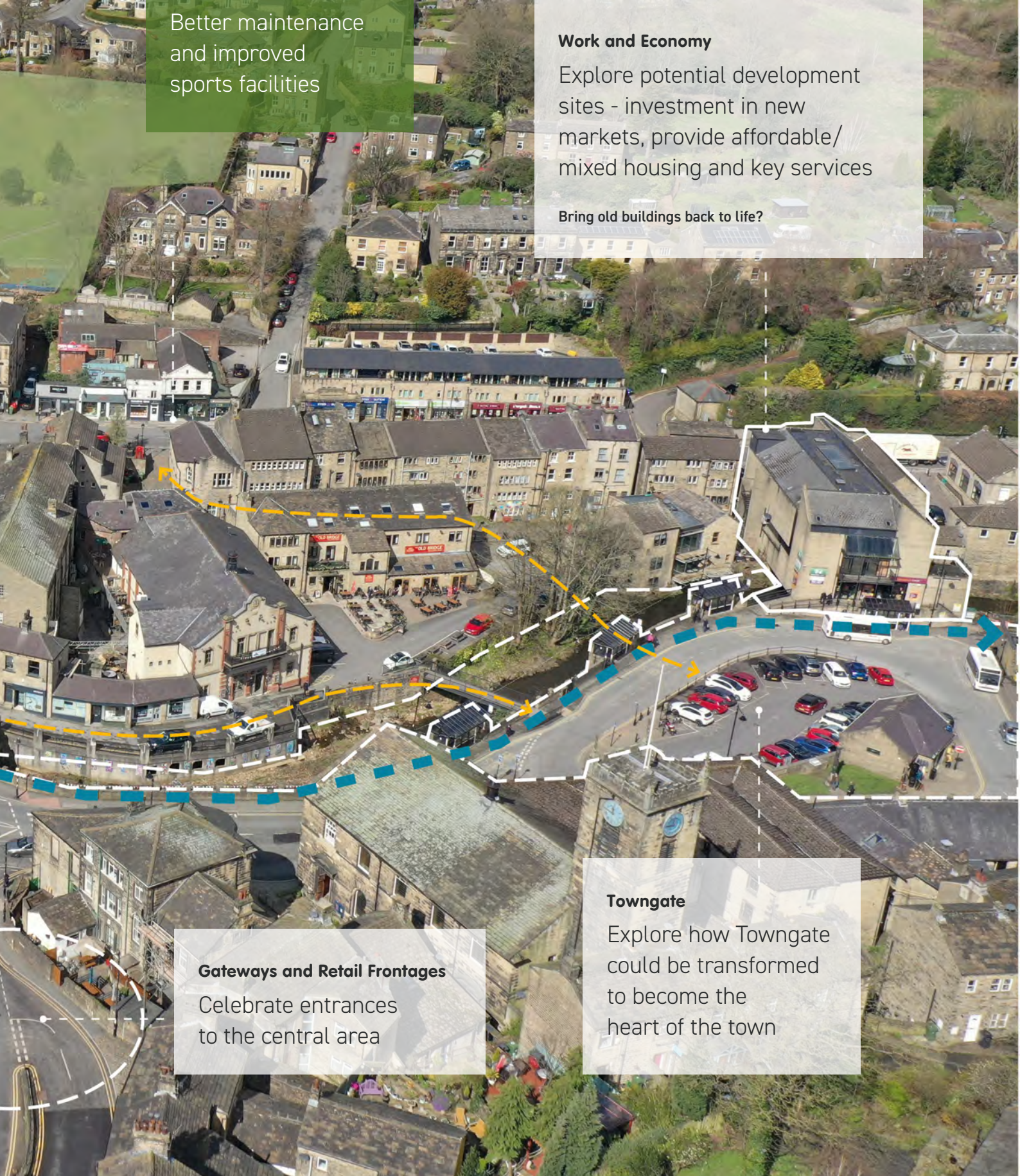
Bring old buildings back to life?

Gateways and Retail Frontages

Celebrate entrances to the central area

Towngate

Explore how Towngate could be transformed to become the heart of the town





03

Vision and Objectives

Vision and Objectives

The vision and objectives are informed by the site analysis, vision work already undertaken by the community, and subsequent conversations in stakeholder workshops.

These objectives are focussed on seeking improvements to the Town Centre environment, enhancing the shopping and visitor experience and looking at ways to reduce the impact of traffic and respond to the effects of the climate crisis. They are also forward facing, creating opportunity for the town to express its identity and to consider new uses and attractions that will continue to make Holmfirth a fantastic and exciting place to live.

Existing Plans

Further details on the existing vision work, consultations and initiatives that have recently been undertaken within the town are provided in Appendix B. Whilst wide ranging, they provide detail on specific interventions within the centre and aspirations for enhancements. It has been important that these are captured within the themes of this document, so that these separate threads can be drawn together comprehensively.

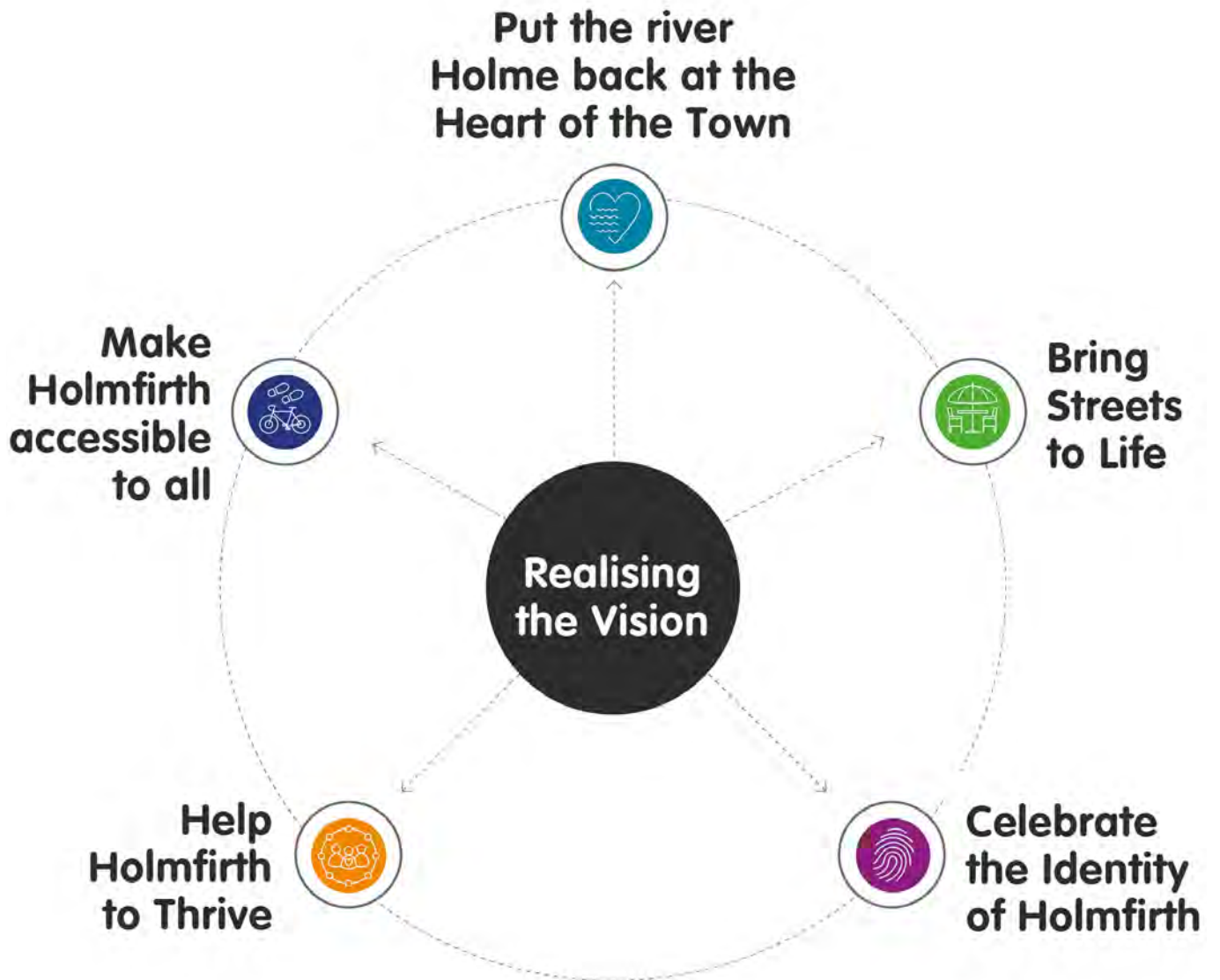
Key Themes

At the wider scale, linkages along the valley bottom provide an obvious structure to pedestrian and cycle movement into the Town - following the course of the River Holme. Strengthening of these routes will be key to promoting active travel and helping to reduce short journeys into the central area.

Focussing in on the central areas of the Town - its shopping streets, river frontage, market space and bus station, more specific and detailed opportunities are presented:

- The Town Centre has many great features and heritage assets - but all too often the potential for these elements to 'shine' is limited by the space given over to roadways around them and the impact of the heavy traffic using them. The town sorely needs a focal point.
- Locals love the quirky character of the place - both its heritage and the community, but is this really being celebrated or communicated? Can this move Holmfirth beyond its TV past?
- The River is perceived as a detractor to the Town rather than an asset. Making the River a positive feature to Holmfirth, which can help link - rather than divide its central spaces is critical. It presents an opportunity to draw a more natural environment into a built up and urban space.
- Whilst traffic is cited as the main issue facing the centre, the impact from passing traffic is magnified by the poor quality of the pedestrian spaces, footpaths and crossings. A high quality public realm would expand the potential of the excellent small businesses in the centre and allow them to utilise the street spaces to promote a positive shopping environment.
- The local centre is compact, but there are spaces within it where new or alternative uses might be introduced. The Vision should look to exploit any opportunities to promote a rich mix of uses - including residential to the central areas.

These key objectives form the basis for the vision, around which a number of separate projects were identified. These are explored over the following pages, with an illustrative plan that shows how these projects could be combined to create a cohesive vision for the Town.



Celebrate the Identity of Holmfirth



Holmfirth has a distinct physical and cultural heritage that should be supported and celebrated throughout the town. There are multiple opportunities to interpret its heritage and culture through new projects and developments in the town centre.

Ensuring the gateways are reflective of the history of the town will not only help to communicate this to visitors but will also act to announce arrival into the town centre.



A unified branding approach could help people understand what's important about the town and get around more easily



Community run spaces give a sense of quirkiness and character of the town



'Gateway spaces' function as thresholds, indicating the entrance into a town centre.

Help Holmfirth to Thrive



Holmfirth has a great selection of independent businesses, and there is opportunity to provide more space for them to thrive. This could be achieved by providing public spaces for businesses to use and by exploring opportunities for sites in the town centre. Bringing forward opportunity sites identified below would also help add further floorspace, new residents and activity into the centre.



Holme Mill occupies a prominent corner in the town centre and could come forward for re-development in the future.



Post office depot occupies a large area in the centre of Holmfirth. Could there be a better use for this space?



Easy bicycle parking in a clear and safe location, next to a popular destination. (Stockport)

Put the River Holme back at the Heart of the Town



The river Holme had an essential role in the town's history but the natural benefits that it brings have been eroded over the last decades.

Putting the river Holme back at the heart of the town could provide an attractive focal point for Holmfirth to be proud of.

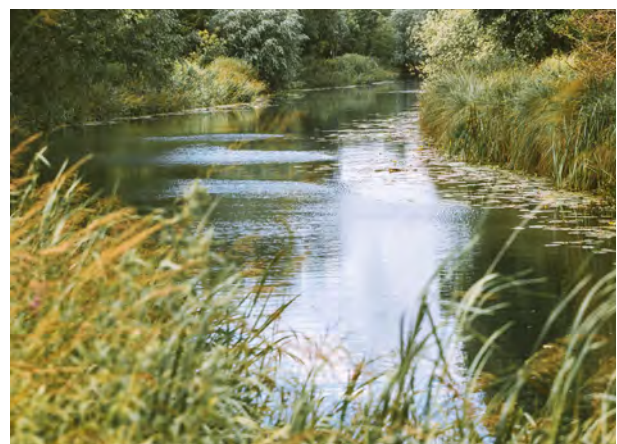
This will need a combined effort by Kirklees Council, the Environment Agency and local people to manage the river, support more plants and wildlife and prevent flooding.



Public art themed on the river and its relationship to the city, embedded in paving. (London)



Creating opportunity to experience the river such as the planned 'Ledge and Lounge' at Kirkstall Forge, Leeds.



Rivers can have rich biodiversity if managed sensitively

Make Holmfirth accessible to all



Improving provision for walking and cycling will support both those who are keen to make a change in the way they get around and those who find moving about more challenging. Well designed streets will also avoid conflict between people travelling in different ways.

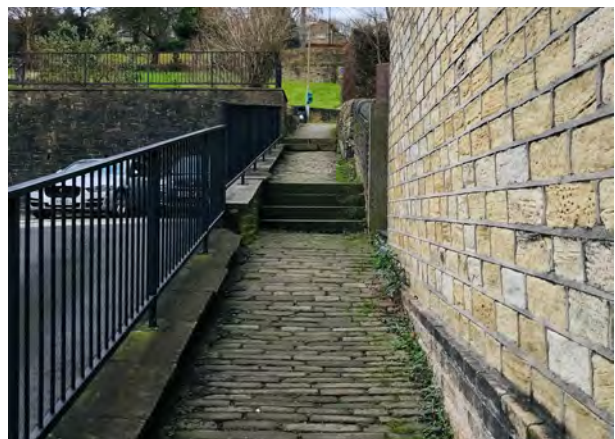
Kirklees Council will also continue to promote public transport in the centre as it remains part of the solution to sustainable ways of travelling. Parking should also be reviewed to maintain spaces available for those who need them but encouraging others to walk a little further.



High quality, safe cycle routes link destinations along a linear park - Rhur Valley, Germany



Reducing the width of carriageways can create more space for people to walk and cycle (Preston)



A more accessible access to Victoria Park could be made from the town centre

Bring Streets to Life



Holmfirth already hosts a number of events that take place in its streets and there has been an increase in outdoor dining.

Improvements to the quality of streets and spaces would further encourage these positive changes in the town.

Streets can become more than roads for through traffic. They can also be spaces for civic activity, celebration, public art and nature. They should cater for all ages, including providing spaces for children.



Current levels of on-street parking can make the streets unwelcoming to pedestrians. (Hollowgate, Holmfirth)



Wider pavements and safe crossings encourage people to walk. (Preston)



Extended pavements and street trees can make even busy streets more comfortable to be in. (Altrincham)

The Vision

“Holmfirth is a town where people of all ages find it easy and enjoyable to get about, and where pedestrians come first. The streets are vibrant places to spend time, meet friends, and enjoy local culture and events.

A modern market town where businesses thrive, and there’s meaningful work for all across a wide range of industries. A place to put down roots, to grow up joyfully, and to grow old comfortably. Holmfirth is a town where people can get involved in the social and cultural life and be an active member of the community.

It’s a place to celebrate the landscape and proud heritage that make Holmfirth a truly enriching place to be. A place that’s resilient, welcoming and forward looking, ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.”

Illustrative Plan

The plan illustrates how the vision could be delivered through targeted interventions, and how these link together across the Town Centre.



Put the River Holme back at the Heart of the Town



Celebrate the Identity of Holmfirth



Make Holmfirth accessible to all



Bring Streets to Life



Help Holmfirth to Thrive





04

Stakeholder and Public Engagement

Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary

Approach

The vision and objectives are underpinned by community engagement, to ensure citizens have had an opportunity to share their priorities and to tie this into existing vision work carried out.

This process was carried out in tandem with a wider '**Place Standard**' consultation being undertaken by Kirklees Council in 2021/2022. This provided a useful baseline of thoughts and comments across a wide range of topics, that have influenced this vision.

Stakeholder Workshops

Two stakeholder workshops were held on the 21st and 22nd of July 2022. These were attended by 25 people representing over 30 different groups and organisations. For more detail refer to Appendix C.

Review of Objectives

The feedback from these sessions helped guide the emerging vision. The commentary also allowed the team to review the initial objectives - to understand if these were appropriate and fit for purpose. As highlighted on the previous pages, the initial responses suggest that some of the objectives are more overarching and relate to all potential changes, some were closely connected and needed to be consolidated, some were not quite right and needed changing or adding to and there were a number of new objectives that should be considered.

Supporting existing work

A clear message taken from all the sessions was the importance of ensuring that all the good work that is already taking place with Holmfirth is understood and where possible, supported within this Vision. This includes the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan policies, the Holme Valley Vision that identifies a range of 'Features' and 'Areas of Action', the River Holme Connections mission to transform the river catchment, the "Big Data for Small Users" project as well as the wider findings of the Place Standard consultation.

The team had also reached out to working groups within the town to understand what other information and analysis had been prepared and integrated this within the design process.

Actions following the event

Following stakeholder feedback the objectives and vision were refined. Based on the objectives, potential project schemes were drafted. The revised Vision, objectives and draft projects were then presented to the wider public.

Public Consultation

Holmfirth Blueprint public consultation which ran from the 17 November until 17 December 2022 was designed to give the public an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed vision and objectives for the town centre as well as to respond to the draft list of projects that would implement the vision. The full list of projects is set out below.

In total, 432 respondents provided answers to the Holmfirth Town Centre Vision online questionnaire whilst a further 32 responded by returning a paper copy.

The consultation captured a wide cross-section of respondents, with those living, working and visiting Holmfirth all participating in representation numbers. The responses were broadly supportive of the proposed principles, vision and proposed projects with most principles achieving over 80% support. Further information on how the different principles and projects were supported is provided in this section.

More information on stakeholder and public engagement can be found in Appendix C of this document.



05

**Delivery
Strategy**

This section of the document considers how the numerous objectives of the vision could be brought forward into a comprehensive delivery strategy.

Kirklees Council have carried out an appraisal assessment to understand how the priority projects could be funded. The appraisal seeks to understand how much the proposed options cost and how they can be funded, either through capital funding, enabling development, funding agreements with developers such as S106 monies and other grant funding sources.

Defining projects

In order to structure the delivery strategy, the vision and objectives have been amalgamated into **5 priority projects**. These draw together multiple strands of the vision to address the existing issues, the wishes of the local community and facilitate change in Holmfirth.

For the purposes of this vision, the projects remain broad, and are intended to form a robust public realm base that can accommodate further initiatives such as specific river side access provision, new planting, improvements to shop frontages and heritage branding etc. These tie back into the more detailed aspirations set out by community groups such as of the Holme Valley Vision, River Connections, Holme Valley Neighbourhood Plan and Place Standards results.

Common elements

Public consultation feedback suggested that two objectives were particularly well supported:

- **Objective 2** 'Put the River Holme back at the Heart of Town' with 91% either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'
- **Objective 5** 'Celebrate the Identity of Holmfirth', with 88% either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'

Whilst there was strong community support across all areas (with an average of 54% strongly agreeing), where possible, all of the 5 key projects within the delivery strategy include elements supporting these 2 objectives.

The projects also all include wider sustainable travel through the town - for example supporting strategic routes along the river Holme.

5 Priority Projects

The five priority projects are shown on the map on the right. The projects are described in more detail on the following pages.

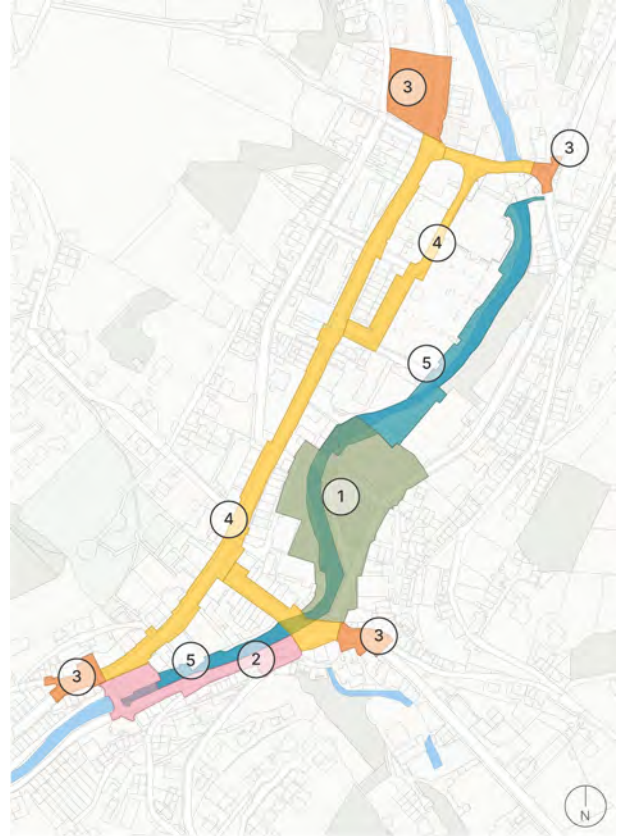
Towngate by virtue of its location at the heart of the town and the potential to become the hub for public life should be considered a priority project. With a retained bus station and a new public space, the space will provide something for both visitors and residents of the town. The interface with the river will also allow more visibility and prominence given to the river Holme, which came out as the top objective through the public consultation.

The transformation of **Hollowgate** into a pedestrian and cycling priority space would be another key project to implement in the short term. Whilst not completely car free, reducing vehicle movements along Hollowgate would allow people to enjoy walking and cycling in this area. In addition, the reclaimed space could be used by the existing businesses to set out outdoor dining areas, whilst also creating an uninterrupted walk along the river and space for new tree planting.

The River Holme project could be delivered at any point in the near to mid-term and will require technical and design coordination with the Environment Agency and engagement with local groups and residents.

Other projects like the **gateways and improvements to streets** could follow on from the completion of the current access scheme on the old Market, extending the proposed treatments across the town and building on the good work that's already being done.

The projects will help address some of the key challenges of the climate and biodiversity crises and enable more ways in which residents can live sustainably, for example walking and cycling more often using the proposed improved routes, socialising and building community bonds within new public spaces and benefitting from increased presence of nature in the town centre.



Key project diagram

Key

- ① Towngate Project
- ② Hollowgate Project
- ③ Gateway Project
- ④ Street Project
- ⑤ River Holme Project

Towngate Project

Ingredients

- Public realm enhancement and new civic space
- Traffic calming and parking
- Sorting office re-development
- River edge connection
- Walking and cycling valley links
- Info hub and active travel

Contribution to vision objectives...



Hollowgate Project

Ingredients

- Public realm
- River edge
- Traffic calming
- Holmfirth Mill
- Walking and cycling valley links
- Wayfinding
- Shop frontage.



River Holme Project

Ingredients

- River edge enhancement
- Access to water
- Habitat management
- Walking and cycling valley links
- Wayfinding.



Gateway Projects

Ingredients

- Public realm and traffic calming
- Entrance signage and wayfinding
- Exchange building
- Walking and cycle links.



Streets Project

Ingredients

- Public realm enhancement
- Crossings and traffic calming
- Walking and cycling links
- Signage and wayfinding
- Shop frontage improvements



Towngate Project



Transforming Towngate from a car and bus dominated area into a lively and flexible space for people, events and travel could have a profound impact on the quality of life for residents of the town and catalyse further transformation.



Project Description

The project would entail a substantial redesign of the Towngate Bus Station that would retain the bus station, but optimise it to release space for a new public square. The space around the river will also become more accessible and with the addition of an overhung jetty, will allow both residents and visitors to connect more closely with the river. In addition, the project entails the creation of a number of new safe crossings, addition of cycle parking, new tree planting and other street furniture such as seating. The redevelopment of the Post Office depot and Riverside Shopping centre could also form part of the transformation of the area, providing mixed use facilities, with active ground floor uses and residential apartments above.

Project Elements

- Reconfiguring the bus station to create an area of public realm adjacent the river Holme. The public realm area would measure approximately 5,000sqm and will include new paving, seating and other street furniture, tree planting, cycle parking and incorporate bus shelters
- Improved and optimised bus facility to be retained on site but removing existing parking areas to allow for a different arrangement of bus movement
- Redevelopment of post office depot to create a mixed use new buildings with active use on the ground floor and town centre living above. A cycle hub with cycle maintenance facilities and secure parking / bicycle rental should be explored as part of the development
- Removal of existing bus shelters and improvements to the boundary wall, allowing more access and overview of the river Holme. Create a cantilever structure over the river, potentially adjacent to the Towngate project.
- Improvements to pedestrian access across the river Holme at Towngate should also form part of the project, such as providing fully accessible access to the pedestrian bridge
- Provision of public art celebrating the river should also be included



Image shows how Towngate could be transformed into an attractive public space

Objectives Achieved

The Towngate project contributes to the following objectives:

- Bring Streets to Life
- Put the River Holme back at the Heart of the Town
- Help Holmfirth to Thrive
- Celebrate the Identity of Holmfirth
- Make Holmfirth Accessible to All

Priority

Short - medium term priority, project would have a wider impact on the town.

Hollowgate Project



Reducing traffic on Hollowgate would create space for safe pedestrian and cycle routes, new tree planting and more space for the local businesses to spill out onto the street. It would also form a key part of the wider walking route along the river valley.



Project Description

The transformation of Hollowgate into a balanced space street that could accommodate cycling and pedestrian movement by reclaiming space from the cars. Reducing the space currently used by cars doesn't mean that the street will be completely car free, but it may only accommodate movement one way. This would allow more people to use the quiet streets to travel through the town. In addition, the reclaimed space could be used by the existing businesses to set out outdoor dining areas, whilst also creating an uninterrupted walk along the river and safe crossing spaces whilst space for new tree planting could also be found. This will also link to and support the adjacent new parking and event space - extending the benefits of this to the surrounding streets.

Project Elements

- Creation of a balanced street for pedestrian and cycle priority
- Removal of some on street car parking and narrowing space allocated for cars
- Consider potential temporary road closure to facilitate on street activities and events
- Where possible space should be allocated along shop fronts to allow space for table and chairs to be placed outside. Creation of uninterrupted route along river edge
- Provision of tree planting and other urban greening solutions where reallocation of space allows
- Enhancing crossings around existing bridges over the river
- Creation of cycle priority markings and signage
- Public art incorporated along river edge
- Potential redevelopment / refurbishment of Holme Mill into a mixed use building with retail use on the ground floor and residential use above
- River bed improvements, including removal of any debris and invasive species, creation of new locally sensitive planting



Image shows how Hollowgate could be brought to life.

Objectives Achieved

The Towngate project contributes to the following objectives:

- Bring Streets to Life
- Put the River Holme back at the Heart of the Town
- Help Holmfirth to Thrive
- Make Holmfirth Accessible to All

Priority

Short-term priority, project would have a wider impact on the town.

Gateway Project



Marking the entrances to the town centre will create a clear sense of transition into the town, from fast-moving rural roads, improve first impressions and create an opportunity for local community groups and businesses.



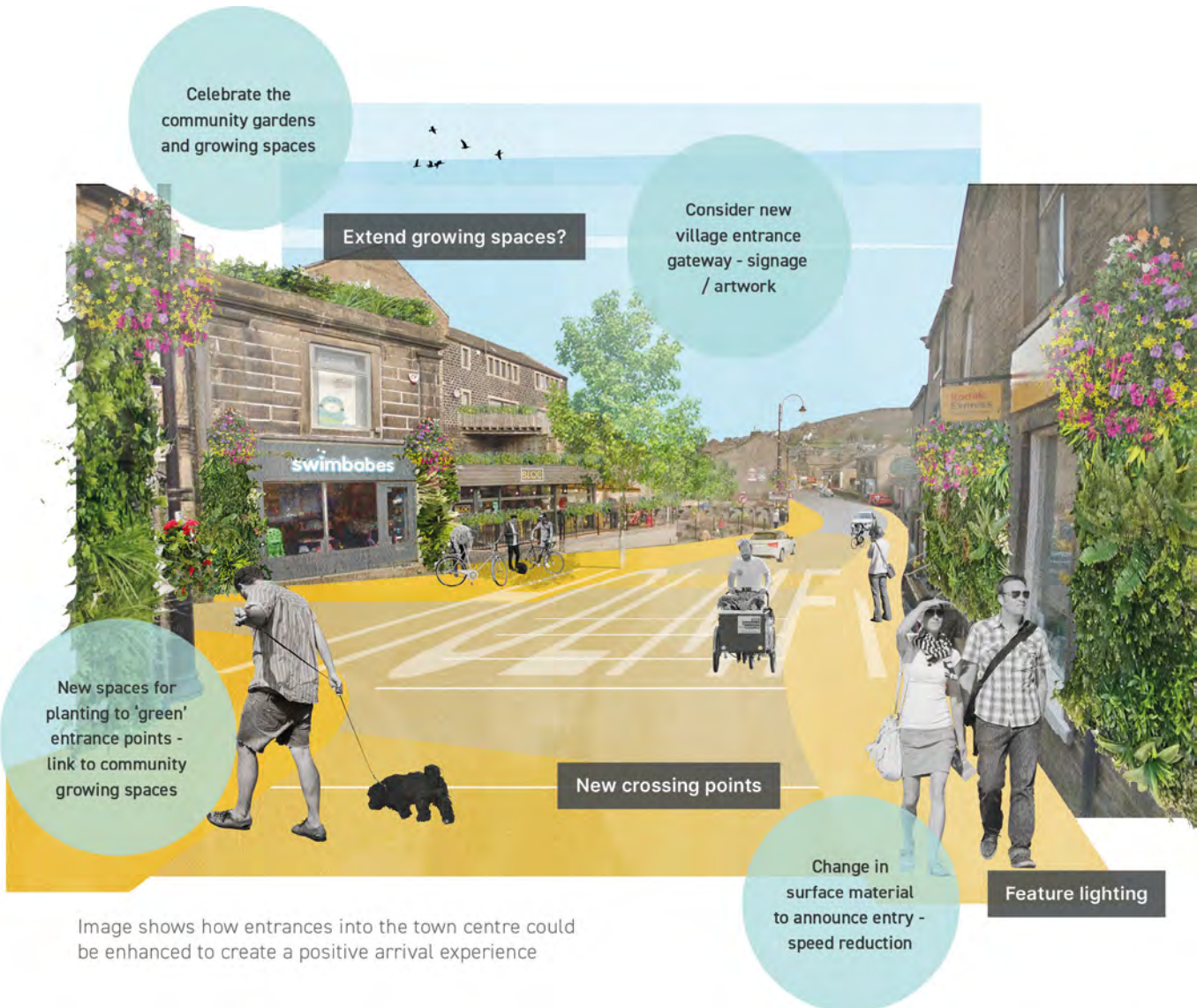
Project Description

There are four key gateways into the town centre which currently fail to create a real sense of arrival. These are on the north and south of the town centre on Huddersfield Road, junction between Summervale and Bridge Lane as well as on Dunford Road, at the junction with Victoria Street. Whilst space is limited on these streets, there is still opportunity to announce the arrival into the town centre and include new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure improvements, such as crossings, pavement widening, cycle parking and new urban greening. Opportunities should also be explored to engage the community in projects such as urban greening but also make provision for improvements to shop fronts and community facilities around the gateways.

Underpinning this project is a need to clearly communicate what Holmfirth is about - a clear brand or identity to the town - that reflects its past - but also its modern community. This should be driven by current community initiatives, local businesses, and form a new tourism / visitor experience strategy, that starts at these entrance points.

Project Elements

- Four gateway public realm improvement / traffic calming projects at key entry points into the town centre
- Works to public realm to include raised crossings and alterations to road materiality to signal entrance to town centre. Where possible crossings should be aligned to key local landmarks and points of interest, such as the Holmfirth Tech, Holmfirth Community Gardens etc
- In some instances, such as at Bridge Lane improvements to cycle safety should also be made such as providing cycle priority markings and reducing traffic speeds through raised crossings
- Elements of public art such as entrance signage / artwork could be included along with wayfinding boards
- Feature lighting and new tree planting could be provided, potentially working with the community gardeners. Urban greening initiatives should also include growing spaces and edible planting that would support the ongoing community initiatives. Innovative methods of growing should be explored with the community for these tight spaces.
- The site of the telephone exchange could potentially come forward as part of the adjacent gateway project and contribute more positively to this key area of arrival into the town centre
- Funds should also be set aside to improve building / shop frontages at these gateways



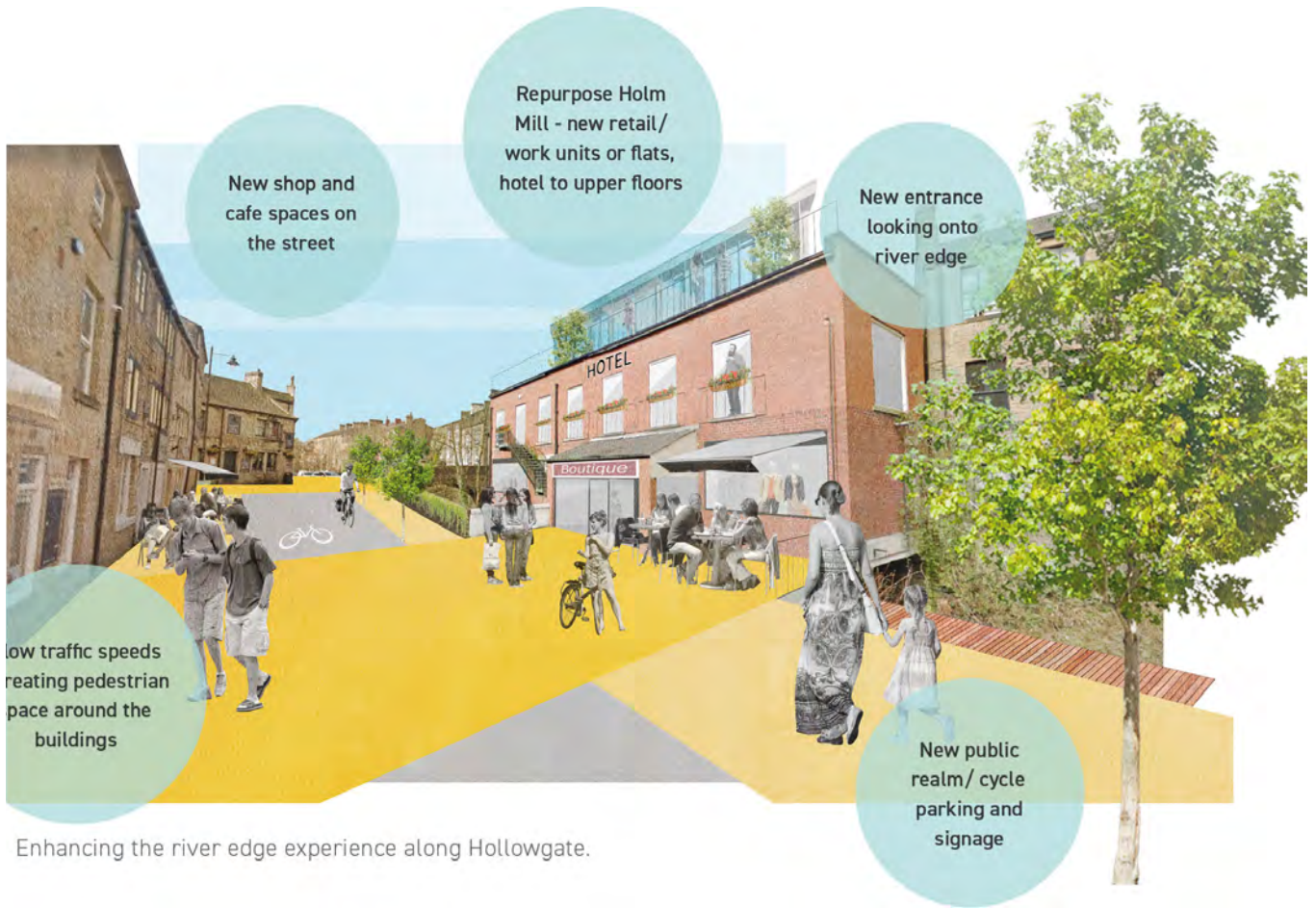
Objectives Achieved

The Towngate project contributes to the following objectives:

- Help Holmfirth to Thrive
- Celebrate the Identity of Holmfirth
- Make Holmfirth Accessible to All

Priority

Medium term priority.



Enhancing the river edge experience along Hollowgate.

Objectives Achieved

The Towngate project contributes to the following objectives:

- Put the River Holme back at the Heart of the Town
- Celebrate the Identity of Holmfirth
- Make Holmfirth Accessible to All

Priority

Medium to long-term priority, co-ordinating with Environment Agency.

Streets Project



Improving the environment for walking and cycling in the centre of Holmfirth. This will extend the improvements currently planned in the town centre, and draw in the wider highstreet.



Project Description

This project includes measures to transform town centre streets into attractive green spaces. They will be conducive to walking and cycling through new controlled and courtesy crossings, slowing of traffic and making more space for pedestrians. Where possible opportunities for urban greening and street tree planting will be explored to provide shelter and a more pleasant shopping environment.

Project Elements

- Reduce the amount of on-street parking to allow widening of existing footways
- Where possible widen existing pavements to provide more space for pedestrians to walk safely from passing traffic
- Creatively reuse existing materials and furniture where appropriate
- Create raised courtesy crossings to give more opportunities for informal crossing and slow down traffic in addition to three new zebra crossings
- Create crossings on Huddersfield Road, at junctions with side streets

- Explore the potential for a 20mph zone including new signage, traffic calming measures such as courtesy crossings and road narrowing
- Improve access to Victoria Park from Huddersfield Road, creating a fully accessible ramped access. This could be supplemented by new controlled crossing from across Huddersfield Road, aligning with the entrance to the new Market public realm scheme

Objectives Achieved

The Towngate project contributes to the following objectives:

- Bring Streets to Life
- Help Holmfirth to Thrive
- Make Holmfirth Accessible to All

Priority

Long-term priority, to follow completion of Holmfirth town access plan scheme.

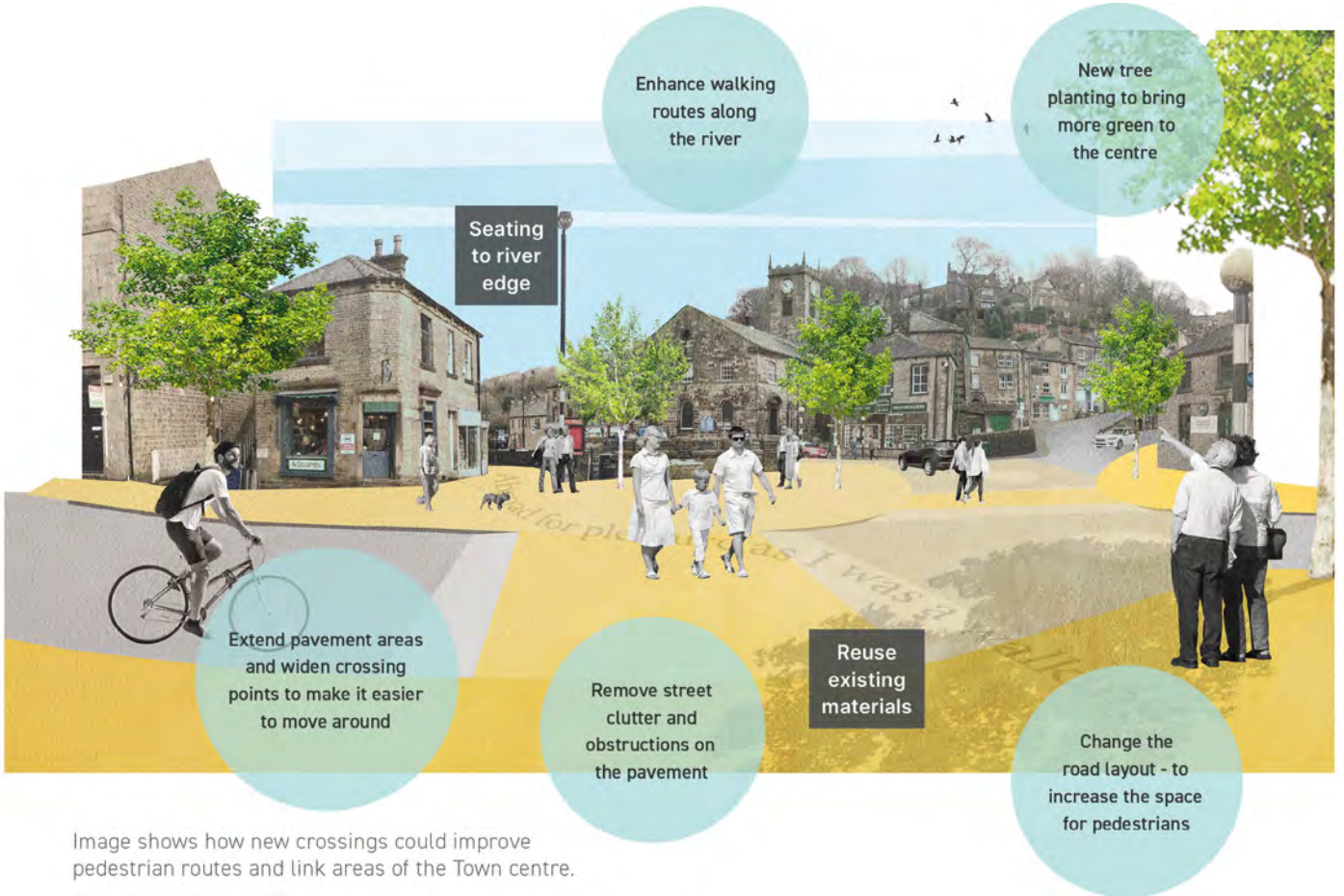


Image shows how new crossings could improve pedestrian routes and link areas of the Town centre.

Appraisal Assessment Summary

Appraisal Summary

Continuum have sought to understand how much the proposed options cost and how they can be funded, either through capital funding, enabling development, S106 monies and other grant funding sources.

They have undertaken residual appraisal assessments on the projects set out in this document in order to understand if the projects are deliverable based on the proposed funding opportunities available to Kirklees. Continuum have also provided an assessment of areas that could be explored in order to increase the funding pot for public realm works in Kirklees.

Kirklees Council have identified a capital budget for the delivery of improvements in Holmfirth. From assessment of the projects' public realm costs, this capital budget funding would only be able to fund a single project or part of a single project. Due to this, alternative routes to funding need to be undertaken in order for multiple projects to be funded over the short to medium terms.

- S106 monies to be spent in Holmfirth
- Further Capital Funding
- Available Grants

Project Assessment

A residual appraisal of each project has been carried out and is available within the Appraisal Assessment report by Continuum. The potential costs (excluding financing) and funding options for the projects have been set out below:

Towngate Project

- Approximate Cost: £2.1m-2.5m

Hollowgate Project

- Approximate Cost: £1.3m-1.5m

Gateway Project

- Approximate Cost: £1.2m-1.4m
- S106 monies to be spent in Holmfirth
- Further Capital Funding
- Available Grants

Streets Project

- Approximate Cost: £6.2m-7.4m
- This project has substantial costs and unlikely to be available in the short to medium term
- S106 monies to be spent in Holmfirth
- Further Capital Funding
- Available Grants

River Holme Project

- Approximate Cost: £4.4m-5.3m
- This project has substantial costs and unlikely to be available in the short to medium term
- S106 monies to be spent in Holmfirth
- Further Capital Funding
- Available Grants
- Environment Agency Funding

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06

Summary

Summary

An opportunity exists to enhance the centre of Holmfirth to deliver the sort of place that its residents envisage - a lively, attractive and sustainable town, rooted in history. This document sets out a Vision and series of objectives based on site analysis and feedback from the community and local stakeholders.

These objectives are:

- Bring Streets to Life
- Put the River Holme back at the Heart of the Town
- Help Holmfirth to Thrive
- Celebrate the Identity of Holmfirth
- Make Holmfirth Accessible to All

To deliver the Vision, 5 priority projects have been identified that will help enact the change that is envisaged. These 5 projects are:

- Re-development of Towngate into a new public space, whilst retaining the bus services and creating new mixed use buildings
- Re-development of Hollowgate into a 'quiet street' prioritising pedestrian and cycle movement and creating more space for businesses whilst still retaining some vehicular access
- Creating a number of key gateway spaces signalling the arrival to the town centre
- Re-design of streets with more accessible and safe pedestrian and cycle infrastructure
- Enhancement of the biodiversity and accessibility of the river corridor

These projects could be delivered alongside each other or in subsequent steps, as each might be a catalyst for further change in the town. The projects will go some way in making the town more resilient to the effects of climate change and will enable more sustainable lifestyles. Viability and funding is always a challenge for public sector led projects and collaboration with community groups and private sector will be necessary to deliver the vision. Holmfirth benefits from a constellation of passionate and experienced community groups who can work with Kirklees Council to draw on funding opportunities to deliver the projects. This process will require strong buy-in and leadership and, with these in place, has every chance of success.

The proposals in this document have been developed through engagement with the community and have been shown to have a high level of support. These now form a route map for the future of Holmfirth town centre that can be achieved through collaborative efforts between the Council, the community and other public bodies.

Kirklees Council have identified capital budget for the delivery of improvements in Holmfirth. From assessment of the projects' public realm costs, this capital budget funding would only be able to fund a single project or part of a single project. Due to this, alternative routes to funding need to be explored in order for multiple projects to be funded over the short to medium terms.

Appendices

The following appendices are attached to this document:

- Appendix A - Town Centre Analysis
- Appendix B - Existing plans
- Appendix C - Overview of Stakeholder Engagement

Appendix A

Town Centre

Analysis

Heritage

The existing intact building stock within Holmfirth is a strong defining feature. A number of these buildings are protected through national listing and the Conservation Area designation.

Some key historic listed buildings in the centre include :

- Church of the Holy Trinity
- Picturedrome
- Towngate
- Civic Hall

Whilst these buildings enjoy added protection many of the buildings are not listed but reflect local vernacular and have an important role in the attractive townscape of Holmfirth. This in tact character forms a unique selling point to the town and a point of pride for many residents.



Example of listed buildings in Holmfirth contributing to its character



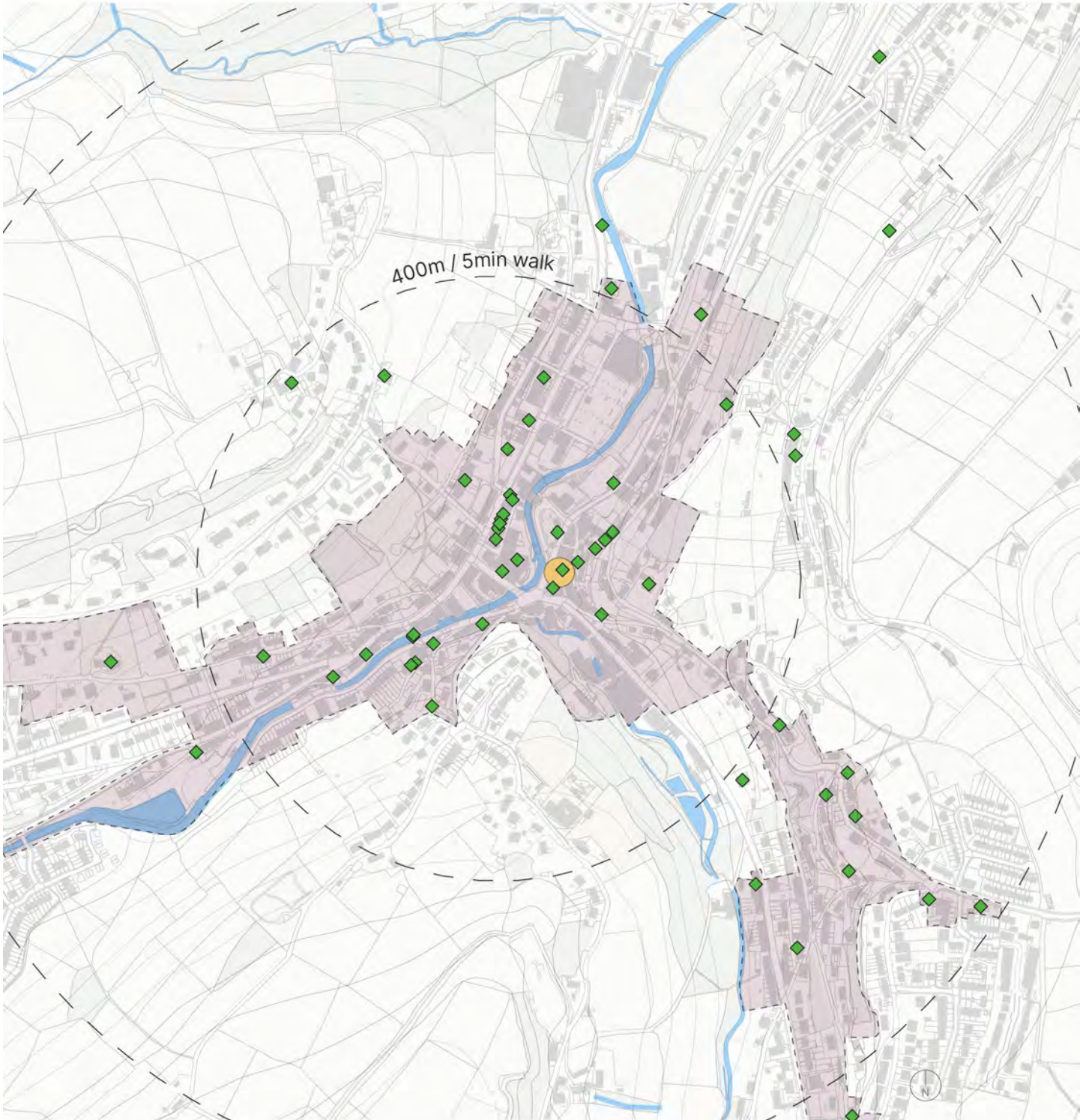
Heritage buildings form an attractive backdrop to the streets and spaces of the town

Heritage Opportunity

- An improved public realm to support and enhance the existing heritage stock.
- Sensitive redevelopment of sites within the centre might remove eyesores /make better use of land and improve the overall setting.

Key

- ◆ Grade II Listed Buildings
- Archaeological site
Parish Church Holmfirth Holy Trinity
- Conservation Area boundary



Land Uses

An analysis of the existing town centre uses was undertaken to establish patterns and congregations of similar / complementary uses and is shown overleaf.

The following patterns have been observed:

- Compact town centre with good range of shops and services.
- Retained tourism offer, although this has been reducing in recent years.
- Some large scale and industrial uses impacting on the character of the centre.
- The centre of Holmfirth is predominantly surrounded by residential neighbourhoods.
- Smaller independent shops and food and beverage offers are succeeding in the centre.
- Larger buildings in the town centre are currently underutilised or vacant, demonstrating market failure in this type of offer.



Holme Mill occupies a prominent corner in the town centre and could come forward for redevelopment in the future.



The telephone exchange is located at the approach to the town centre. This could be redeveloped to provide much needed accommodation in the centre of Holmfirth.



Post office depot occupies a large area in the centre of Holmfirth. There could be a better use for this space.

Land Use Opportunity

- A number of sites around the centre that could be considered for new uses,
- Bridge Lane industrial area, Holmfirth Mills, Wood Lane currently underused / vacant,
- Sorting office and Fire Station are currently taking up prime land in the town centre - this is an opportunity for relocation.
- Opportunity to build on the night-time economy by supporting and enhancing the existing evening offer.
- A range of interventions can be made depending on the Council's immediate and long term aspirations.

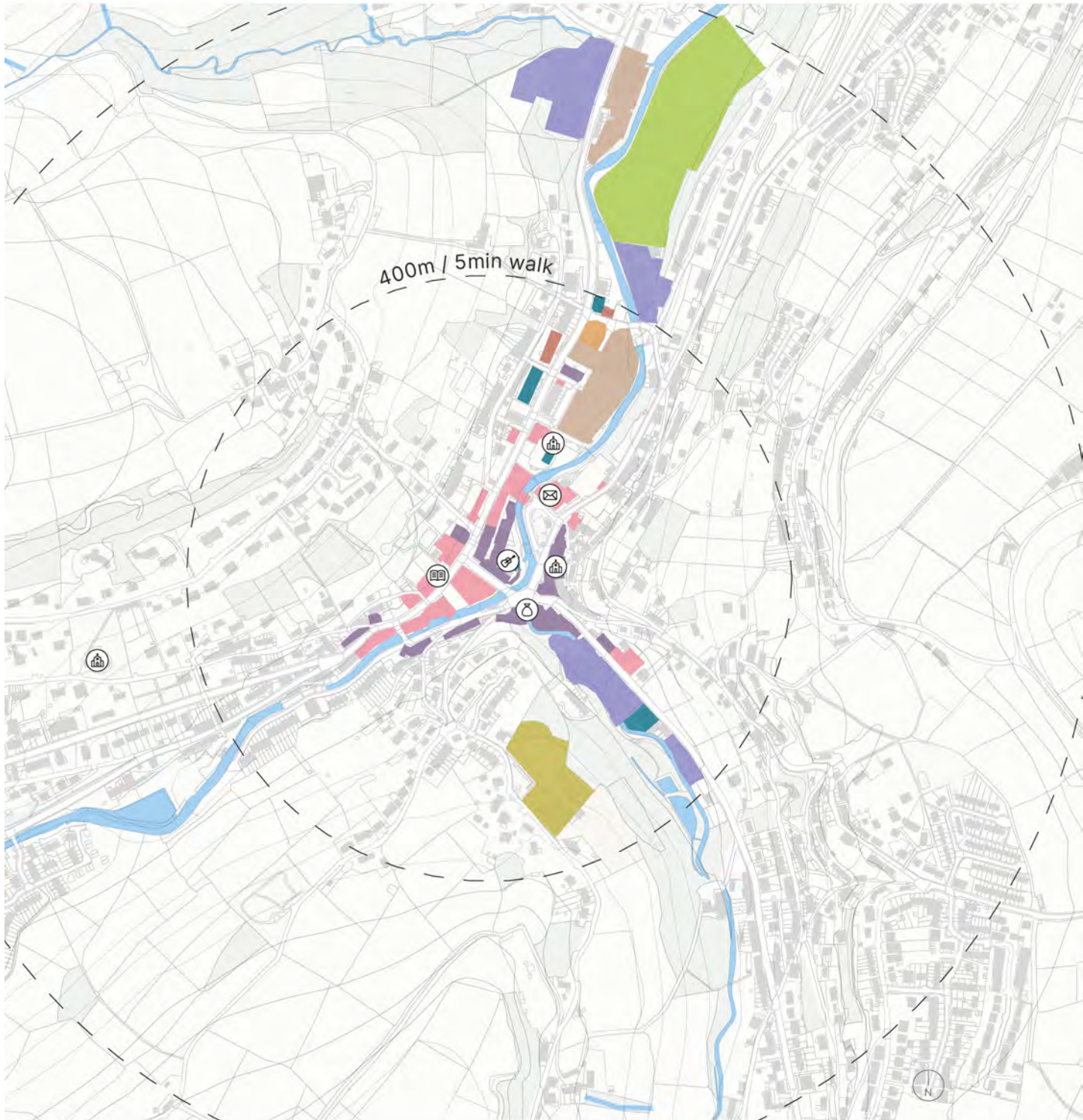
KEY

- Predominantly shops and services
- Predominantly food and beverage
- Large retail

- Employment
- Community use
- Civic use
- Office use

- Education
- Sport and leisure
- Post office
- Church

- Library
- Music venue
- Bank
-



Land Use Analysis

Green Infrastructure

The River Holme corridor and the network of public open spaces and other green infrastructure create the landscape setting for the town centre and are shown on the plan overleaf.

Key Features:

- Good access to public green spaces, although topography and route quality is a challenge.
- Larger green spaces - Sands Rec, Hagg Wood, Victoria Park within walking distance of the centre.
- Strategic green connections to the Moors are not obvious or accessible.
- River Corridor is constrained by flooding but links Holmfirth to valley areas.
- Opportunity to expand the role that green space already plays for the community.
- The river corridor could be better connected to surrounding green spaces.
- Opportunity to provide the right type and condition of green space to meet the needs of the community and local groups.



Encouraging more people to get around by foot would help achieve the town's sustainability goals



Improving the convenience and safety of routes would encourage more people to walk



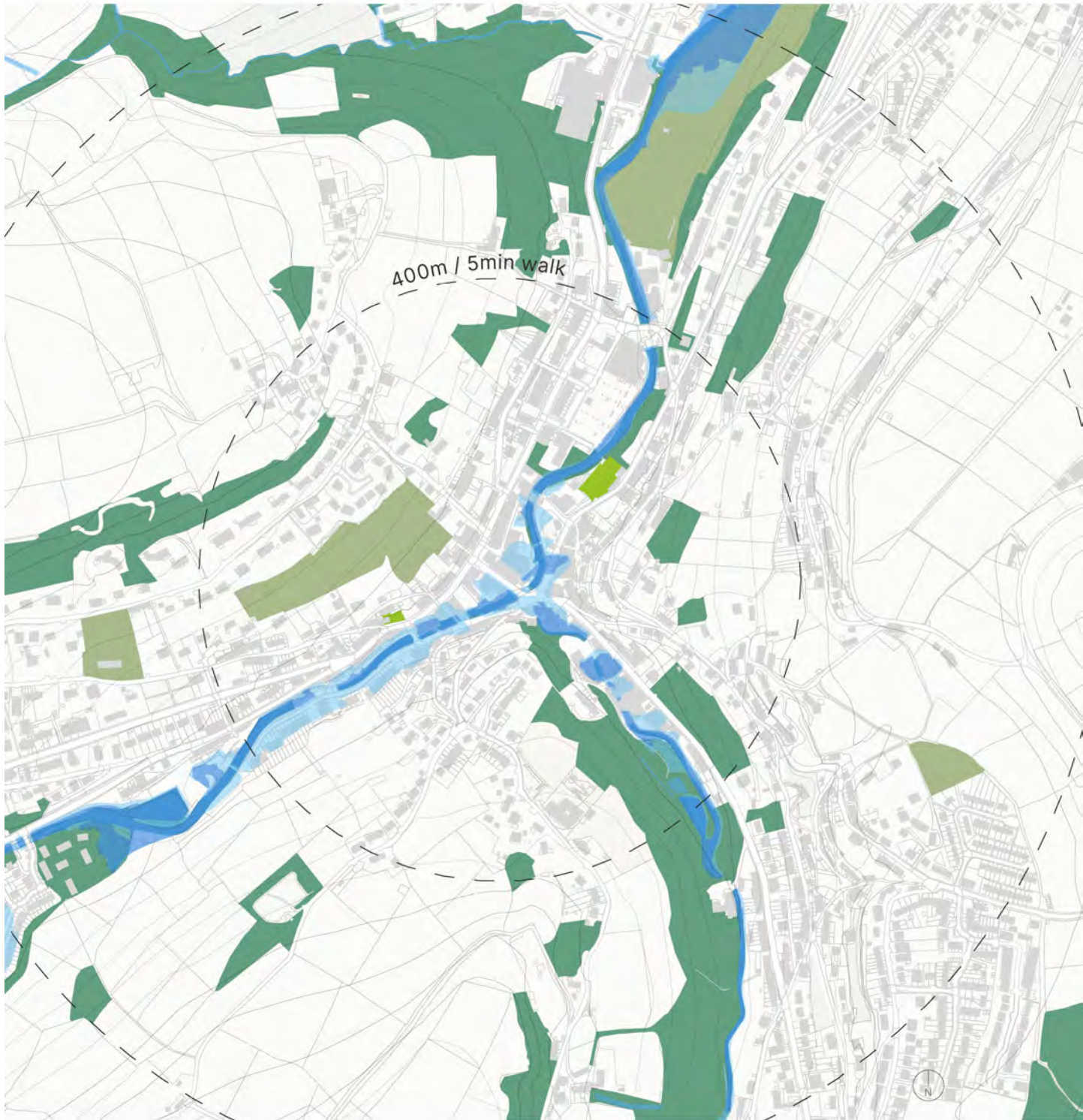
A more accessible access to Victoria Park could be made from the town centre

Green Infrastructure Opportunity

- Improve access to the River Holme corridor.
- Improve the quality and accessibility of connections to the surrounding green spaces.
- Improve existing active travel links through green areas.

KEY

- Public green spaces
- Small public spaces
- Green infrastructure
- River Holme
- EA Flood map: Zone 2
- EA Flood map: Zone 3



Open Space and Green Infrastructure Analysis

Civic Open Space

At the heart of most towns is a formal civic open space, that can be the focus for community pride and identity. Within Holmfirth however:

- Town lacks a central civic space.
- Large spaces exist in the centre - but currently used for infrastructure - not people spaces.
- Including the river, the size of spaces are comparable to the largest civic spaces in the region such as St Georges Square, Huddersfield.



Whilst there are smaller public spaces and seating areas around the centre, the largest spaces are reserved for roadways and infrastructure.

Civic Space Opportunity

- Create a new civic space that will form the 'heart' of the town.
- Locate the space so that it gives an opportunity to reconnect with the River Holme.

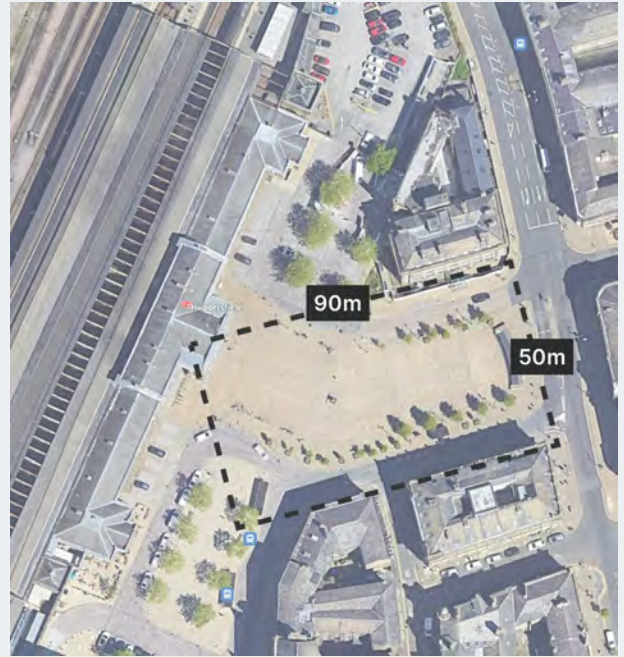
Space Comparison

St Georges Square, Huddersfield

Capacity: 15,000
Dimensions: 90m x 50m
Fountain Plaza: 1382m²
Main Plaza: 1223m²
Total Area: 4,500m²



St Georges Square, Huddersfield

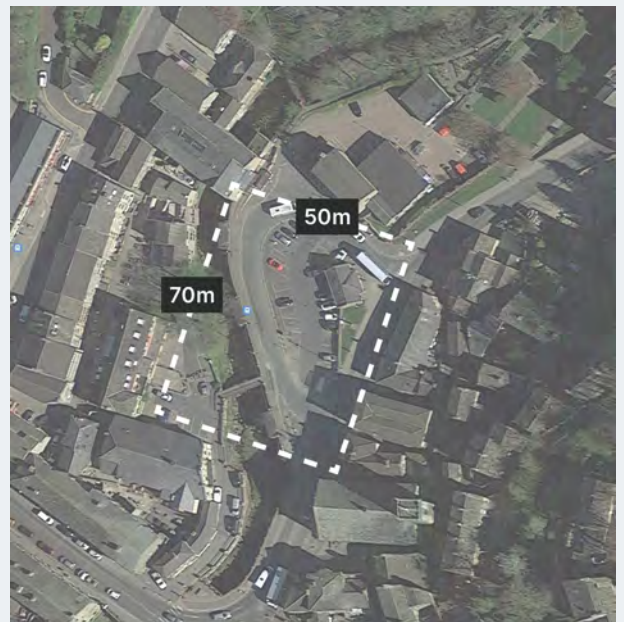


Holmfirth Bus Station and Towngate Car Park

Dimensions: 70m x 50m
Total area: 3500m²



Holmfirth Bus Station and Towngate Car Park



Public Rights of Way and Cycling

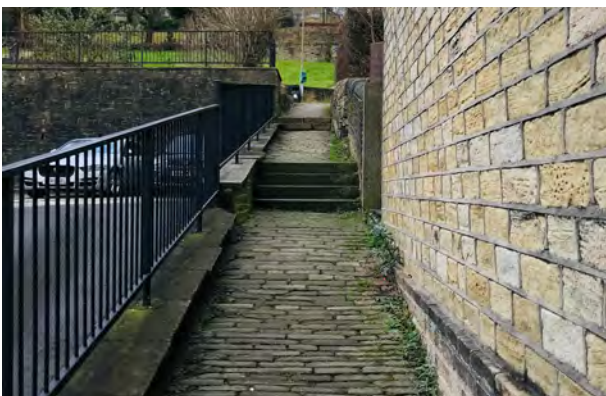
Holmfirth is well placed to connect to an extensive network of Public Rights of Way, that link to long range recreational routes across the moors.

The Town centre itself though struggles to benefit from these routes due to a number of key challenges:

- Routes are currently provided on heavily trafficked main roads, this creates a poor pedestrian / cycle experience,
- Topography presents a key challenge - cross valley,
- River corridor off-road route not fully appreciated / or complete,
- Off road / minor connections less obvious to visitors - no real sense of wider routes
- Home Valley Circular (HVC) Walk?



Quieter routes could be used to encourage cycle movement



A more accessible access to Victoria Park could be made from the town centre

There are no segregated cycle facilities provided along any of the street of the town's network.

The map opposite shows the assessment of the existing route network using a qualitative Red-Amber-Green score that encompasses a range of considerations including:

- Expected traffic volumes,
- Forward visibility,
- Topography,
- Street layout (width, geometry..),
- Competition for space at the kerbside for car parking and loading

A new project for the improvement of access and movement in the centre of Holmfirth had been developed at the time of writing this document. More information on this project can be found at:

<https://www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/holmfirth-update>

There will be marginal improvement in the quality of the environment for walking and cycling as part of the approved town centre scheme.

PRoW Opportunity

- Are there specific routes used by the local community that could be focused on?
- Could the connections to key facilities - like the Primary School / Victoria Park / Sands Recreational Ground be improved?
- Could pedestrian and cycle movement be encouraged to use quieter side road/ routes and the river corridor?

Key

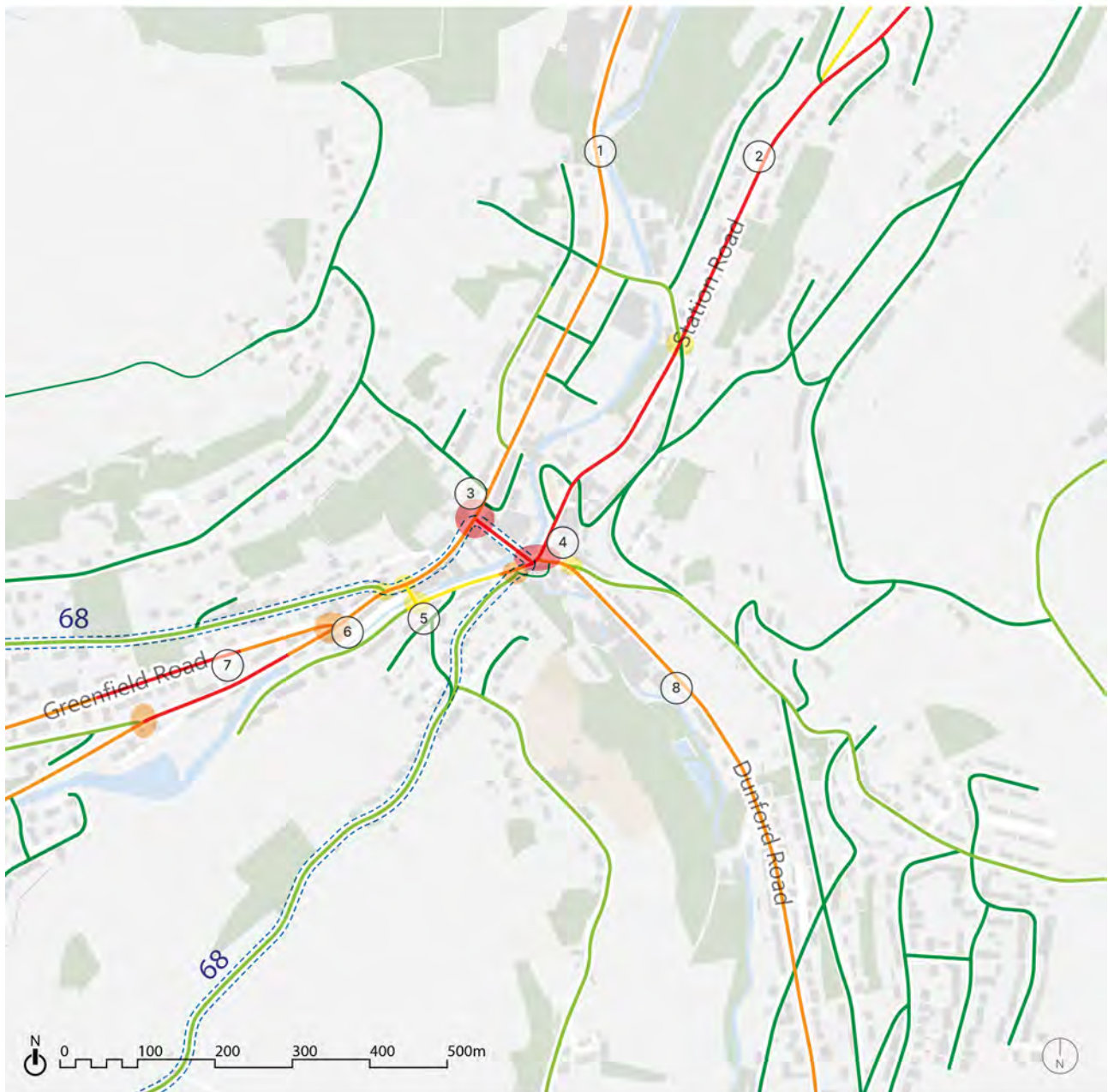
1. Wide traffic lanes induce speeding at certain times of the day. Lack of cycle demarcation warning vehicles of potential conflicts
2. Steep road with parked vehicles along one side. High risk of conflicts
3. Turning movements are unprotected and cyclists risk side hook collisions
4. Significant interaction with pedestrian flows, turning movements including large vehicles and buses
5. Hollowgate is used as a short cut, often by drivers travelling at inappropriate speeds, increasing collision risks pedestrians and cyclists
6. Blind corner, risk of conflicts
7. Risk of high speeds on all approaches to town centre
8. Steep road constrained by on-street parking, risk of conflicts with vehicles

Cycle Paths

- National Cycle Route
- Acceptable experience
- Negative experience

Junctions

- ⬆ Moderate conflict
- ⬆ High Conflict



Cycle Network Analysis

Bus Services

There are 29 routes that serve Holmfirth Bus Station.

This includes 21 services that start / terminate at the station. These services have more turning and dwelling space requirements than those routes simply running through the town centre.

Clearly, the station and bus services into Holmfirth provide a regular and valued provision that serve the wider Holme Valley.

Public transport to local railway stations

- Brockholes
(journey time 18 minutes)
Four direct buses (310/314/316/H6) per hour on average
- Honley
(22 minutes)
Three direct buses (310/314/316) per hour on average
- Slaithwaite
(37 minutes)
One direct bus (335) per hour on average

Public transport to local cities / larger hubs

- Huddersfield
(33 minutes)
Four direct buses (310/314/316) per hour on average
- Wakefield
One direct bus per hour (X1)
- Sheffield
Approximately 1 hr 45 min via Brockholes station with buses 310/314/316/H6 and Northern rail service
- Manchester
1 hr 22 min via Slaithwaite with bus 350
- Transpennine Express
1 hr 23 min via Huddersfield with bus 314-316 and Transpennine Express



Car parking dominates the current Holmfirth Bus Station environment



Existing Bus Station

Parking

Main observations

- There are seven main publicly-available car parks in the town centre, with details shown below.
- There is also a significant amount of on-street car parking in the town centre. On-street spaces closest to the centre are subject to waiting restrictions but charges are not applied for on-street car parking.
- Disabled provision missing at several locations.
- Cycle parking is limited across the town centre and only provided at one of the car parks (Towngate, where cycle lockers are provided).

Location	Type	Address	Spaces	Disabled	Cycle parking*	Price
1. Bridge Lane	Long stay	Bridge Lane HD9 7AN	17			£1.00 for 3 hrs, £2.00 for 5 hrs, £2.80 all day
2. Council Offices	Long stay	Huddersfield Road HD9 3JP	23			£1.00 for 3 hrs, £2.00 for 5 hrs, £2.80 all day
3. Crown Bottom	Long stay	Market Street HD9 3HW	272	15		£1.00 for 3 hrs, £2.00 for 5 hrs, £2.80 all day
4. Huddersfield Road	Two hours	Huddersfield Road HD9 3JH	26			20p for 30 mins, 40p for 1 hour, 60p for 2 hours
5. Sands Recreation Ground	Long stay	Huddersfield Road HD9 3JL	50		2	No charge
6. Station Road	Long stay	Station Road HD9 1AB	26			£1.00 for 3 hrs, £2.00 for 5 hrs, £2.80 all day
7. Towngate	Two hours	Towngate HD9 1HA	36	2		20p for 30 mins, 40p for 1 hour, 60p for 2 hours

*(Sheffield Stands)

Parking Opportunity

The majority of publicly available off-street car parking provision allows long-stay (86% for all the parking shown in the table or 85% if you exclude Sands from the town centre parking supply). It is unusual for most of the car parking in a town centre to be long-stay - one way to make more parking available would be to increase the amount of parking that is short-stay so there is more turnover and more customers can access parking.



Example of on-street car parking dominating street character

KEY

Car Park

Off-street car parks



Road Safety

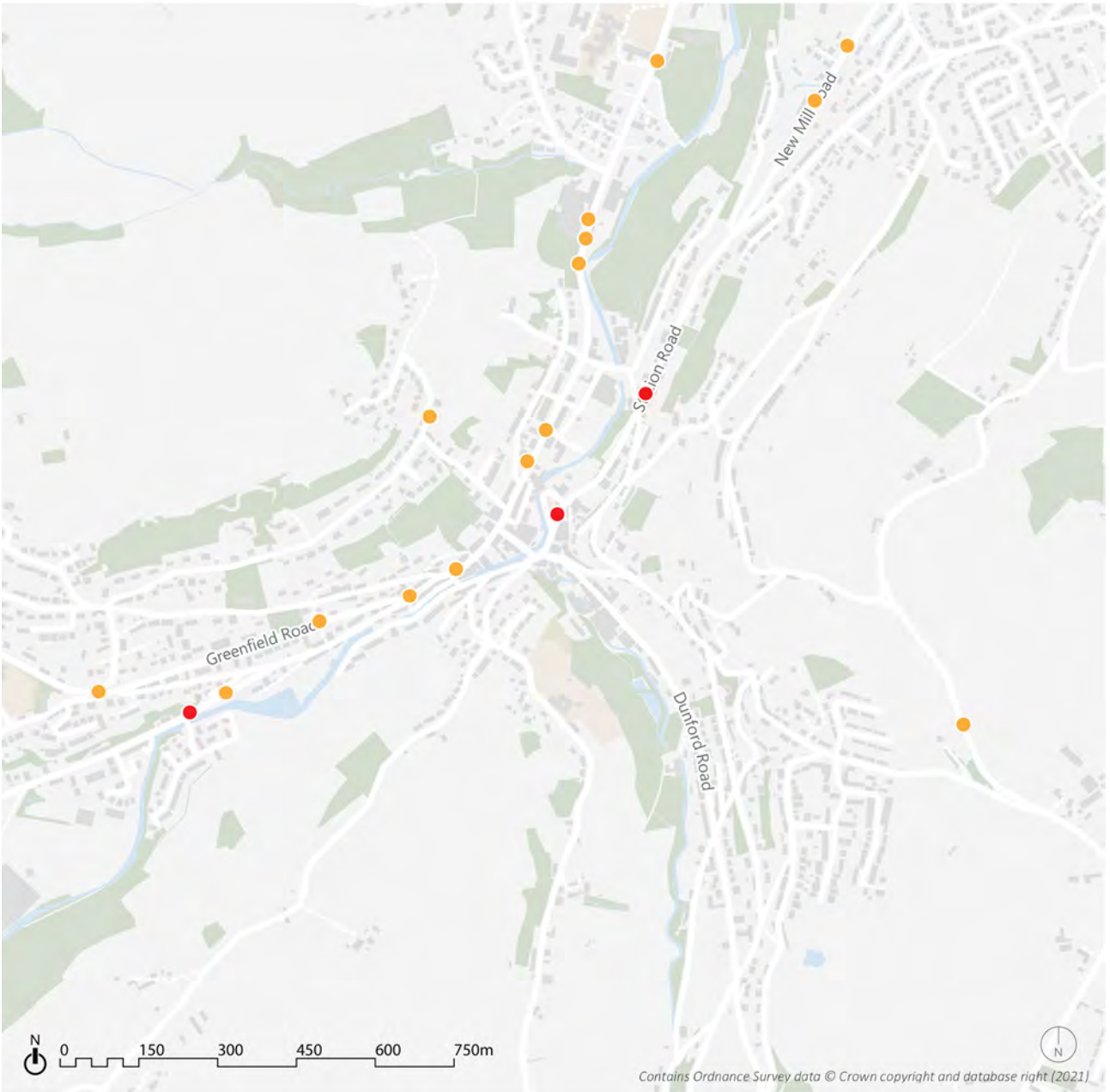
An analysis of road safety data has shown that:

- Collisions recorded in the past three years are clustered along the main roads, in particular along the A6024 corridor.
- In this time, three serious collisions have occurred in the town centre – two along Station Road and one on Woodhead Road. All of them involved pedestrian casualties.
- Only one cycle and one motorcycle have been reported as minor casualties in the last three years. All the other accidents involved vehicles only.

KEY

Road Collisions (2018-2020)

- Series
- Slight



Road Safety Analysis

Planning

A number of policies from the Kirklees Local Plan (adopted 2019) apply to the study area. These policies include the Town Centre boundary, Conservation Area, Primary Shopping area designation as well as a number of other spatial allocations and the wider Green Belt boundary. These spatial policies are summarised on the plan on the following page.

In addition to Kirklees Local Plan consideration has been given to local planning policies from the *Holme Valley Neighbourhood Plan*, including:

Policy 1

Enhancing the landscape character of Holme Valley -requires all proposals to be informed by the key characteristics of the Landscape Character.

Policy 2

Enhancing the built character and promoting high quality design - requires that proposals for new development achieve 10 objectives, which include taking account of local character, create a sense of place, utilise existing assets and innovate and respond to the local context of the site.

Policy 5

Promoting high quality public realm and improvements to gateways - sets out that proposed improvements to the public realm should enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Considerations for public realm enhancements where they relate to highway safety and efficiency are also set out within this policy.

Policy 8

Supporting development in Holmfirth Town centre - supports development within Holmfirth Town centre for a range of uses whilst also setting out criteria against which the development proposals will be assessed.

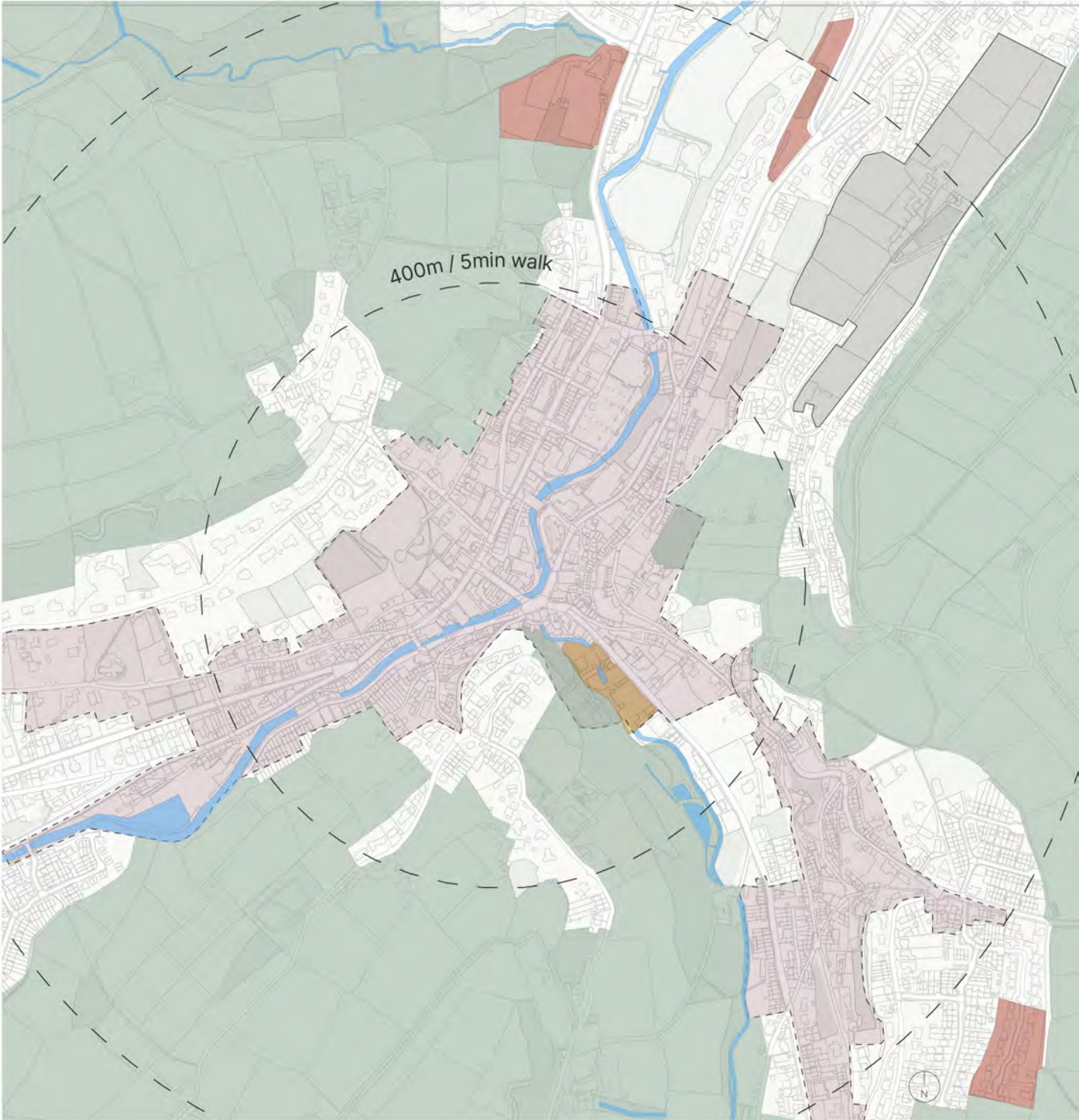
Policy 11

Improving transport, accessibility and local infrastructure - provides principles for Traffic Management and Design, Accessibility and Parking Provision for development proposals.

Relevant spatial policies from the Kirklees Local Plan have been set out in the plan on the opposite page.

KEY

- Housing allocation
- Green Belt
- Safeguarded land
- Priority employment area
- Holmfirth Conservation Area boundary



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Appendix B

Summary of

Existing Plans

Existing Plans

A number of key documents, plans and strategies, that have been prepared by Kirklees Council, the Parish Council, local community and action groups have been taken into consideration.

The Vision, Objectives and Projects set out in Section 3 draw together many elements of these plans, and allow Kirklees Council and other organisations to target investment, support policy, and provide funding to help deliver them.

Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan

The aim of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP's) is to give local people more say in decisions about proposed developments in their area by encouraging their involvement in drafting local planning policies. The Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan was adopted in December 2021. It provides a vision, objectives and planning policies to help deliver development which meets local needs and aspirations. The policies are used alongside the Kirklees Local Plan to determine planning applications submitted to Kirklees Council in the area. The NDP sets out the following 'Vision for the Valley':

'The Holme Valley of the future will continue to be a beautiful rural landscape offering safe environments for wildlife and a place where its culture, heritage and splendour are celebrated by local people and visitors. It will be home to a vibrant and welcoming community whose people live and / or work within its thriving settlements. It will offer the services and facilities for modern life, whilst sustaining a strong sense of identity and belonging for everyone.'

The Vision set out in Section 3 aims to support and expand on this, by considering in finer detail, objectives that will preserve the distinctive character of the Town, protect and enhance the public spaces within it.

Heritage

- Heritage centre for visual and living history
- Guided walks
- Blue plaques and guides

Retail

- Modern market
- Wide range of shops
- Opening hours to suit customers
- Support for independents
- Use vacant outlets for other purposes

Activity and Entertainment

- Events for a wide age range
- Live music and performances
- Public art
- Sustainable uses for the countryside

Employment

- Shops, cafés, bars and services
- Places for people to work in the Town Centre

Housing

- Above outlets
- Within walking and cycling distance

Other services and draws

- Library
- The Tech
- Services and facilities (beauty, health, finance etc)
- Facilities for cyclists and walkers
- Stuff to do and places to go for young people

Holmfirth, the place to spend time and money, to be with others and enjoy yourself

Drivers of Footfall

Attractiveness

- Tidy up buildings and get rid of clutter
- Paint street railings etc
- More trees and plants
- Improve lighting
- Reduce congestion
- Increase walking and cycling
- Better bus services

Holme Valley Vision

The Holme Valley Vision presents a community-led set of actions for how the town centre can be improved.

Brand and marketing

- New brand built on history
- Better promotion to local people and potential visitors

Climate change actions

- Better energy conservation and water reduction
- Use of renewable energy sources

Amenities

- Seating and open spaces
- Better accessibility
- Excellent broadband
- Open up the river bank
- Use view points
- Public toilets
- Improved air quality
- Adequate car parking
- Better signage and notice boards

The Drivers of Footfall identify a number of clear elements that would transform the Centre, its environment and economic future. As such, they are incorporated where possible into the objectives and vision set out in this document.

River Holme Connections Group

The River Holme Connections Group, is a charitable organisation, established in 2012.

Its Vision and Mission is:

‘Transforming the River Holme catchment for the benefit of residents, business, visitors and wildlife.’

The Group has explored opportunities for improved access to the river and have identified connections along the river as a key improvement within Holmfirth Town Centre.

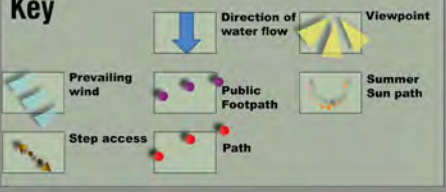
Through this masterplan, we hope to support the objectives of the group and help link them to wider environmental improvements and pedestrian and cycle connectivity more generally.



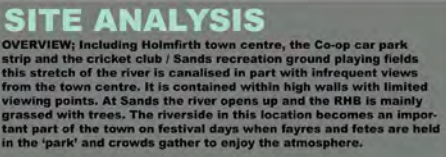
Aerial View



Analysis plan




Key





SITE ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW; Including Holmfirth town centre, the Co-op car park strip and the cricket club / Sands recreation ground playing fields this stretch of the river is canalised in part with infrequent views from the town centre. It is contained within high walls with limited viewing points. At Sands the river opens up and the RHB is mainly grassed with trees. The riverside in this location becomes an important part of the town on festival days when fayres and fetes are held in the 'park' and crowds gather to enjoy the atmosphere.



04 HOLMFIRTH-SANDS

01 PROPOSED FOOTPATH LINK;

- Improve visibility of the river;
- Create lower level terraces to Hollowgate
- Remove Invasive weed species
- Reduce tree canopy cover over the river

02 PROPOSED TC URBAN SPACE;

- Change lighting to white LED
- Provide shared vehicular / pedestrian surfaces in TC locations
- Create spaces to encourage people to stay in the TC when visiting
- Review and develop use of key TC sites.



03 SANDS RECREATION GROUNDS;

- Build additional play space, create bump and berm cycle park, improve pitch drainage;
- Improve footpath surfaces to the north and provide link to footpath / cyclepath.
- Create Go Ape facility in woodlands to the north.

OPPORTUNITIES;

- ★ Improve access from Holmfirth TC to the riverside, allow access to waters edge;
- ★ Create a range of flexible urban spaces within Holmfirth TC to support festivals / events and business throughout the year.
- ★ Create continuous footpath/ cyclepath link thru' the TC to Sands and beyond ;
- ★ Improve facilities at Sands for different age groups; create Go ape within woodland to North of Sands.



Key

- Outdoor performance space
- Improved path and cycle access
- New surface for cycling; especially young cyclists.
- Improved footpath access / surfacing.




Ecology




Walking



Cycling



Historical



Energy

Example of work produced by Holme Valley Vision group

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'Your Voice, Your Holmfirth' Conversation

"Your voice, your Holmfirth" place standard engagement about Holmfirth town centre took place from 6th September to 31st October.

For the 1st 2 weeks the focus was on promoting the engagement in the town centre (local businesses, library, community venues) and surrounding villages (noticeboards and general stores). All 200 town centre businesses were sent a letter encouraging them to take part and were visited by council staff. It was promoted via local social media networks and council staff contacts with local groups, events, services, schools and parents, sixth form colleges, library users, Holme Valley parish council.

From week 3 drop-ins for the public were held at Holmfirth Library (weekly) and at Holmfirth Market (weekly on alternate days). On one day the Wellness Bus was parked at Crown Bottom car park. Promotion and conversations also took place on-street in Holmfirth centre. During November, when groups were comfortable meeting again, in-person group conversations were held with representatives of local groups; Holmfirth Business Association, River Holme Connections, HOTT (Holmfirth Transition Town), Holmfirth Festival organisers, Holmfirth Civic Society and 8-12 years youth club at the Phoenix Centre.

The Place Standard Tool was used to have conversations with people about what works now, how things might change and what matters most to them about Holmfirth centre



'Your Voice, Your Holmfirth' Conversation

Following the consultations responses were collated and summarised under the following key topics.

Moving Around

Lack and quality of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the town centre.

Public transport

Improving accessibility, frequency and reliability of bus services.

Traffic and parking

The dominance and impact of traffic in the town centre and lack of parking for special events.

Streets and spaces

Impact of empty shops, poor signage and development projects undermining the quality and charm of the town centre.

Natural space

Abundance of green space and natural infrastructure but connections need improving and making the most out of the river corridor.

Play and recreation

Better maintenance and improved sports facilities.

Facilities and amenities

Support independent shops and ensure key services remain in the town centre.

Work and local economy

Lack of good jobs and investment, outside of retail.

Housing and community

Issues of affordability and lack of future-proofing of old housing stock.

Social contact

A hub of opportunity for social events and groups, but not always well advertised.

Identity and belonging

The town has a positive identity that needs to be used to guide it's future development.

Feeling safe

The town feels safe and has neighbourhoods with strong sense of belonging, although anti-social behaviour can be tackled.

Care and maintenance

Rejuvenate derelict buildings and improve maintenance of streets and spaces.

Influence and sense of control

A strong community but not all voices are always heard. Consultations have sometimes felt like a check-box exercise.

"As a shop manager we find our shelves are covered in black dust from the nearby, very busy road."

"Market has been run into the ground by Kirklees and the extourist information centre is an eyesore."

"Holmfirth should be a destination not a thoroughfare."

"Bang average if honest. We are seriously behind other towns such as Uppermill or anywhere really."

"For teenagers I am only aware of one youth club."

Holmfirth Town Centre Access Plan

The Holmfirth Town Centre Access Plan, led by Kirklees Council, is funded through the West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund and the Leeds City Region Growth Deal.

Kirklees Council carried out a significant amount of work to assess the road use and layout in Holmfirth town centre. This area of Holmfirth is unique and provides many challenges to making major alterations to the roads, but the impact of congestion meant consideration for improvements were necessary.

The aims of the improvements are to:

- Create a more attractive environment for residents, businesses and visitors
- Ease traffic congestion in Holmfirth

- Improve efficiency and journey time reliability for all road users
- Create better access for local residents, workers and businesses
- The council collated information from investigations and traffic simulations, looking at where the issues and journey time delays are in Holmfirth. They then used this information to develop and test a number of improvement options, in order to develop a preferred access plan option.



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Appendix C

Stakeholder

Engagement

Stakeholder Consultation

21st and 22nd July 2022 Holmfirth Tech

The stakeholder consultation held by consultation later that year) at Holmfirth Tech was a productive and valuable source of feedback on the emerging vision, principles and projects. Thanks again to all attendees for their thoughtful input of ideas and time to shaping the future of Holmfirth.



Invitees

1. Friends of Parks
2. Holmfirth Walkers are Welcome
3. Holmfirth Women's Institute
4. Holmfirth Rotary Club
5. Holme Valley Lions
6. Probus Club
7. Holmfirth over 60's
8. Holmepride
9. River Holme Connections
10. HOTT
11. Holy Trinity Holmfirth
12. Holmfirth Methodist
13. Holme Valley Food Bank
14. Full Life Church Food Bank
15. Square Peg
16. Holmfirth Choral Society
17. Holmfirth Civic Hall
18. Picturedrome
19. Holmfirth Tech
20. Holmfirth Market
21. Holme Valley Vision
22. Homfirth Library
23. Parish Council
24. Holmfirth Business
25. Edinburgh Woollen Mill
26. Holmfirth Police
27. Holmfirth Conservation Group
28. Holmfirth Festival of Folk
29. Holme Valley Civic Society
30. Film Festival
31. Holmfirth Arts Festival
32. Cllrs and Council officers, including representatives from Transport, Landscape and parks departments.

Attendance

25 people attended the two events in total, with approximately equal attendance at both sessions.

Process

The session was kicked off with a presentation of initial thoughts, including an analysis of the Town's issues and opportunities.

A Vision for Holmfirth was presented to the group, alongside key objectives for improving the town.

The participants then broke into workshop groups of around 7-8 to discuss and refine the vision and objectives, using engagement tools to prompt debate and build consensus.



Top three things about Holmfirth responses

Icebreaker Task

We asked stakeholders, "In your opinion, what are the top three best things about Holmfirth". These are the common themes:

1. **Beautiful Landscape** - peaks, woods, river
2. **Vibrant Culture** - active community, independent businesses, popular events
3. **Proud Heritage** - proud social history and beautiful historic townscape



Stakeholder Feedback on the Draft Vision for Holmfirth

“Holmfirth is a town where people of all ages find it **easy and enjoyable** to get about, and where pedestrians come first. The streets are **vibrant places to spend time**, meet friends, and enjoy **local culture and events**.

A modern market town where **businesses thrive**, and there's **meaningful work** for all across a wide range of industries. **A place to put down roots**, to grow up joyfully, and to grow old comfortably. Holmfirth is a town where people can get involved in the **social and cultural life** and be an active member of the community.

It's a place to **celebrate the landscape and proud heritage** that make Holmfirth a truly enriching place to be. **A place that's resilient, welcoming and forward looking**, ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.”

Feedback

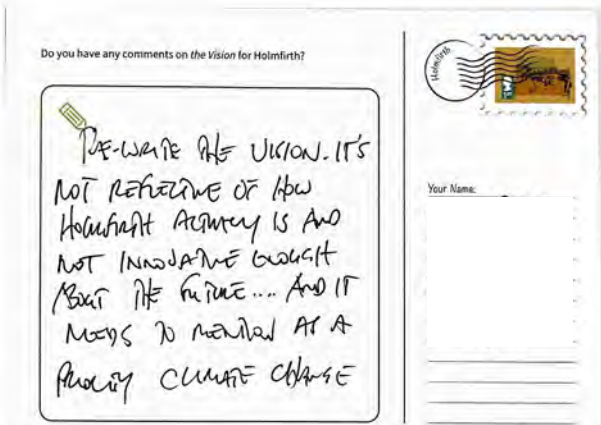
Generally it was felt that the vision presented broadly aligned with stakeholders' ambitions for the town, with many comments supporting - “Spot On”.

There was some feedback on how the vision could be refined to better reflect the unique characteristics of Holmfirth, and present a more innovative vision for the future around social and environmental sustainability.

Two key themes emerged:


- Climate change and the need for action, ambition for Holmfirth to be a pioneering town in embracing a green future.
- Identity and heritage, and developing as a cultural destination.


Do you have any comments on the Vision for Holmfirth?


 The image shows a feedback card with a postage stamp in the top right corner. The stamp features a landscape scene and the word 'Holmfirth'. Below the stamp is a line for 'Your Name:'. The main body of the card contains handwritten text in black ink.

RE-WRITE THE VISION. IT'S NOT REFLECTIVE OF HOW HOLMFIRTH ACTUALLY IS AND NOT INNOVATIVE ENOUGH ABOUT THE FUTURE... AND IT NEEDS TO MENTION AT A POINT CLIMATE CHANGE


Do you have any comments on the Vision for Holmfirth?




 AT THE CENTRE'S HEART
 River access is
 remembered in
 START TERM TO
 ALLOW VISION OF
 ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY
 + NEW WAY OF BRINGING LIFE TO
 STREETS

Your Name _____

Do you have any comments on the Vision for Holmfirth?



 Important to create a
 liveable town centre
 - accessible to all
 and a place to spend
 time. Important to
 be pedestrianised and
 a place to enjoy.
 Traffic free areas are
 vital.

Your Name _____

Do you have any comments on the Vision for Holmfirth?




 - Pedestrians are put first and
 are able to avoid traffic
 - Active travel into centre

Your Name _____

Do you have any comments on the Vision for Holmfirth?




 Celebrate Cultural
 heritage Museum
 Local art
 Public safety

Your Name _____

Do you have any comments on the Vision for Holmfirth?




 needs more about bringing
 environment in to the
 heart of the town.
 Town Centre greenup +
 sustainability (trees - street
 trees + making room for green
 spaces as well as pedestrianish)

Your Name _____

Do you have any comments on the Vision for Holmfirth?




 ① - Great events
 ② - Picturehouse
 ③ - Great mix
 of independent
 businesses
 ④ - ~~to~~

Your Name _____

Stakeholder Feedback on the Objectives for Holmfirth

Session 1, Group 1

Prioritisation of Objectives

- Placed River at the heart of the Town – the catalyst for other things to happen
- Business needs support – new Business group being put in place
- Street environment improvements would promote business
- Key element – Council Assets not seen as important to the regeneration

Short / Long Term

Created a Awareness and Connection as new objectives – making people aware of what is happening – where to go. The street improvements needed to be connected – to create routes for people to do when they are there.

Debate around celebrating entrances – which was seen as important. However the group realised that it needed an Exploring Identity objective, for example new signage and art that reflects the local community and artists of the town. This should permeate through the entire Town but could start at the entrances. These could be early actions.

Connected to this – there are some amazing local stories that need to be told – Holmfirth was going become a hotspot for the film industry "like Hollywood"! The local barber does the Peaky Blinder hair cuts! We need to celebrate this quirky character.

Liveable local centres objective over multiple time lines – could be promoting residential over shops now. The Community Land Trust is a key community asset that has been lost – bring it back.

River corridor – implement existing ideas – but early wins of tidying the river – potential new lighting?

Final new objective – Support a visually stimulating environment - this should be an exciting and characterful place.



Key Objectives

1. Put the River back at the Heart of the Town
2. Make space to support local shops
3. New objective - Parking and Traffic Opportunities

Session 1, Group 2

Prioritisation of Objectives

- Create a new centre – was seen as a key catalyst to all other change happening in the town, the location at the current bus station was embraced by the group. Keeping the station in the centre was seen as less important.
- Creating accessible (rather than attractive) street environments was key as many elderly residents struggle to use the town, as did families with buggies
- Enhancing the strategic pedestrian / cycle connectivity was seen key to achieve sustainability ambitions. In addition, it was felt that more could be done to entice and capture cyclists that pass through Holmfirth for 'leisure'.
- Supporting a 'liveable' town centre in the wider sense was also important.
- Sustainability was seen as being a key thing for the town to focus on and that should form the key criteria, against which the objectives are assessed.

Short / Long Term

It was felt that the key objectives should be a new centre – a public space of civic standard and quality, which would be the focus of transformation in the town and become the key project, whilst the other objectives would be measured against this.

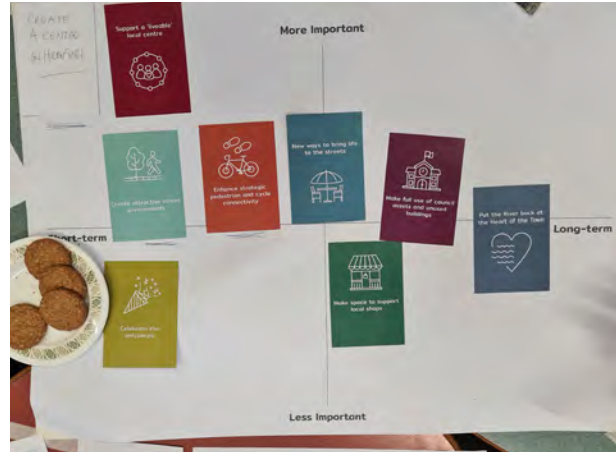
It was seen that the town is already well activated, but more pedestrianised streets and spaces could build on this. It was suggested that Hollowgate would be a key space to pedestrianise.

It wasn't immediately clear how much ownership the Council had in the centre of town and therefore not much importance was placed on utilising these assets.

It was felt that local shops should be supported, but not necessarily through allocating more public realm.

There was some debate on the importance of the river in the town and some opposing views had been expressed, therefore overall this objectives was seen of only being of average importance and to be arrived at over the long term.

Finally, whilst enhancing the entrance experience was seen as a short term win, it's importance overall was low. This is perhaps due to most of the group being residents in Holmfirth.



Key Objectives

1. New Objective - Create a centre for Holmfirth (public realm)
2. Amended objective - Create accessible streets
3. Enhance strategic pedestrian and cycle connections



Session 2, Group 1

Prioritisation of Objectives

Clear message from start that the Council Assets (Library and CLT) are potentially the important 'hub' to the Town – and that promoting / funding these elements will link to all the other objectives. This has to happen.

The river is the heart of the town – and needs to be transformed – although we need to be realistic – the technical constraints to this limit what is possible. The festival space over the bus station is successful – having this as a permanent open space is supported. There could be more activity in this space if it was easier / possible. A real opportunity.

No major adverse commentary on reducing the parking / bus areas here – actually supported the idea – linked to:

A new objective – Parking and Traffic Opportunities. Key is to find Park and Ride solutions – the cattle market was highlighted – could a shuttle bus be provided or bike hire / green connection to it. Sands Rec was mentioned – but highlighted that this is often already full. This idea is vital on events days. Discussion that consultation had already been undertaken on the road issues and limitations on what can be done – but should continue to promote HGV alternative routes – but also that the traffic monitoring has shown that its car traffic that causes the issues – the Town is basically a T junction – there is not much that can be done to reduce this.

Key Objectives

1. Make full use of council assets and unused buildings
2. River
3. New objective - Parking and Traffic Opportunities

Short / Long Term

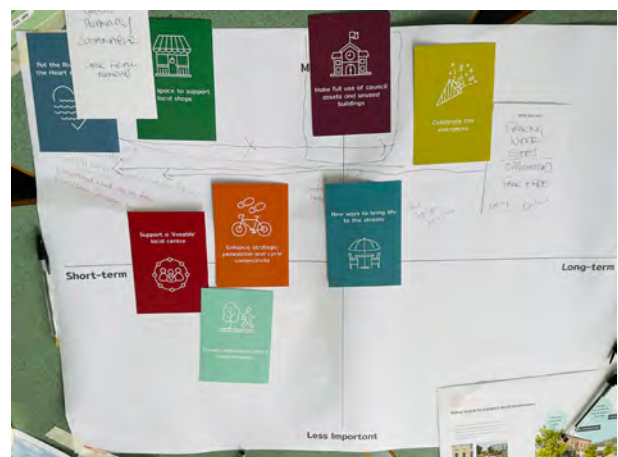
Key new Objective discussion – Green Town – all objectives should be considered for sustainable features – the towns quirky character should be sustainable in everything they do. Look at options on green energy (hydro??) Linked to cycle / walking routes.

Council Assets – the library is due to be refurbished – so can this be part of a wider new community / visitor centre offer – key issues of broken lifts / unused tourist information centre building. This could be relatively low cost / but have big impact.

The River is a long term project – but the feasibility work should happen now – what is possible, what cannot be done / flood issues– there has been significant discussion / analysis with the EA already – linking to the River Holme Connection is vital.

Parking and Traffic – begin looking at park and ride sites – could parking signage be improved – showing available spaces or general information? Cycling infrastructure is part of this – providing alternative routes for people use instead of cars. How much of the traffic is local / how much is passing through. Any way to understand locals vs visitors?

It was felt that street improvements were at the heart of many of the objectives (and important to do something) – perhaps this is just a single overarching element – this also needs to include the appearance of buildings – addressing poor rear boundaries – or a consistent shop frontage appearance?



Session 2, Group 2

Prioritisation of Objectives

Heritage came out as an important objective during early discussion. It was important that this recognises both preserving the built heritage but also the cultural heritage and identity of the Town. Could be linked to a new 'hub', replacing museum, tourist centre etc.

Making the town more 'liveable' in a wider sense (providing more facilities for local people) was seen as important, but not necessarily, with a view to providing more residential use in the town. Domestic bins are an issue if considering more people living in the town.

A strong network of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure was seen as very important, but with it's challenges, such as the lack of space on many roads and 'unsightliness' of secure bike storage.

Short / Long Term

Prioritising heritage and creating a pedestrian / cycle network that would allow for a greener way to travel was seen as important in the short term.

Streets were also needing to be made attractive and accessible and the whole town being more 'liveable'

A new hub for the council services, heritage and tourism could be positioned in an existing council asset, therefore that was also seen as an important objective. Edinburgh Wool mill site is in private ownership, but could more be done to speed up its redevelopment.

The river was seen to have the potential to be improved through many of the other projects, therefore it was placed in the middle as an 'overarching' objective. Duck feeding area by the co-op is well used, could be improved further, better link to Sands / better road crossing.

It was seen that shops are already able to utilise the public realm and market scheme is helping make space so this was of lower priority.

Bringing streets to life was seen as something that would happen organically through implementing some of the short-term objectives, therefore this was put further into the long-term. It's also seen to be happening already.



Celebrating the entrances was again seen as a potential quick win but was not seen as very important. It was mentioned that this should also celebrate what's happening in Holmfirth and provide information for visitors. Some debate about where the town starts and ends. People liked the stone welcome signs in Meltham (<https://walkersarewelcome.org.uk/2021/08/feature-town-meltham/>)

Key Objectives

1. New Objective - Celebrate the heritage
2. Enhance strategic pedestrian and cycle connectivity
3. Support a 'liveable' local centre

Key Take-aways

The conclusions from the two Stakeholder sessions have allowed the vision objectives to be refined and focused, before proceeding to the Public Consultation events. This breaks down into the following four main considerations:



Catalyst Objectives

While there was difference of opinion and perspective between stakeholder groups, there was some consensus that certain objectives were more significant as catalysts for unlocking further subsidiary improvements.

Put the River back at the Heart of the Town

It was felt the river is a clear focal point for the town, and that placing it at the top of the agenda will enable other things to happen around it. Others saw this as a long term project, but thought that there is existing good work being done by community groups which is vital to tie into. It was considered that there are some early wins available, as well as an imperative for feasibility work to commence now to establish a workable long-term ambition.

Make full use of council assets and unused buildings

There was consensus that the town needed a hub to consolidate community action and regeneration efforts, and to act as a cultural incubator. This was considered a major priority. Council owned assets and underutilised buildings were seen as an obvious venue for many stakeholders, and could be relatively low cost but have big impact. However the public realm seemed to be the priority for Council owned land.

Connected Objectives

It was felt that the objectives below were intrinsically linked, and stakeholders challenged the separation of these objectives - they felt they should be combined or better differentiated.

Create attractive street environments

Participants felt that street improvements were at the heart of many of the objectives, and that it's important to do something about the issues identified as a priority, as it's connected to other related objectives. There was the suggestion that this objective should be extended to include the appearance of buildings - addressing poor rear boundaries - or potentially a consistent shop frontage appearance. It was also suggested that accessibility was a key part of this objective, rather than just visual appearance.

Make space to support local shops

Participants felt that some businesses are struggling, and many need support to thrive. There was consensus that street environment improvements would promote business.

New ways to bring life to the street

It was felt that this happens already. Whilst further pedestrianisation of streets would help, this was not seen as a priority and would happen naturally as the other objectives were implemented.



Off-target Objectives

Some objectives didn't quite hit the mark, and need to be re-focussed or expanded.

Celebrate the entrances

It was felt that this needed to be expanded to celebrating the townscape, landscape, and place identity more broadly, including wayfinding, public art, signage, heritage interpretation and promotion of cultural events across the town. The focus should be celebrating Holmfirth's quirky character. A key consideration is the visibility, accessibility, and usability of these initiatives across different user groups, and the need to have a relevance and presence in digital space as well as physical space.

Enhance strategic pedestrian and cycle connectivity

The key to addressing the congestion issue is more nuanced and extensive than focussing on pedestrian and cycle connectivity. It was suggested that a car parking strategy was needed as a priority, alongside a rethink of public transport provision and a better understanding of traffic flows and destinations. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity was seen as part of a larger movement network strategy.

Additional Objectives

Stakeholders also contributed some insightful new priorities to the agenda.

Green Future

Many stakeholders highlighted the imperative of putting sustainability, resilience and adaptation thinking at the heart of any plans. It's clear any vision needs to address the multiple intersecting crises we face, including ecological collapse, climate breakdown, health, economy and society. It was felt that Holmfirth could take a bolder stance on facing up to these issues and delivering innovative solutions, with sustainability central to the other objectives.

Awareness, Connection, Identity

Many comments centred around the cultural life of Holmfirth, and how to give this a bigger platform. There is a lot to offer, from proud heritage, to the arts, and a vibrant, active community. It was felt that Holmfirth is and should be seen as an exciting and characterful place. Consideration should be given to how this can be nurtured and elevated.



