

April 2024



Guildford Street

Public Realm & Building Frontage Improvements

Review of public exhibition &
consultation responses, public report

Public Exhibition & Consultation

The public exhibition was launched with a special event for local businesses and invited stakeholders at The Revive Cafe on the evening of 29th February. Formal consultation on the proposals started the following day on 1st March with exhibition material available in the Revive Cafe and Chertsey Library. Officers and consultants were available to meet the public and explain the proposals on 1st March, and on 7th March.

A brief survey was available to complete on-line or by submitting hard copies. Flyers and posters were displayed with QR codes to guide people to the appropriate website.

The formal consultation period ended at midnight on Sunday 24th March and 83 responses were received.



Exhibition launch event at Revive Cafe



Have your Say!

Improvements consultation

We would like to hear from you about the proposed improvements to Guildford Street, Cherstey.

29 February - 24 March 2024



- Improving gateways into town
- Introducing seating and greenery
- Enhancing the appearance of the street



SCAN ME



Have your Say by scanning the QR code or visit:
www.runnymede.gov.uk/guildfordstreet

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Guildford Street Improvements: Consultation Responses

81% of respondents said it was 'Very important' to improve Guildford Street and a further 15% said it was quite important (a total of 96%). Only 2 respondents said improvements were not necessary.

65% of respondents said it was very important to have more greenery and seating, and a further 23% said it was quite important (a total of 88%).

The overwhelming majority of respondents therefore supported the proposals shown at the exhibition and there were requests (via the comments and at the exhibition) for the proposals to be extended to include the southern area of Guildford Street and to improve the arcade linking Guildford Street to Sainsbury supermarket. There were also requests to improve the park area outside the library and nearby railings.

The responses to the specific proposals for the three opportunity areas are summarised on the following pages.

Opportunities

Guildford Street

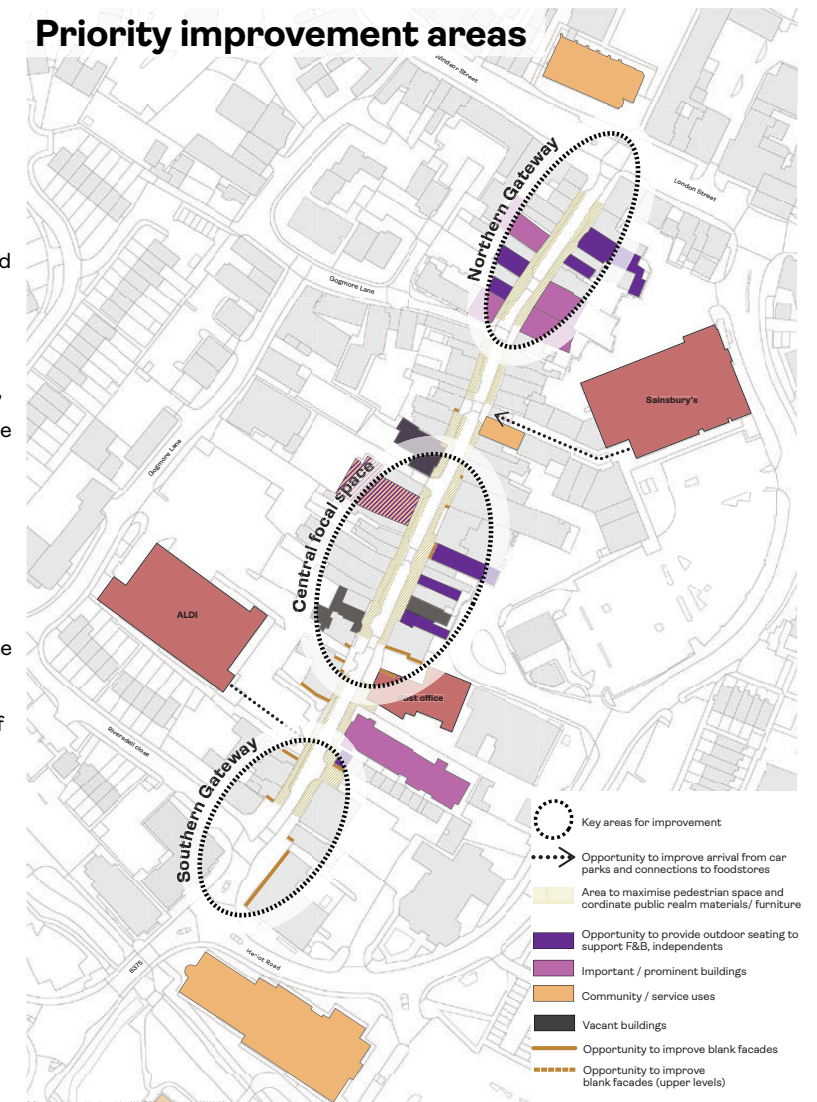
The public realm strategy for Guildford Street is based on the following key objectives:

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

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

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

Priority improvement areas



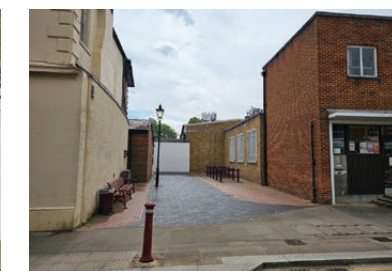
Area 1: Northern Gateway (see Board 5)



Area 2: Central Focal Space (see Board 6)



Area 3: Southern Gateway (see Board 7)



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



Northern Gateway: Consultation Responses

59% of respondents said it was very important to improve the Northern Gateway, and a further 29% said it was quite important (a total of 88%).

86% wanted to see more planters, seating and cycle parking at the entrance to Guildford Street from Windsor Street. This was the most popular of the individual proposals.

83% wanted to see more planters and seating on the wide area of pavement outside Just Relish and House of Flowers.

9 responses were received saying the proposals were unnecessary. Some of these objections believed that the proposals included pedestrianising Guildford Street or narrowing of the road which would restrict access by service vehicles, neither of which is intended to be the case.

Some of those who felt the proposals were not needed were concerned at the lack of maintenance of existing street furniture, and the potential maintenance cost of additional planters and seating. Some respondents were concerned that additional seating would encourage anti-social behaviour.

Some respondents stated that planters alone cannot 'save' Guildford Street and requested longer periods of free parking in the town centre. One respondent did not support the proposals because they felt they weren't ambitious enough and wanted to see Guildford Street fully pedestrianised.

Area 1: Northern Gateway

Guildford Street

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

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

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

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

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

Existing on-street parking bays retained.

Existing on-street parking bays retained.

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



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



Central Focal Space: Consultation Responses

66% of respondents said it was very important to improve the Central Focal Space, and a further 24% said it was quite important (a total of 90%).

82% wanted to see new planters outside the Kings Head where the pavement is wide enough to accommodate them. 11 responses were received saying the proposals were unnecessary. One of these felt that the overall proposals weren't ambitious enough and a second wanted to prioritise spending on the larger parklet proposals rather than just on planters.

86% wanted to see more planters, seating and better cycle parking on the area owned by Runnymede Borough Council just to the north of the Post Office depot. 66% of respondents thought this was very important, the highest percentage for any of the specific public realm proposals.

8 responses were received saying the proposals were unnecessary. Where reasons were given, it was often because respondents felt that planters and parklets on their own would be insufficient to bring more visitors to the town centre, and again some concerns were raised about potential for anti-social behaviour. Some suggested that it would be more important to help businesses further south along Guildford Street where footfall needed boosting.

Area 2: Central Focal Space

Guildford Street

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



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



Southern Gateway: Consultation Responses

55% of respondents said it was very important to improve the Southern Gateway, and a further 31% said it was quite important (a total of 86%).

77% wanted to see more planters, seating and cycle parking on the wide area of pavement outside the SSNR and 80% of respondents wanted to see space provided for occasional market stalls or for street food vendors.

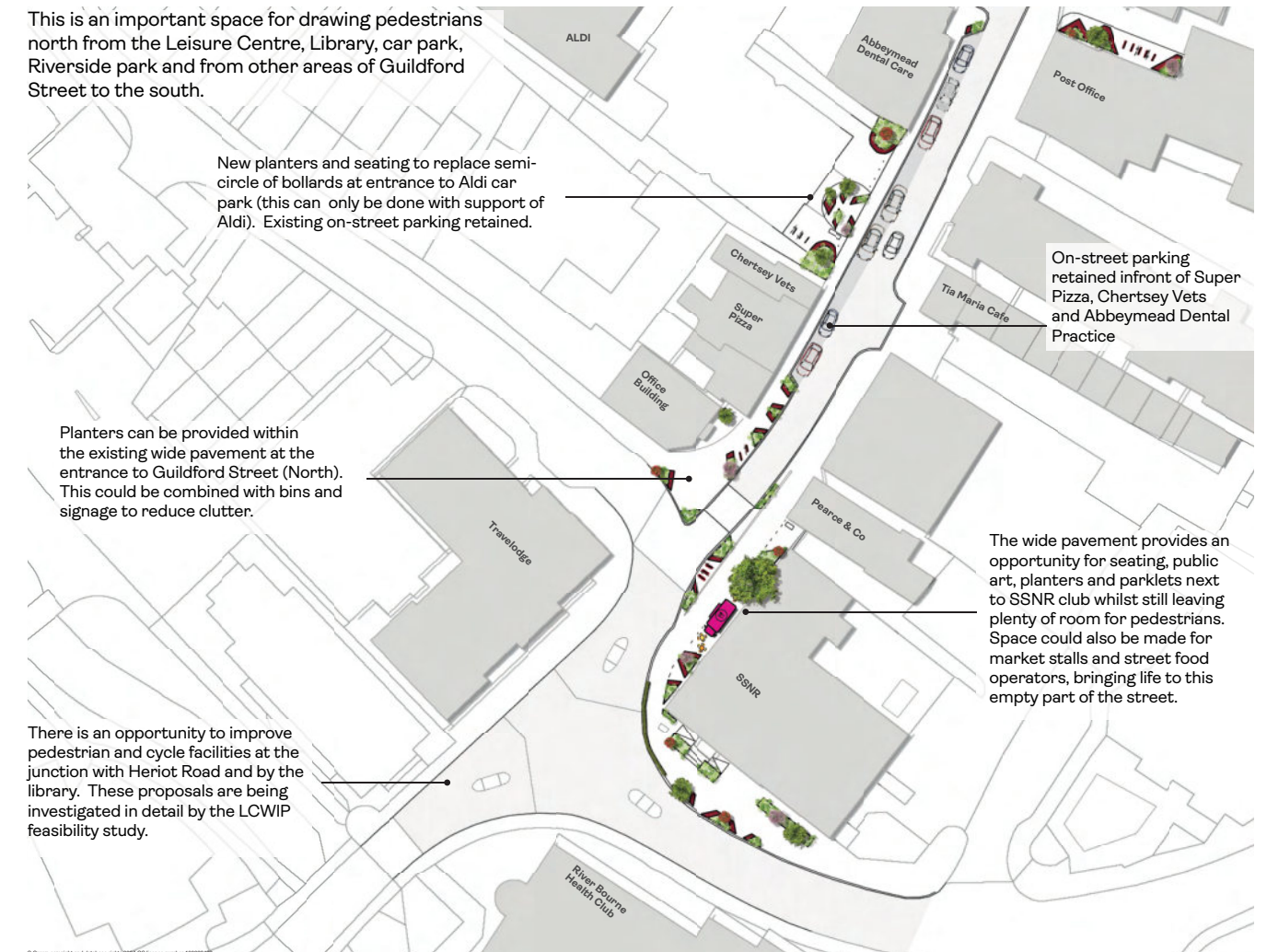
15 people felt the planters were unnecessary, with some feeling the investment would be better elsewhere, further from the traffic. One person commented that this was an excellent place for a 'pop-up' food vendor and one respondent expressed concern about competition for existing cafes.

82% wanted to see more planters and seating on the area owned by Aldi close to Guildford Street. 14 people felt the proposals were unnecessary, but there were no specific comments about this area or reasons given.

Area 3: Southern Gateway

Guildford Street

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



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



Other Improvements: Consultation Responses

Heritage Improvements

66% of respondents said it was very important to have a unified style for street furniture on Guildford Street and a further 25% said it was quite important a total of 91%. A number of general comments were also made about the current poor state of the street and street furniture and the need to improve this.

69% of respondents said it was very important to 'de-clutter' the street and remove unnecessary and unsightly seating, bins and signage. A further 21% said it was quite important a total of 90%.

70% of respondents said it was very important to use the heritage to create interpretive facilities and attract visitors. A further 16% said it was quite important a total of 86%.

The survey responses show a strong desire overall to protect and promote the heritage character of Guildford Street. This is also reflected in the support for shopfront improvements.

Business Frontage Improvement Scheme

69% of respondents said it was very important to improve shop frontages and business frontages to complement the public realm proposals. A further 24% said it was quite important a total of 93%.

82% of respondents (the highest response to any individual proposal) said it was very important to support businesses to improve the appearance of their buildings. A further 11% said it was quite important a total of 93%. The only concerns expressed was that the funding available would be insufficient to support the number of businesses that may seek grant support.

Heritage character

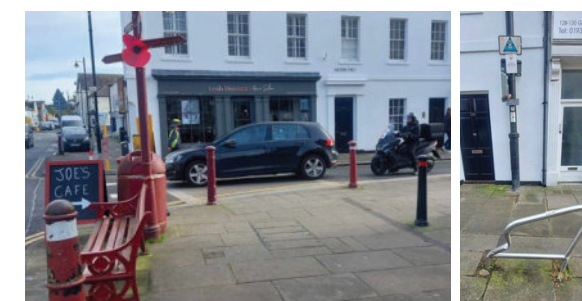
Guildford Street

Street Furniture

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

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

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

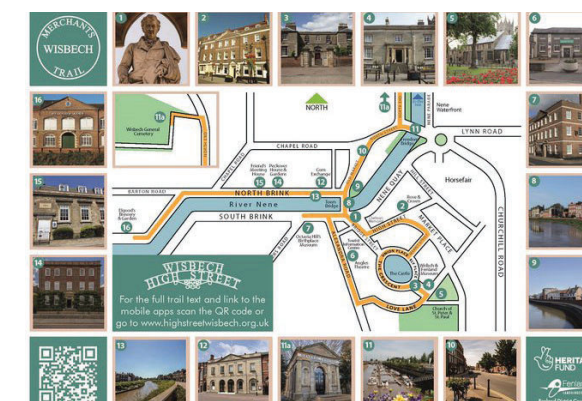


Photos illustrating the wide variety of styles and colours used for street furniture on Guildford Street, poor maintenance of existing features such as bike rack, and excessive signage attached to a historic lamp in the background. Addressing these types of issues would improve the character of the Conservation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

Heritage Trails

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

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



Example of interactive Heritage Trail board

Business Improvement Frontage Grants

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

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

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

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



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

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



Priorities & Next Steps

All three of the opportunity areas received strong support, with 86-90% of respondents saying it was quite important or very important to improve these areas.

There is strong and clear support for the environmental improvements suggested for Guildford Street, including the seating, planting, heritage improvements and support for individual shopfront improvements.

Ideally therefore, analysis of the survey results would support improvements being made to all the areas identified in the exhibition. There is however a limited budget available for improvements, and a deadline of April 2025 for delivery of those improvements. It is important therefore to prioritise the measures in terms of public support, value for money and deliverability within this timescale.

Survey responses and priorities

Of the three areas, the **Central Focal Space was slightly more popular (90% support)**, and respondents also gave it more priority, 66% of survey responses stating that improving this area is 'very important'. The most popular area within the Central Focal Space was the area outside the Post Office and again 66% of respondents said it was 'very important' to improve this area.

Improving the Northern Gateway was almost as popular, with 88% wanting improvements and 59% saying it was 'very important'. 86% wanted to see more planters, seating and cycle parking at the entrance to Guildford Street, giving it equal priority to the space outside the Post Office. 83% wanted to see improvements to the area of wide pavement outside Just Relish and House of Flowers.

The Southern Gateway was very marginally less popular but it is important to note that it still received significant levels of support. 86% of respondents wanted to see this area improved, and 55% said it was 'very important'. Although slightly less popular the Southern Gateway improvements do address some of the wider concerns expressed such as the need to spread the benefits to the southern areas of Guildford Street and to improve the area around the bridge and library.