

Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework

Forward

As Leader of Bromsgrove District Council, I am proud to present the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework. This document was developed collaboratively with local stakeholders and represents our collective vision for a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient town centre that reflects the pride of our community and meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Bromsgrove is a town with a rich heritage and a strong sense of community. Our strategic location in north Worcestershire, coupled with excellent transport links and natural assets, makes Bromsgrove a desirable place to live, work, and visit. However, like many towns across the UK, we have faced significant challenges in recent years, including changes in consumer behaviour and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these challenges, Bromsgrove has a solid foundation for renewal. Our town is well-positioned to adapt to changing retail habits and evolving high street expectations. With high levels of entrepreneurial activity, a strong local economy, and connectivity, we have the conditions needed for growth and transformation. The £14.5 million awarded through the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund is enabling us to deliver major regeneration projects that will bring renewed vibrancy to key town centre locations.

This Strategic Framework charts a course for a town centre that embraces change while celebrating local identity. It lays the foundations for inclusive, long-term prosperity and positions Bromsgrove to respond confidently to future challenges and opportunities. By aligning investment, guiding development, and fostering collaboration, we will deliver a future-ready town centre that people are proud to live in, work in, and visit.

I invite everyone with an interest in our town to support the ongoing development of the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan. Together, we can create a town centre that we are all proud of—a place where people of all ages can live, work, and enjoy leisure time.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to Bromsgrove's future.

Cllr Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

Introduction

Grounded in placemaking principles, the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework has been developed to support the creation of a town centre that is vibrant, inclusive, and resilient—one that reflects community pride and meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors alike. It provides a clear vision for Bromsgrove, developed with local stakeholders, and will guide investment, prioritise action, and encourage collaborative efforts to enhance the town centre.

Bromsgrove is the largest town centre in the district and benefits from a strategic location in north Worcestershire, midway between Birmingham and Worcester. Excellent transport links—including the M5 and M42 motorways and a modernised railway station—make the town highly accessible. Surrounded by natural assets like the Lickey Hills, Bromsgrove is also a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

The town's heritage as a historic market centre, once known for its wool and nail-making industries, remains visible in its architecture and street pattern. Today, Bromsgrove continues to host a traditional street market and offers a mix of independent and national retailers, along with cultural and leisure venues such as The Artrix, the Library, and the Sports and Leisure Centre.

However, like many towns across the UK, Bromsgrove has faced significant challenges in recent years. The rise of online shopping, changes in consumer behaviour, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected footfall, retail occupancy, and public perception. Key areas such as Windsor Street remain underused, and there is concern over the lack of variety in the town's retail and leisure offer.

Despite these challenges, Bromsgrove has a solid foundation for renewal. With deep historical roots, a strong sense of community, and untapped potential, the town is well-positioned to adapt to changing retail habits and evolving high street expectations. Its high levels of entrepreneurial activity, strong local economy, and connectivity provide the conditions needed for growth and transformation. These strengths were recognised in November 2021, when the town was awarded £14.5 million through the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund.

This funding is enabling two major regeneration projects. The first is the redevelopment of the former Market Hall site, now known as Nailers Yard. This site will be transformed into a hub for enterprise and community life, featuring flexible office and co-working spaces, food and beverage units, and a multi-use Pavilion designed to host exhibitions, events, and markets. With construction underway, Nailers Yard is set to bring renewed vibrancy to a key town centre location.

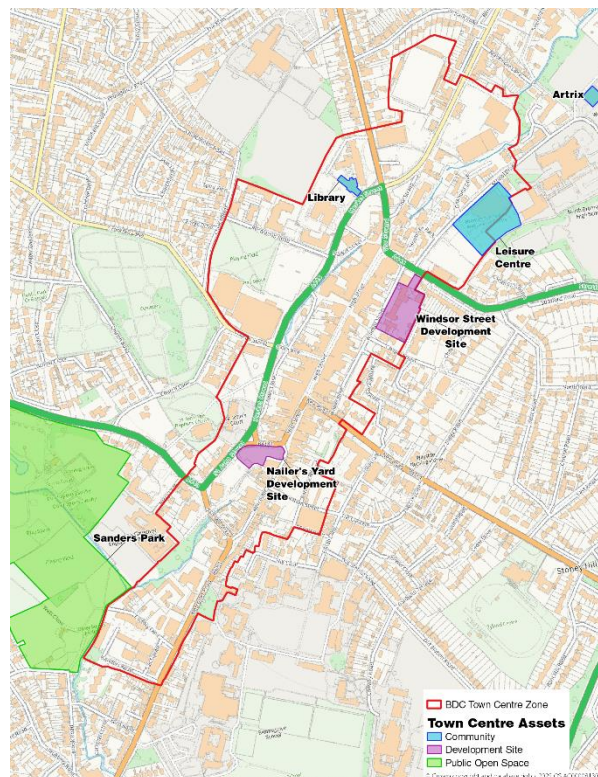
The second project focuses on the Windsor Street site, where demolition and remediation of the site will unlock its potential for future development and support wider regeneration. This funding has also been used to deliver improvements to the public realm within the town centre.

There are opportunities for further regeneration projects to be delivered in the town centre including the potential redevelopment of Churchfields multistorey car park, the Stourbridge Road car park and the former Dolphin Centre site.

Encouraging more people to live in the heart of the town is central to Bromsgrove's regeneration. A growing residential population will support local businesses, boost town centre activity throughout the day and evening, and foster a greater sense of safety and vibrancy. By promoting high-quality housing, accessible services, and enhanced cultural and leisure provision, the town can develop a more liveable, people-friendly centre.

Vision

'Bromsgrove Town Centre will be a thriving and distinctive hub, rooted in its rich heritage and strong sense of community. It will support independent businesses and enhance its vibrant market, offering a dynamic mix of retail, culture, food, and entertainment—day and night. As a welcoming, safe, and socially inclusive destination, Bromsgrove will encourage town centre living and attract people of all ages. With strong digital and physical connectivity, sustainable development, and inviting public spaces, Bromsgrove will be a future-ready town centre that people are proud to live in, work in, and visit'.



The strategic framework focuses on the town centre while acknowledging the vital connections with assets beyond its traditional boundaries. By enhancing and leveraging these connections, we aim to strengthen Bromsgrove Town Centre's unique identity, attracting more visitors and encouraging them to spend more time in the area.

Through collaboration with local stakeholders a number of key strengths and challenges for the town centre were identified:

Strengths:

- **Excellent connectivity:** Strong road and rail links connect Bromsgrove to Birmingham, Worcester, and beyond.
- **Strategic centrality:** Its central location enhances its role within the wider region.
- **Entrepreneurial spirit:** High levels of business start-ups and strong survival rates reflect a dynamic local economy.
- **Quality of life:** High household incomes, proximity to countryside, and recent investments in leisure, library, and transport infrastructure contribute to an attractive living and working environment.

Challenges:

- **Retail and leisure diversification:** The town centre must broaden its offer to include more varied shopping, entertainment, and residential experiences.
- **Access and navigation:** Improvements are needed for walking, cycling, and public transport access.
- **Perception and appeal:** There remains a persistent perception of high vacancy rates and limited retail quality.
- **Business retention:** Ensuring Bromsgrove remains competitive for businesses is critical, particularly as some continue to relocate elsewhere.
- **Inclusive growth:** Targeted interventions are needed to address pockets of unemployment, especially among younger people.
- **Sustainable development:** As the town grows, ensuring infrastructure, public services, and environmental sustainability keep pace is essential.

In order to build upon these strengths and seek to address the challenges, we will focus on the following strategic aims:

1. Transform Public Spaces and Connectivity within the Town Centre and celebrating its unique identity
2. Enhance Town Centre Links and Visitor Access
3. Build a safe and inclusive Town Centre community
4. Cultivate a Thriving Local Business Ecosystem
5. Create a Buzz and Attract More Visitors

Strategic Aims and Key Actions

1. Transform Public Spaces and Connectivity within the Town Centre and celebrating its unique identity

We will unlock the potential of public spaces, improve wayfinding, and boost connectivity to create a lively town centre while preserving and enhancing its unique character, heritage, and townscape.

- Develop the new Pavillion Building at Nailers Yard to become a vibrant community hub within the town centre.
- Consideration of any suitable interventions, including the introduction of a banking hub in the town that might assist with changes in the town centre offer.
- Support public art, cultural, and heritage projects that reflect Bromsgrove's unique story and draw visitors to the town centre.
- Upgrade signage and wayfinding, including digital tools, to help people to more easily navigate in and around the town centre.
- Seek opportunities to secure funding to further enhance the public realm (e.g. Church Street), including streetscapes, lighting, and street furniture.
- We will develop a more proactive approach to enforcement to ensure that the conservation area is consistently protected and maintained and that issues are dealt with promptly.
- Building on the 2040 vision for Bromsgrove, we will review and bring forward development plans for the key sites identified, including Windsor Street, Churchfields Car Park, Stourbridge Road Car Park and the former Dolphin Centre.

2. Enhance Town Centre Links and Visitor Access

Building an interconnected, walkable town centre that effortlessly links people and places.

- We will explore opportunities to improve connections between the town centre and key locations such as the train station, the Artrix and Avoncroft Museum. This will include looking at opportunities to expand demand responsive transport (DRT) to include shuttles from the Train Station to the Town Centre and park and ride solutions.
- We will seek to enhance walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure via the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) that will include the development of pedestrian-friendly routes, cycling facilities and exploring a cycle hire scheme.
- Building on the strategic car park review carried out in 2024, we will review our town centre parking policies to ensure that they support local economic needs and attract visitors, that the use of each car park is considered and that they provide a positive user experience.
- We will analyse data on travel patterns to inform better transport planning.

3. Build a safe and inclusive Town Centre community

Ensuring a clean, safe, and welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable and secure.

- We will explore opportunities to implement hostile vehicle mitigation measures in key public spaces.
- We will review the approach to keeping the town centre clean and explore opportunities for improvement.
- Explore opportunities to expand CCTV coverage, addressing blind spots and priority locations.
- Develop a clear approach to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) by clarifying responsibilities and improving coordination
- Support diversionary activities and spaces for young people to deter ASB and build positive engagement.
- Explore opportunities to introduce roles such as Town Centre Champions or Street Wardens.
- Promote wider use of Business Watch and Pub Watch schemes to engage businesses and the public in community safety.

4. Cultivate a Thriving Local Business Ecosystem

Providing the tools, space, and support for businesses to grow, stay, and succeed in the town centre.

- We will undertake a feasibility study to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) in Bromsgrove Town Centre
- We will carry out an annual audit of available Commercial Spaces and assess options for promoting and bringing them back into use. This may include working with landlords to develop pop up shops or other opportunities for new entrepreneurs.
- Create a Business Support Pathway tailored to the development of current and future town centre based businesses. This may include targeted support for sectors such as food and beverage, retail and leisure/entertainment.
- Develop opportunities to support new start up businesses with tailored support for young entrepreneurs.
- Grow the 'Taste of Bromsgrove' brand through initiatives to celebrate local food and drink businesses such as a dedicated food festival and food month. As part of Taste Bromsgrove explore the prospect of a 'Meet the buyer' event to connect local producers and suppliers with larger buyers to encourage local sourcing.
- Develop a Town Centre Business Welcome Pack for businesses that move to or start a business in the town centre. This will include useful information on business rates, planning, environmental and regulatory services, Town Centre business groups and networks and other agencies positioning Bromsgrove as a business-friendly Town Centre.
- Engage with businesses to understand their strengths and challenges and use this intelligence to promote the existing business support offer, shape the future offer and to develop opportunities for networking and mutual support.

5. Create a Buzz and Attract More Visitors

Attracting more visitors by implementing a comprehensive marketing strategy to make the town centre a welcoming, thriving, and vibrant place for everyone

- Develop and deliver a comprehensive marketing strategy for the town centre.
- Use social media, digital platforms, and local media to raise awareness and promote activities.
- Engage the public through consultations, co-design sessions, and events.
- Support and promote local initiatives that encourage pride in keeping the town centre clean, safe, and welcoming.
- Host events and experiences to draw footfall and celebrate community identity.
- Promote local businesses through dedicated campaigns.

From Vision to Reality: Implementing our Strategic Aims

In order to bring the strategy to life and deliver the long-term vision for the town centre, a three year Town Centre Action Plan will be developed under the guidance of a new Town Centre Steering Group (TCSG). The TCSG will provide strategic coordination and foster collaboration across partners. Its membership will include representatives from the local authority, business community, community organisations, police, transport agencies, and other key stakeholders.

One of the TCSG's first tasks will be to develop the detailed 3-year action plan, that will sit beneath the strategic framework. This document will set out clear timelines, delivery responsibilities, budgets, and funding sources for each action as well as identifying the quick wins and longer term plans. It will ensure that all activities are scoped, costed, and scheduled, allowing the Steering Group to monitor delivery.

In addition, the Steering Group will oversee the feasibility study for a Business Improvement District (BID) for Bromsgrove. Should the establishment of a BID be supported through a successful ballot, the Steering Group will provide interim governance and support during the transition period, ensuring that BID arrangements are implemented effectively.

Once the BID is formally in place and operational, it is anticipated that the BID board would assume responsibility for delivering relevant aspects of the implementation plan, at which point the terms of reference for the Steering Group will be reviewed.

To support delivery as required, umbrella groups may be established to provide specialist insight, operational input, and wider stakeholder engagement. These may include:

- a Public Realm and Access Group, focused on street scene, lighting, accessibility, and open space maintenance.
- a Landlord and Property Forum, aimed at working with property owners to address vacancies, improve building quality, and attract investment.
- a Youth Focus Group, to involve young people in shaping a town centre that reflects their needs and aspirations.
- a Culture & Events Group, to co-design and deliver events, public art, and seasonal activity.

A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used to evaluate impact. These may include but are not limited to footfall data, annual vacancy rates (excluding exempt use classes), and start-up data, the volume and reach of cultural events, youth engagement participation, and satisfaction levels from users and businesses. Data will be supported by qualitative insight, including perception surveys, youth forums, and an annual town centre health check. KPI's against each action will be included in the action plan.

The delivery process will be underpinned by a commitment to transparency and shared ownership. Progress updates will be reported on a quarterly basis and an annual "State of the Town Centre" report will be published to summarise achievements, challenges, and learning.

This structure will ensure that the Town Centre Action Plan is underpinned by strong local governance, inclusive engagement, and a focused delivery programme that is both measurable and adaptable to changing needs.

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework charts a course for a town centre that embraces change while celebrating local identity. It lays the foundations for inclusive, long-term prosperity and positions Bromsgrove to respond confidently to future challenges and opportunities, including Local Government Reform. By aligning investment, guiding development, and fostering collaboration, the Framework will help deliver a future-ready town centre that people are proud to live in, work in, and visit.