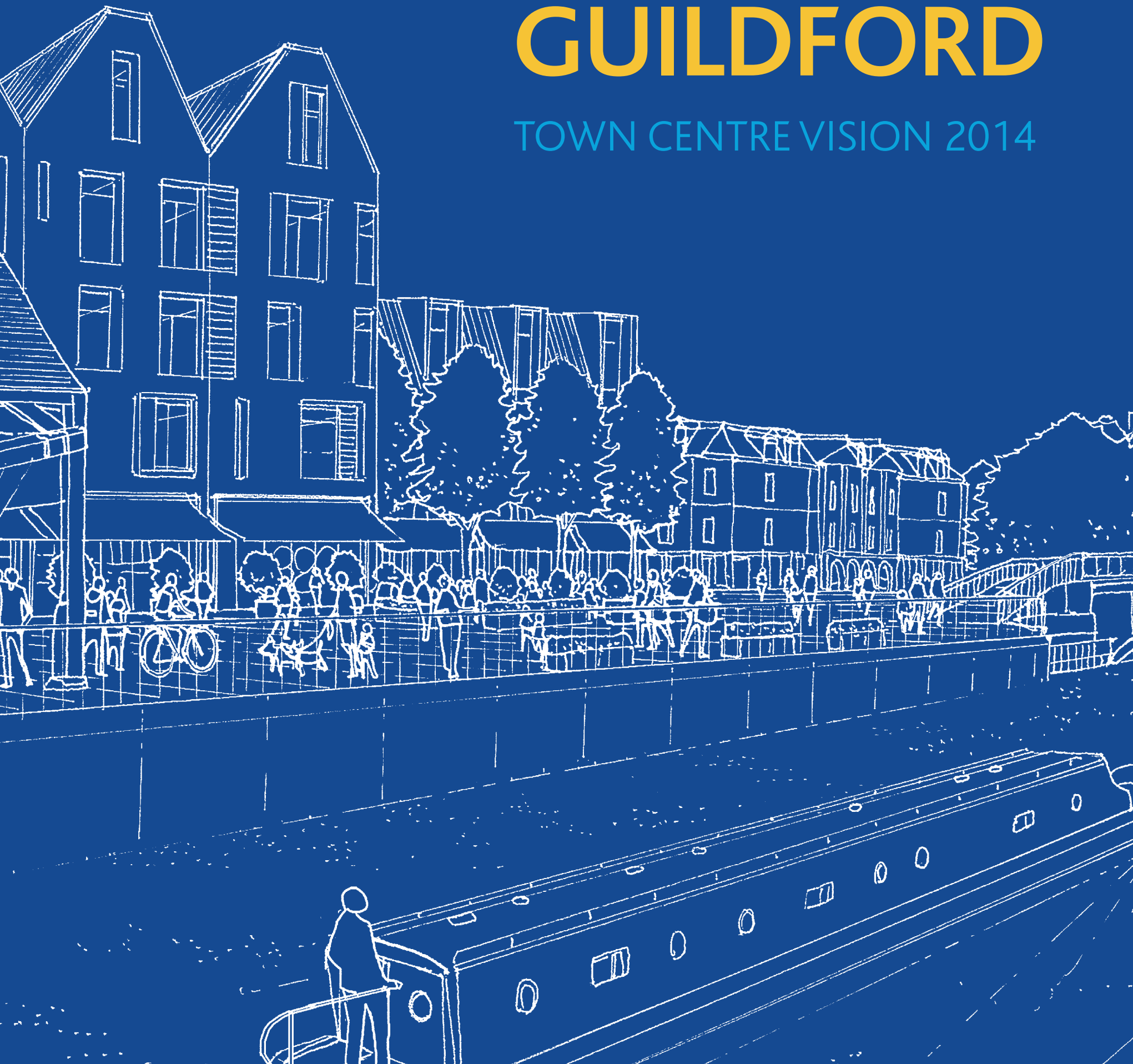


# GUILDFORD

TOWN CENTRE VISION 2014







**Proposals to re-animate Bedford Wharf as part of improved links between the station and the town centre**





WATERSIDE

BILLINGS





## Our Vision for Guildford

Guildford has a unique setting and historical character, and is the centre of one of the most prosperous counties in England.

Guildford Borough Council will protect and build on these assets and insist that all new development will be of the highest design and environmental standards. The Council will be proactive in building a great town centre which connects to the amenity of the riverside. We will invest in creating high quality public realm. We will put people above traffic and we will promote new high quality retail and business development.

To achieve this we will develop innovative funding and delivery bodies. As we embark together towards this exciting future we pledge that we will continue and extend an active dialogue with our residents and other stakeholders.

### Photograph

Guildford Wharf, around 1870.

All historic maps and photographs in this report have been reproduced by the kind permission of the Guildford Institute



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This is a high level vision document. The proposals have not been tested for financial viability purposes at this stage.



# GUILDFORD IS A TOWN BRIMMING WITH POTENTIAL



Guildford is one of the most attractive locations in the south-east, yet retains many opportunities for new thinking to create significant improvements. This vision for Guildford Town Centre sets out the key ideas which will shape the future of the town for the next generation.



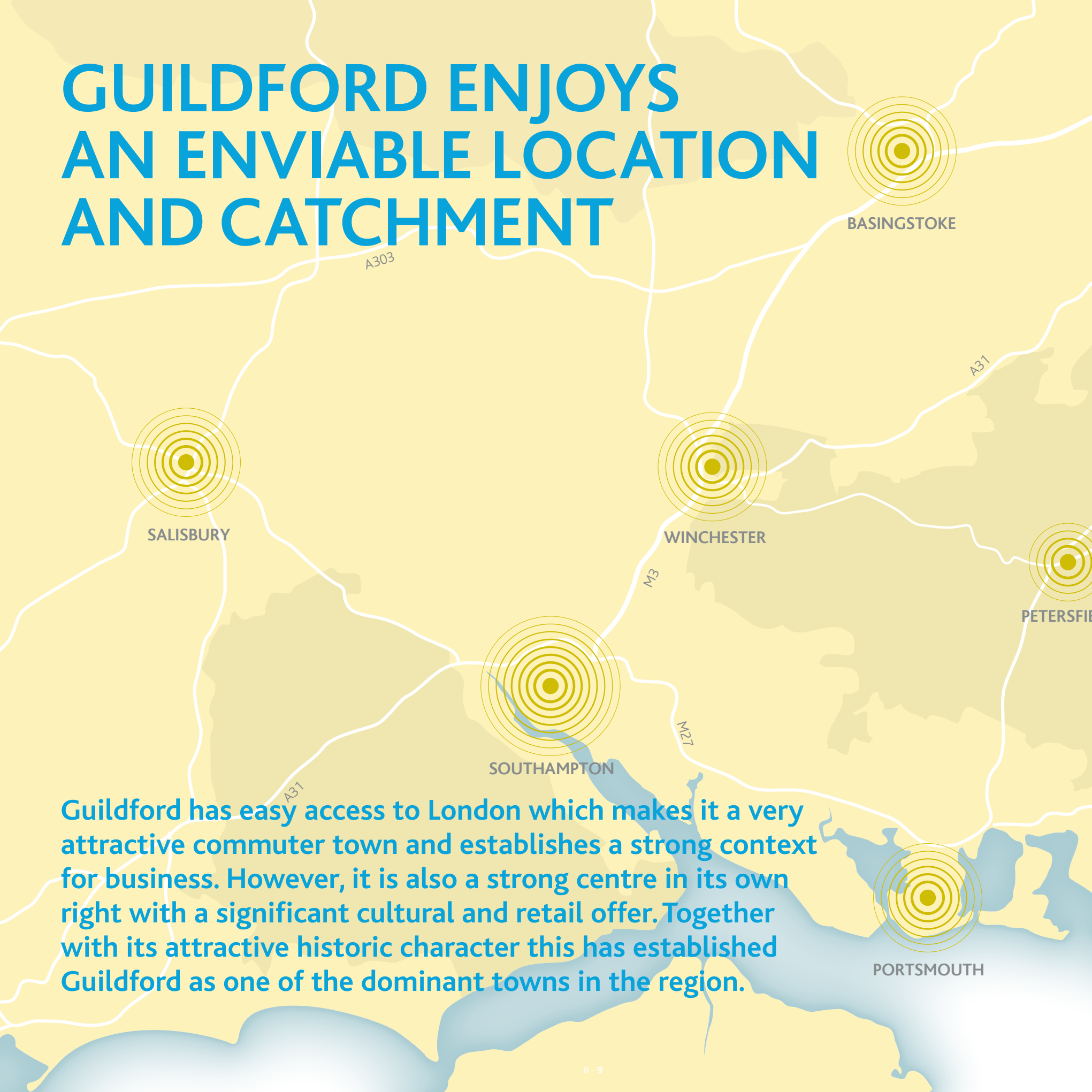


The Original Modern Barber  
[www.jacksoflondon.co.uk](http://www.jacksoflondon.co.uk)





# GUILDFORD ENJOYS AN ENVIABLE LOCATION AND CATCHMENT



SALISBURY

BASINGSTOKE

WINCHESTER

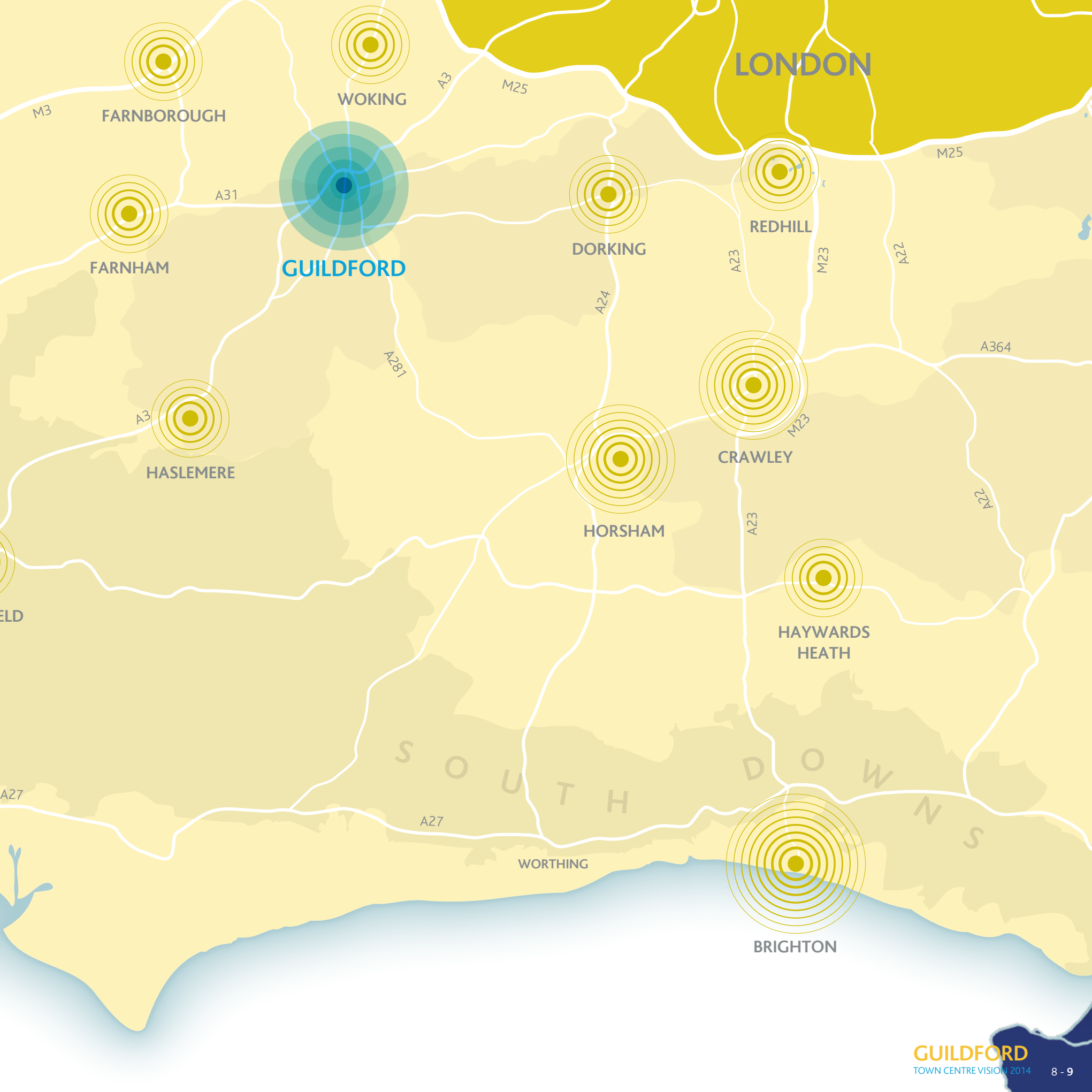
PETERSFIELD

SOUTHAMPTON

PORTSMOUTH

**Guildford has easy access to London which makes it a very attractive commuter town and establishes a strong context for business. However, it is also a strong centre in its own right with a significant cultural and retail offer. Together with its attractive historic character this has established Guildford as one of the dominant towns in the region.**





LONDON

WOKING

FARNBOROUGH



GUILDFORD

FARNHAM

DORKING

REDHILL

HASLEMERE

HORSHAM

CRAWLEY

HAYWARDS  
HEATH

S O U T H D O W N S

WORTHING

BRIGHTON



# NESTLED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Guildford is located in beautiful countryside and nestles into the landscape around the natural crossing point of the River Wey. The town has gradually expanded onto low lying land to the north, but has been contained by the hills to the east and west, meaning that the historic heart of Guildford still maintains a very strong and attractive link with the surrounding landscape.











# A SUSTAINABLE TOWN



**Guildford has the potential to be a truly sustainable town. This is about more than energy efficient buildings and solar panels on roofs - it should shape every aspect of the town. Guildford needs a sustainable mix of uses, a transport network which favours public transport, cycling and walking whilst minimising car use and an environment which promotes biodiversity and healthy living.**



# GUILDFORD'S TIMELINE

## 10th Century

The village of Guildford grows into a small market town and has a population of about 900 people.

## 1257-1340

Guildford is given a charter and sends MPs to parliament. The town has a population of approximately 1,300 people.

## 1645-46

Guildford suffers an outbreak of the plague.

## 1789-1821

A theatre is built in Guildford and the town is now lit by gas. The population has reached around 2,600 people.

## 1507

The grammar school opens in Guildford.

## 1611

Guildford Castle is in ruins and the King sells it.

## 1683

A new Guildhall is built on the High Street.





**1854**

Guildford is linked to London by railway and is the end of the railway line.



**1882-1900**

Bottom: 12th July 1882, Onslow Bridge is opened by the Countess of Onslow; Top: The medieval bridge is destroyed on 15th February by a flood. It was replaced by an iron bridge which was then later replaced in 1983.



**1897**

22nd June 1897 - Diamond Jubilee celebrations along Guildford High Street.

**1866**

Guildford now has a hospital and its own newspaper.

**1870-80s**

The river is used extensively for trade and industry and is lined with buildings that were demolished between 1930 and 1970. The town mill (below, 1881) produced flour until 1894 but was later used as a water works.



**1896**

The last cattle market is held in North Street in the summer of 1896.







**1901**

KAREN MILLEN  
LONDON

The Rodboro building opens as the UK's first purpose-built motor vehicle factory



**1928**

Guildford experiences bad flooding during January 1928.



**1961**

Guildford Cathedral is consecrated.

## Early 1900s

Guildford High Street is used regularly for parades and celebrations, including 21st September 1904 Lifeboat Day (left) and the 1909 Sunday school march to Shalford Park (right). By this time Guildford has a population of 15,938.



**1933**

The lido opens in Guildford.







**1965**

The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre opens. Debenhams is also built at the same time, just downstream of the theatre.



**Late 1960s**

Some of the roads are widened through the town centre which began to form the Guildford gyratory.



**1980**

The Friary Shopping Centre opens.

**1975**

Guildford High Street is a busy retail high street. The population of Guildford according to the census is by now 57,210. The University of Surrey has taken its first students (1968).



**2012**

G Live is officially opened by HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Kent.





# GUILDFORD TODAY









# GUILDFORD'S CHERISHED PLACES

During consultation many members of the public told us about their favourite and most cherished places in Guildford town centre.

The green spaces surrounding the castle are enjoyed by office workers and local people at lunch time.



Chapel Street has an intimate environment with a successful cluster of activity during the evening with restaurants, bistros and bars.





The riverside and surrounding green spaces near Debenhams and the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre.



Riverside pubs such as the Britannia Inn, The White House and the Boatman Inn.



Long views of the old High Street. 'The High Street is the soul of Guildford'.



The old passageway through the Angel Hotel Coaching Inn and the cafe seating in the small square .



The Royal Grammar School in the upper part of the High Street.



# PUBLIC CONSULTATION

How can the town make more of the river?

**The Vision for Guildford Town Centre has been informed by engagement with residents and community groups to understand current issues and people's aspirations for the future of the town.**

The town centre project shop in Swan Lane was open to the public on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 April 2014, giving residents and visitors the opportunity to put forward their views and respond to a number of key questions.

The valuable and comprehensive feedback to the Council's Local Plan Issues and Options consultation has also been reviewed so that it can inform the Guildford Town Centre Vision.

Community groups and residents associations have contributed to the vision through dedicated meetings and working sessions and current projects and proposals have been taken into account.

What is your favourite spot in Guildford?

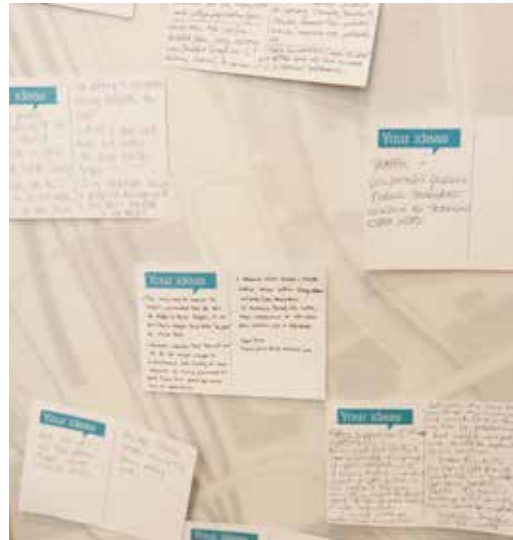
How best can we celebrate Guildford's heritage?

And your least favourite?

How can we improve streets and spaces?

How would you like to change the town centre?







# WHAT YOU TOLD US

## Your ideas

Bus station location is very good - don't relocate. Poor condition. Dirty, not pleasant place to arrive.

Waitrose bad position. Needs greatly improved public transport.

High Street should be the focal point. Problems with parking. Best views.

Develop town centre from heritage stance not retail stance.

Quilford Plaza site - why empty? Empty offices in town centre to be redeveloped.

## Your ideas

More shops. More businesses. More residents. Slower traffic. No grand schemes. Micro management of detail.

“ Remove the busy one-way system ”

“ The river has huge potential to guide visitors from the train station to the town ”

“ Locating housing along the river, and its close proximity to the station and town centre, makes it more sustainable ”

“ Create a vibrant daytime and evening ambience; a town centre to shop, live, work and play ”

## Your ideas

⑥ Eliminate through traffic. See G. See. Repeat. "Avoid Future Good..."

Woodbridge Road to... ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL and promised verbally by James Palmer at Pump's G-TANS

⑥ (cont) Housing/housing/housing especially for elderly. Lower car parking under new development.

NEEDS NEGOTIATION WITH BUS COMPANIES TO UNPLUCK OLD SPIT BETWEEN LONDON COUNTRY AND A DORSET-DORSET

## Your ideas

Nothing for kids. More play facilities for youngsters. Little gym - like Soft play needed.

## Your ideas

Temporary use of North St. Attractive wording. Pocket parks. Living people in Woodcut St use.

National Trust own much of embankment. Cycle routes along river. North Quilford. Wooden bridge. No cycling should be a land bridge for cycling + pedestrian. Better connection of Quilford as a whole. Traffic completed round.

## Your ideas

Green links the river. Maximising green links. Better heritage interpretation of...

## ideas

North North St.

“ Unattractive developments, which have done so much to damage North Street and its setting could be replaced by buildings of outstanding merit, which themselves might in the future become listed ”



**“ New homes should first be built on land within the town, before we extend onto green sites ”**

**“ What about a 'Park and Glide' river taxi service along the river? ”**

**“ There is a pressing need to separate through traffic, local traffic and pedestrians, so as to allow people in and out of the town efficiently ”**

**“ A hopper shopper bus is needed to connect around the town and to other towns ”**

**“ High quality mixed housing in the town centre should help ensure a vibrant, 24/7 economy ”**



# THE BIG IDEAS

We have identified nine themes for the vision for Guildford town centre. In each case there are several key projects which relate directly to ideas that have been suggested by local people through the consultation. The big ideas are summarised over the next few pages and then presented in greater detail in the following section of the report.

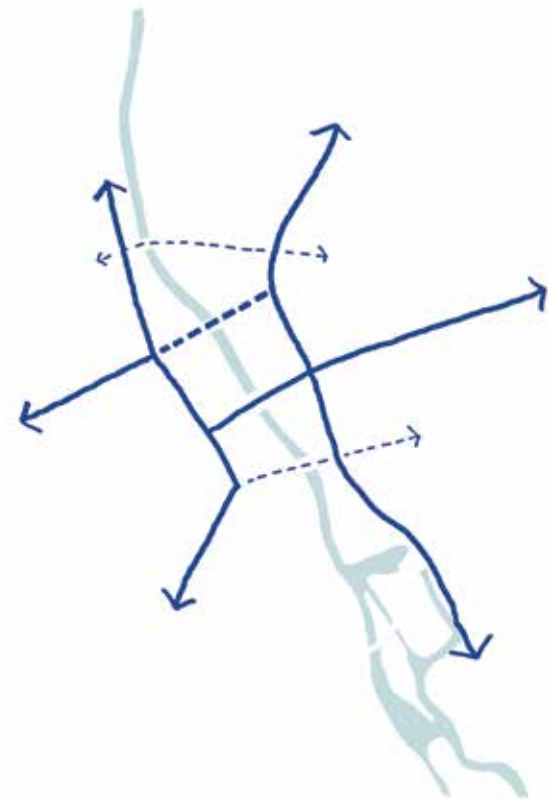
## 1

### SWITCHING OFF GUILDFORD'S GYRATORY

- Onslow Street and Millbrook connect as a north-south spine
- Friary Bridge becomes two way for all traffic
- Bridge Street for pedestrians, cyclists and buses only



The major roads through the centre of Guildford need to be completely re-imagined, turning the gyratory system into humane streets and spaces and tackling the way that the road network dominates the river corridor. Bridge Street will be car-free and other streets will be two-way with easy crossings and new tree planting, creating a great environment for the town centre.





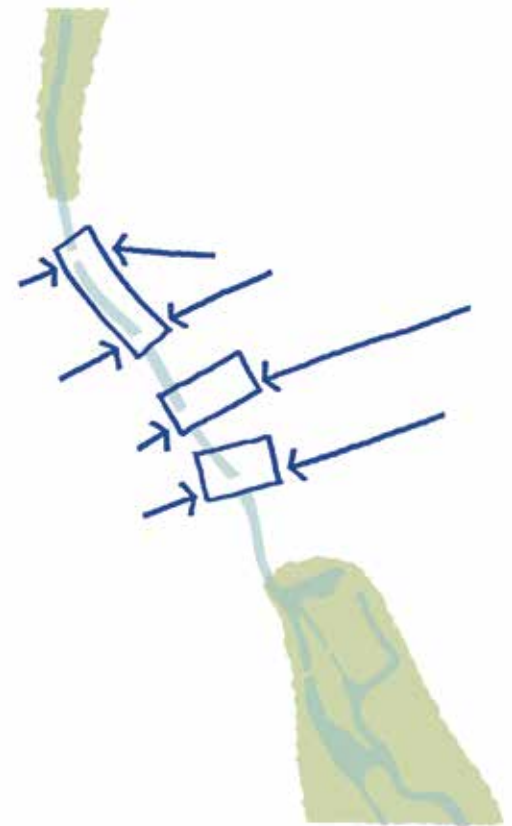
# 2

## REVEALING THE RIVER WEY

- The main road is moved away from the riverside
- New active development and spaces face onto the river
- Strong connections between the town centre and the riverside



The River Wey is Guildford's hidden asset. As the road network is remodelled it creates multiple opportunities for new development and public spaces around the river in the centre of the town. To the north of the centre there are significant opportunities for new development which take advantage of the riverside context, creating new access and open space. A continuous riverside route is promoted as a linear public space, which provides an attractive movement corridor for walking and cycling and hosts new riverfront spaces, each with a different character. Improvements to access points to the river will be provided.





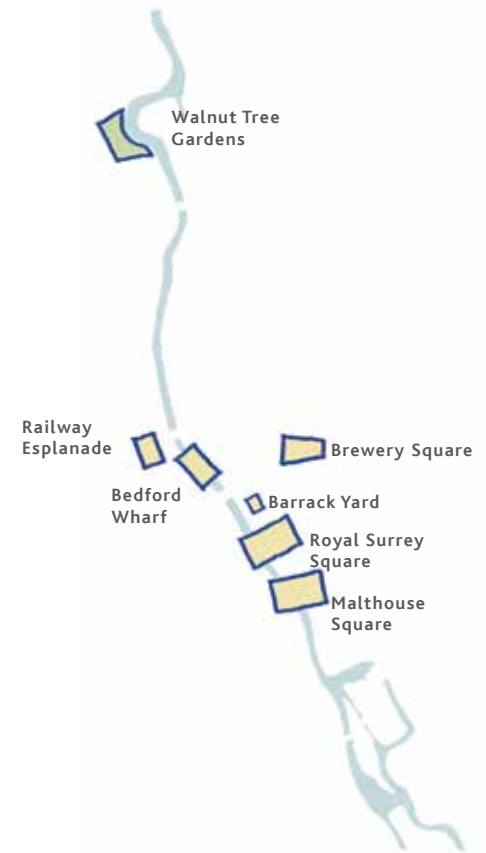
# 3

## SEVEN NEW PUBLIC SPACES FOR GUILDFORD

- A new public square at the railway station
- A series of new spaces related to the river and cultural uses
- A new public space as part of the North Street redevelopment



This vision for the town centre establishes seven new public spaces ranging from formal space overlooking the river through to intimate yards and open green space. These spaces have all been named to capture important historic references such as pre-existing names or historic land uses.



# 4

## CREATING STREETS FOR PEOPLE

- Active uses facing onto Onslow Street and Millbrook
- Two pedestrian friendly routes between the station and the town centre with links on to the University and Stoke Park



Any new development in the town centre should contribute to creating great streets and public spaces. This can only be achieved by buildings which have shop fronts and other uses facing the street rather than presenting blank walls to the public space. This approach will create new street frontage along Onslow Street all the way down to Millbrook.





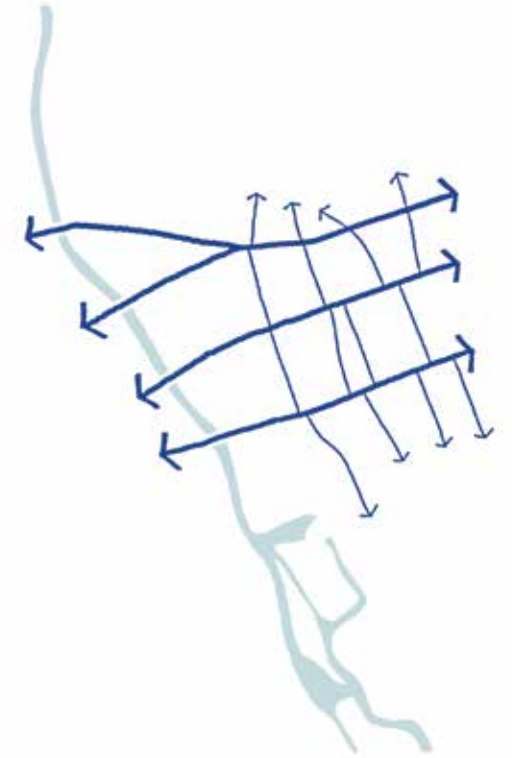
# 5

## GOING WITH GUILDFORD'S HISTORIC GRAIN

- A new heritage quarter
- Narrow lanes creating a range of intimate spaces
- New urban blocks reflecting the scale and massing of Guildford



The historic street pattern of Guildford is one of its defining features with the broad streets of High Street and North Street contrasting with the intimate lanes that connect them. New development needs to capture the essence of this character, repairing parts of the town where the historic grain has broken down and creating new spaces which are attractive and safe. A new heritage quarter will be designated including the High Street, Guildford Castle and gardens, and a potential new entrance, learning space and temporary exhibition space for the Museum.



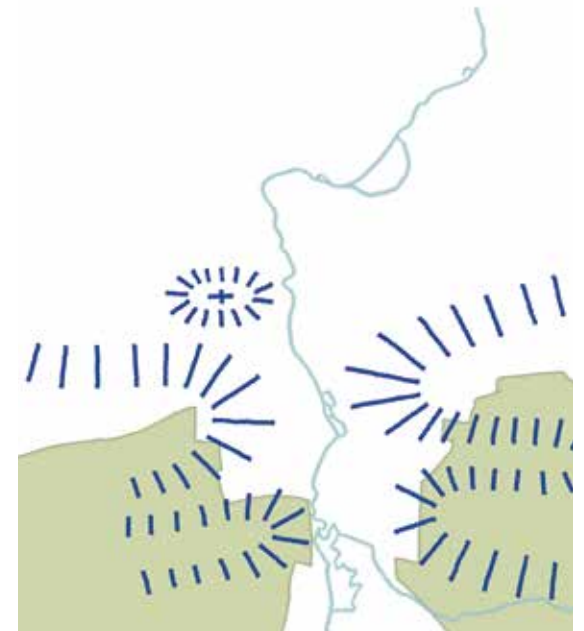
# 6

## GUILDFORD: A TOWN IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

- Protected views from High Street and North Street
- Roofscapes which respect Guildford's historic character
- New homes in the town centre including on the riverfront



In order to maintain Guildford's unique setting within the landscape and to limit urban expansion into the surrounding countryside it is important that development pressure for the town is focussed strongly towards re-use of previously developed land. This will protect the surrounding landscape and will also bring new vigour to significant areas of the town.

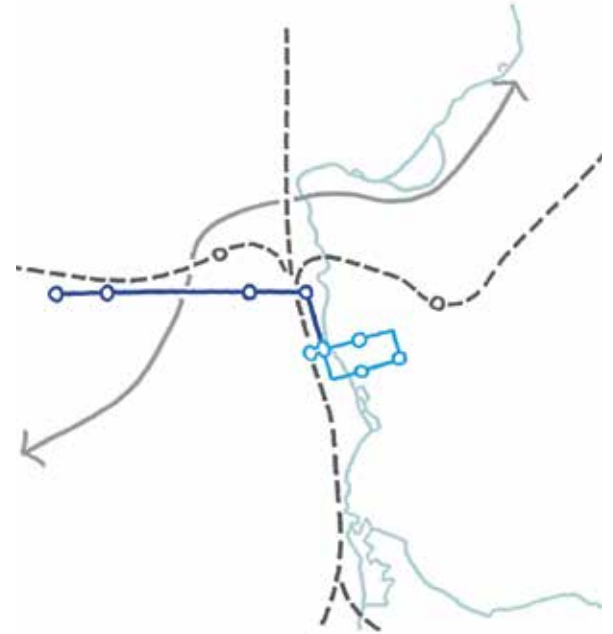




# 7

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Two pedestrian bridges from the station to the town centre
- New rail station at Surrey Research Park and hospital
- New town centre hopper bus and university bus link



Connections between the town centre, the riverside and the railway station need to be strengthened. At a wider scale, there are opportunities to forge better connections to the University and Cathedral, with a new bridge over the railway. This will facilitate a new dedicated bus service providing fast connections to the station. The re-planning of the town centre road network will make it much easier to navigate.

# 8

## DEVELOPING GUILDFORD'S KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

- High quality business space in and around the town centre
- An attractive location with excellent facilities to attract businesses
- A highly educated workforce



Guildford's location and strong transport links make it an excellent location for a thriving knowledge-based economy, exemplified by the University and significant business clusters such as Surrey Research Park. Guildford's location also means that it is able to draw on an excellent pool of talent and skills within the region. This is a vital strand in planning the long term future of the town.





# 9

## BUILDING FOR GUILDFORD'S FUTURE

- New development for North Street integrated with the scale and grain of the historic town
- Mixed use development of the Walnut Tree Close area
- Residential riverside development

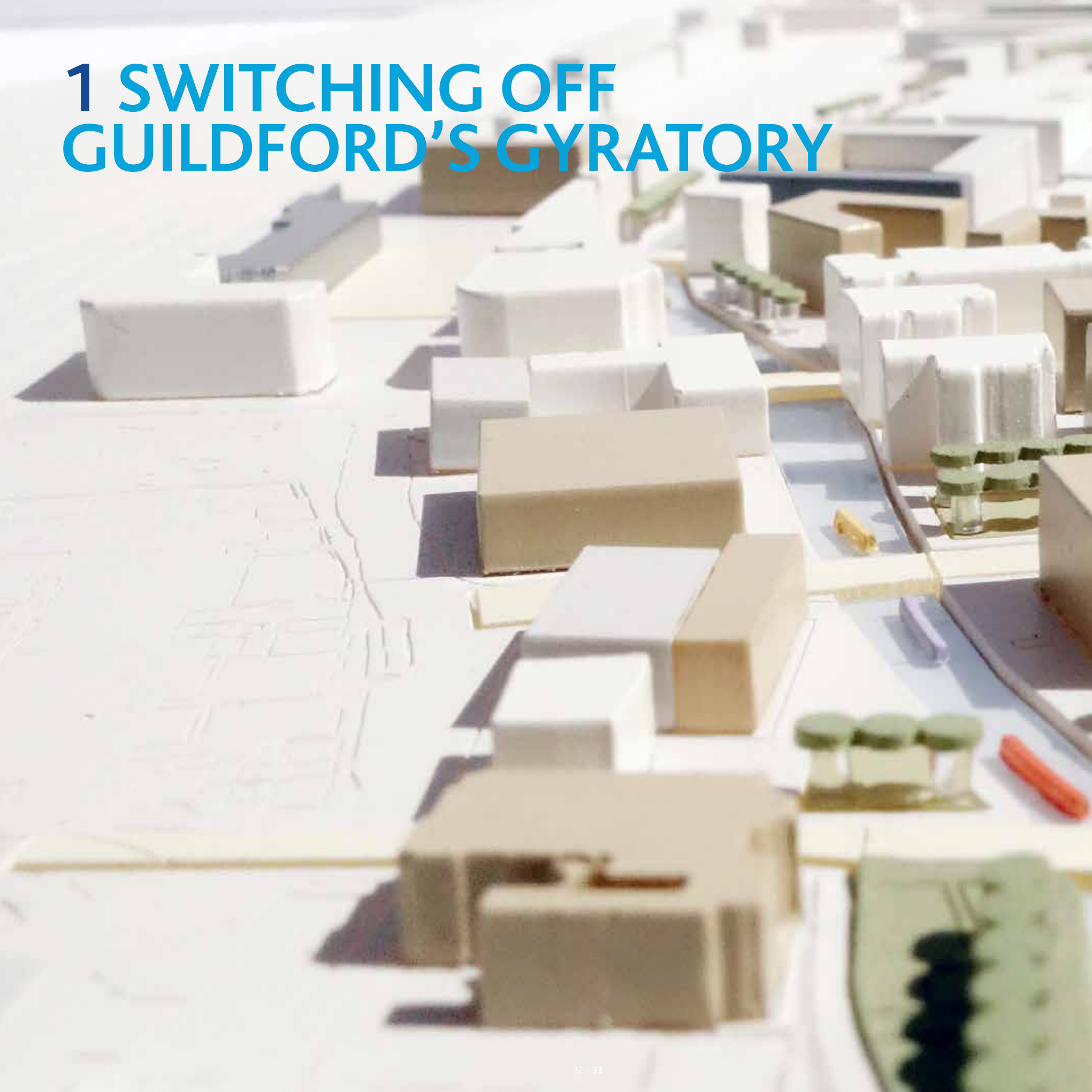


There are extensive opportunities for new development in the centre of Guildford. The North Street area and the sites along Walnut Tree Close are particularly significant and will shape the character of large parts of the town. It is vital that new development respects and responds to the historic character and landscape setting of Guildford to strengthen its unique character.





# 1 SWITCHING OFF GUILDFORD'S GYRATORY







“ The gyratory is intimidating and a barrier for visitors arriving by train ”

The single biggest challenge facing Guildford today is the gyratory system which dominates the river corridor. Tackling this in a way which stimulates development and unlocks the river corridor has the potential to completely transform the centre of Guildford.



**This vision sets out a compelling approach to the re-planning of the central road network, removing the gyratory system and establishing normal two-way streets. This concept has been endorsed by the Council's specialist highways consultants as a positive improvement on the existing network. However, this will also have wider benefits in terms of the character of spaces and buildings which can be created and the quality of the town centre environment.**

The poor quality of the central road system is created by a number of elements which reinforce each other. The current road network with its inhospitable pedestrian environment conspires with the blank elevations of the Friary Centre and Friary Court to create a canyon of traffic and a poor environment. However, these roads carry fewer vehicles than many popular shopping streets in other centres which have attractive pedestrian environments.

The transformative opportunity for Guildford lies in considering the road network and the buildings that front the network simultaneously, integrating normal streets with the surrounding network. As Onslow Street flows south and meets Millbrook it will be transformed into an attractive boulevard with trees along the central reservation.

On either side it will have active uses including shop fronts onto the street and will become the main location for bus stops in the town centre. The bus station will close and will not be relocated as it creates an inhumane environment. Friary Bridge will carry traffic in both directions, allowing Onslow Bridge to be car free and shared by buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

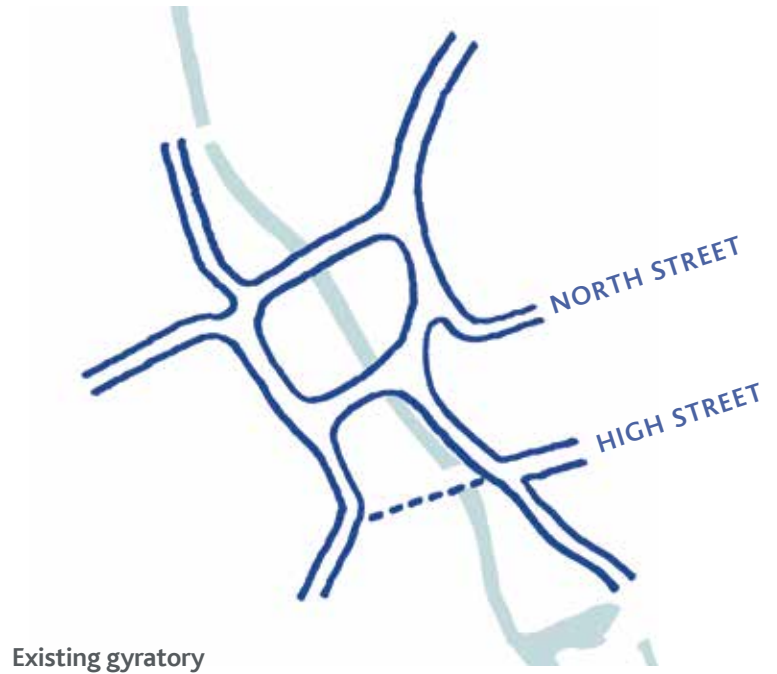
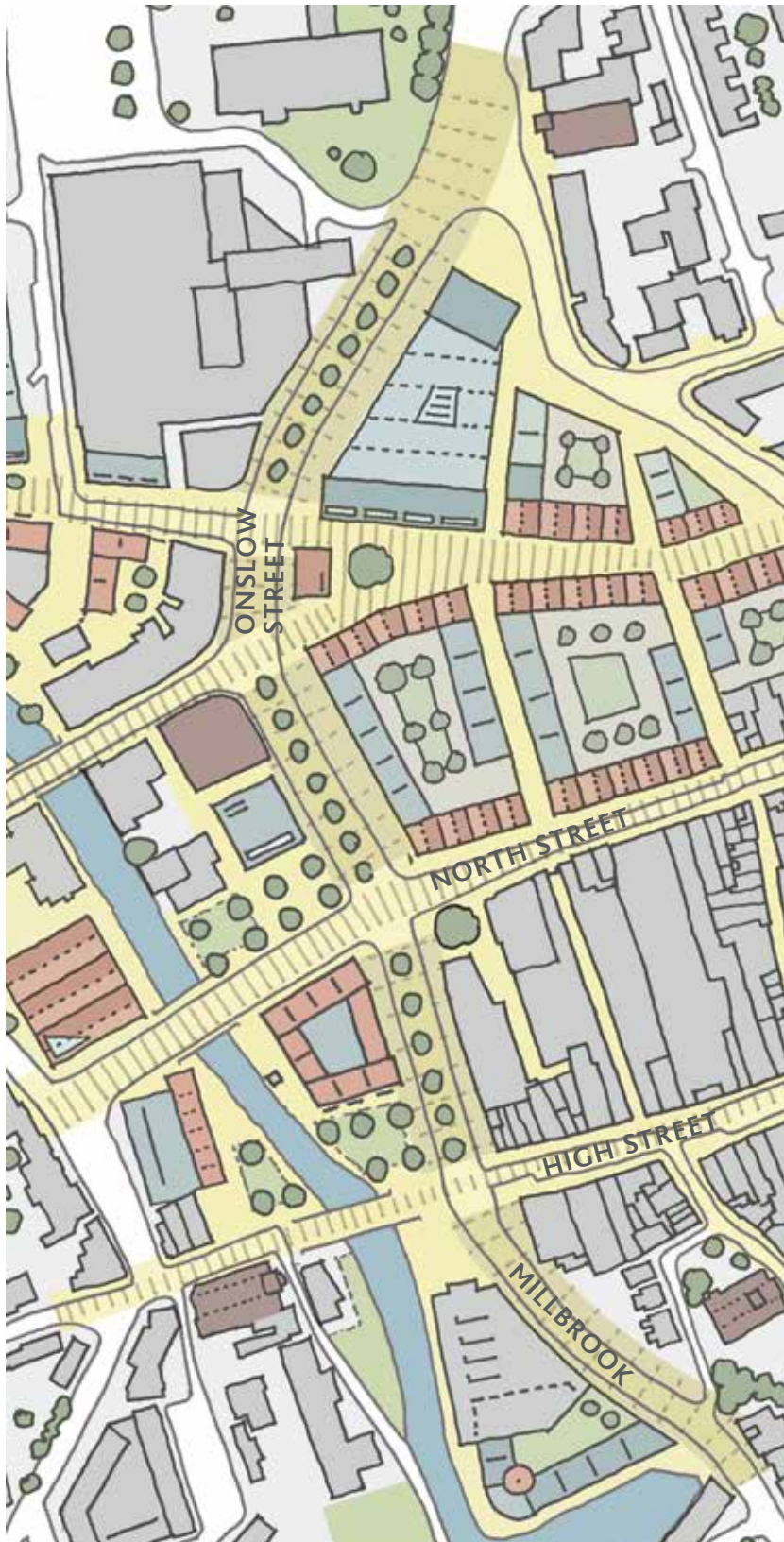
All the key east-west routes which connect the river corridor and railway station with the town centre will have safe crossing points which give priority to pedestrians and emphasise the continuity of the town centre down to the riverside without the use of underpasses. This approach will also aid drivers as they arrive in Guildford, providing a much more attractive first impression of the town centre

and allowing for easy orientation and wayfinding.

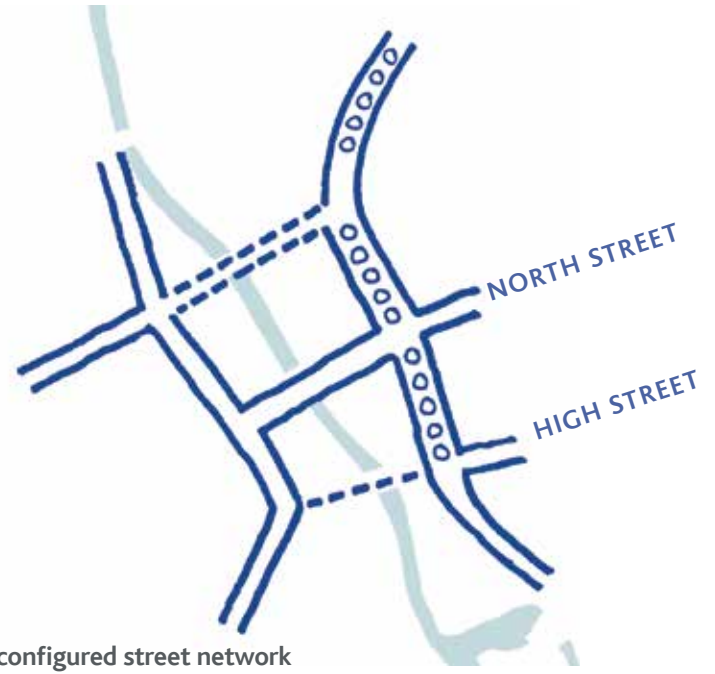
This approach will be complemented by moves outside the town centre which will discourage through-traffic and increase Park and Ride usage. In addition, heavy goods vehicles will be banned from the town centre.

It is increasingly common in historic towns in England for vehicular access to be restrained in order to protect the historic core and to reveal the town's environment for the local community and visitors.





Existing gyratory



Reconfigured street network

Left  
Extract of proposed town  
centre plan





Onslow Street











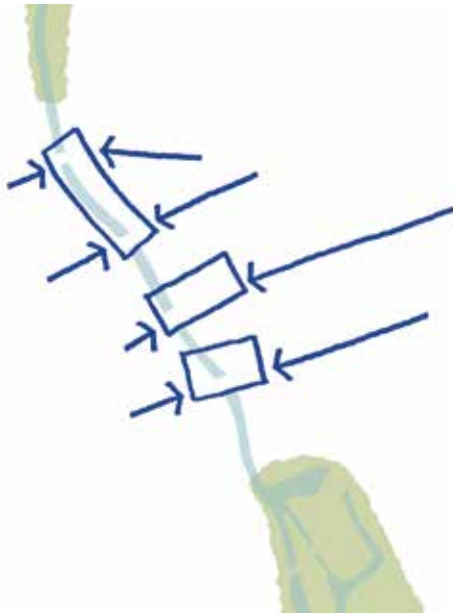
# 2 REVEALING THE RIVER



“ Make more use of riverside areas for cafes not car parks ”

The River Wey is the heart of Guildford town centre. It has been valuable for trade and has supported a network of industries, whilst the gold sands of its banks gave the town its name. The river has been obscured and undervalued for the last 50 years, but will become the focus of a thriving, dynamic series of public spaces and places for leisure and entertainment.





Above:  
Proposal for **Royal Surrey Square**.

Historic maps of the centre of Guildford show river banks which were populated by breweries, malshouses, mills and foundries. These uses and most of the buildings were gradually lost through the twentieth century. At the same time there was the pressure for roads to service the growing volume of traffic. The result of this was a river corridor which was, and remains, totally dominated by highways and is cut off from the town.

The remodelling of the gyratory system and replanning of the road network proposed for the centre of Guildford will open up the riverside allowing it to re-connect with the town centre and become an exciting new focus for the town.

There are a series of opportunities along the central part of the river, each of which has its own particular attributes.

The proposed new Bedford Wharf area will reflect the robust industrial character of the existing buildings and presents a great opportunity for a vibrant evening economy around the redeveloped cinema. It is an important part of the major new connection between the station and the town centre via the new North Street development area.

The proposed Royal Surrey Square will extend and improve the existing public space in front of the Electric Theatre with the potential for new cultural and leisure buildings providing a first class environment.

The new square draws its name from the Royal Surrey Militia Depot which formerly occupied the site and will help to link North Street with the riverside.

The proposed new Malshouse Square will link the two sides of the river at the bottom of the High Street and provide a new location for restaurants and leisure activities as well as riverside apartments. It will provide an attractive context for St Nicolas' Church as well the remaining historic wharf building.

A continuous linear route will provide an attractive movement corridor for pedestrians and cyclists. The route may divert around buildings which are directly on the river wall.



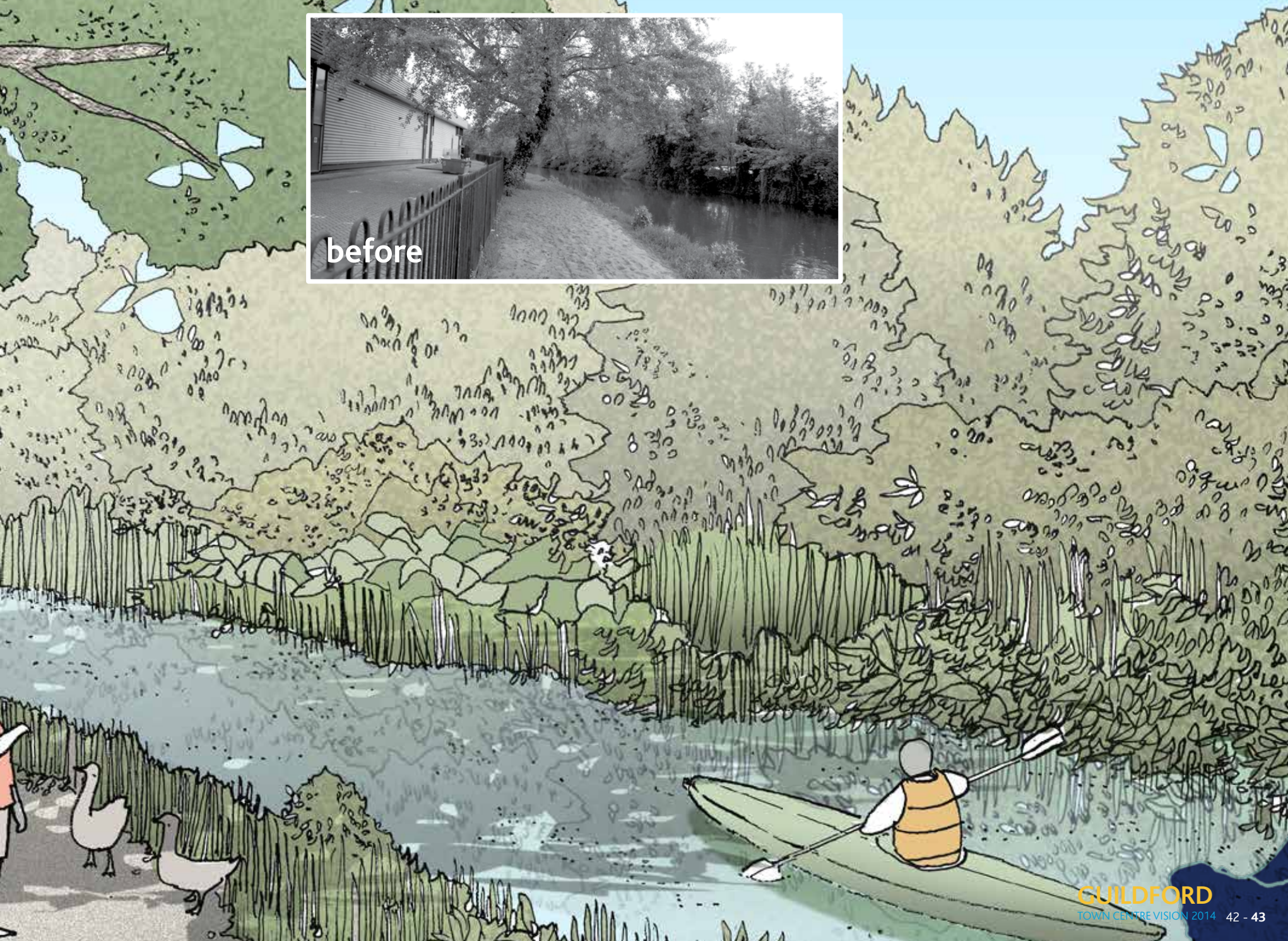








To the north of the town centre the industrial area of Walnut Tree Close has been identified as a major opportunity for mixed use development. This area is ideally placed with easy walking and cycling links to the town centre and station and will create an attractive frontage onto an improved river corridor. The re-planning of this area will also include a new riverside park, enhancing the connection with the historic Dapdune Wharf and establishing an attractive open space which complements the Millmead area to the south of the town centre.

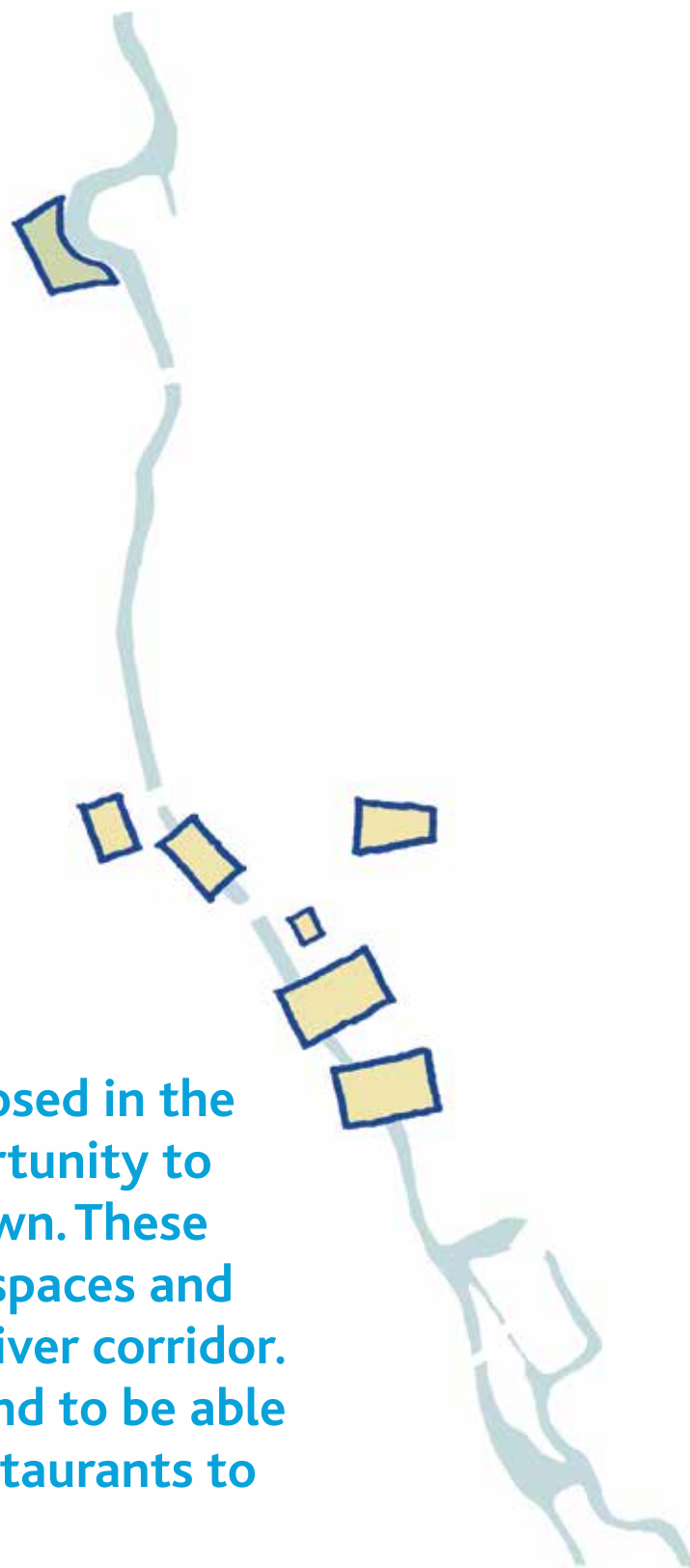




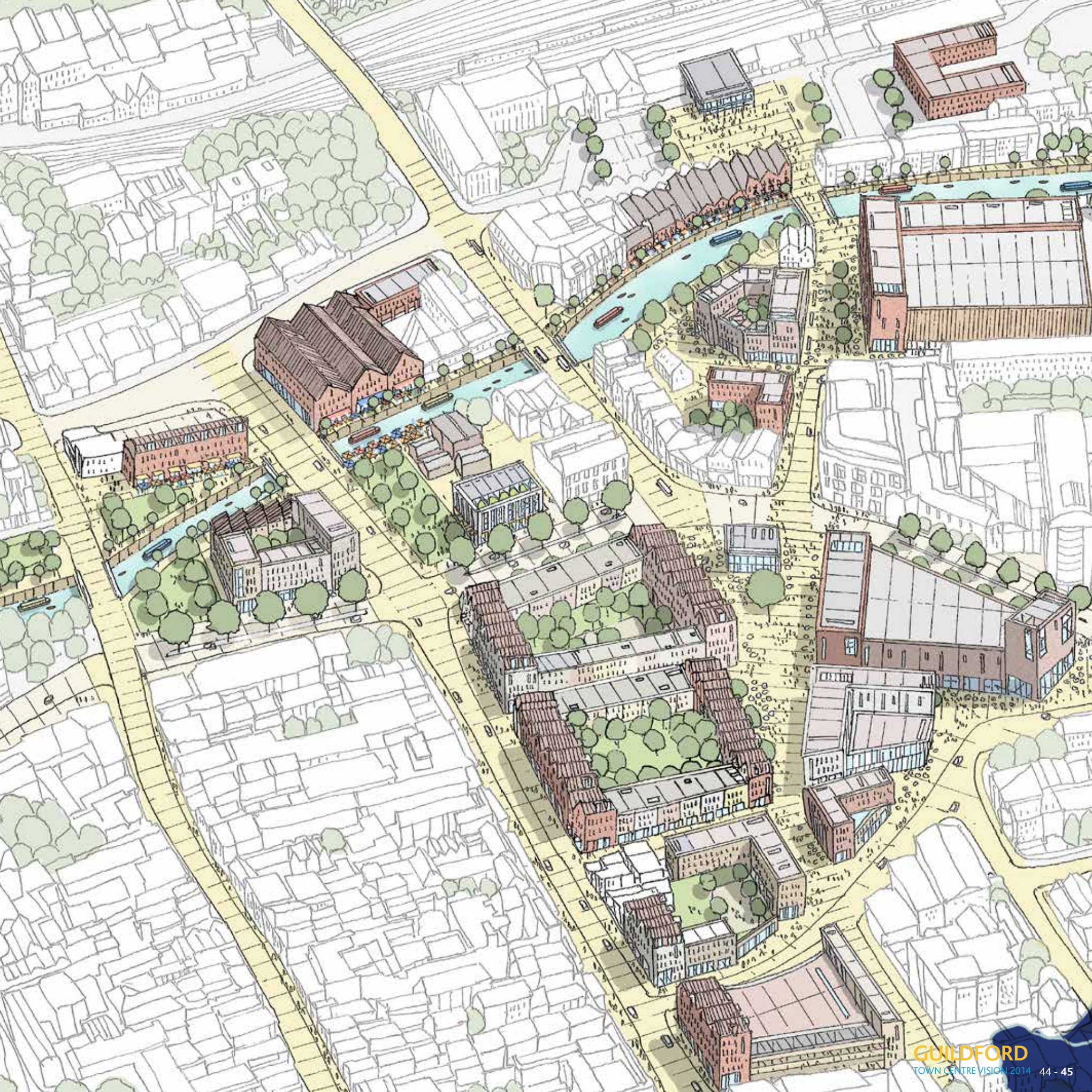
# 3 SEVEN NEW PLACES FOR GUILDFORD

“ We are fortunate to have Stoke Park but this is only one space. We need more outdoor spaces ”

The development and highways changes proposed in the Guildford Town Centre Vision provide an opportunity to create a series of new public spaces for the town. These range from formal squares to riverside public spaces and open green space, but primarily relate to the river corridor. All are designed to be framed by active uses and to be able to accommodate a range of activities from restaurants to markets and events.









# Seven new public spaces for Guildford

## Barrack Yard

a lively intimate space related to the Electric Theatre and new cultural building

## Royal Surrey Square

the new riverside space at the bottom of North Street with new community and cultural buildings linked to the Electric Theatre

## Malthouse Square

the new space at the bottom of the High Street with development which embraces the river on both sides

## Railway Esplanade

a new point of arrival with clear links to the town centre and connections to the University

## Bedford Wharf

a new riverside space as part of the enhanced link from the station to the town centre

## Brewery Square

a new public space at the heart of the redeveloped North Street area



An architectural rendering of the Walnut Tree Gardens project. The image shows a plan view of a riverside park area. A light blue river flows through the center, with several small bridges crossing it. The park is surrounded by various green spaces, including lawns and areas with small trees. The surrounding urban area is depicted with a grid of streets and building footprints. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on greenery and public space.

## Walnut Tree Gardens

a new public riverside park delivered as part of the redevelopment area to the north of the town centre

Research into the history of each location has informed the choice of names which link the spaces to previous uses, anchoring these spaces in the unique history of the town.



# 4 CREATING STREETS FOR PEOPLE

Any new development in the town centre should contribute to creating great streets and spaces. This can only be achieved by buildings which have shop fronts and other uses facing the street rather than presenting blank walls to the public space. This will create new street frontage along Onslow Street all the way down to Millbrook.







before





## **Guildford's historic High Street and connecting lanes provide pedestrians with a rich and engaging environment. Visitors have ample space to enjoy these streets, which are lined with shops and cafes and fronted by handsome buildings with doors opening to the street and a mix of uses on the upper floors.**

The quality of Guildford's environment is lost in surrounding areas such as Onslow Street, Bridge Street and by the existing bus station. Pedestrians are squeezed onto narrow pavements by traffic and faced with blank exterior facades. Street clutter such as railings, litter bins and A boards take further space from pedestrians.

This does not have to be the case and plenty of opportunities exist to transform these streets with their poor environmental quality and give space back to pedestrians.

Bridge Street, linking Guildford Station with the town centre, spans the River Wey and is lined by some historic buildings. However, pedestrians are squeezed onto narrow pavements and traffic on the gyratory system dominates. This street can be transformed as a pedestrian priority

space, with access to buses only. The important but currently weak walking route between the station and the town centre can be greatly enhanced and the historic buildings can be revealed with a more sympathetic setting.

Links to the town centre can be further strengthened through an enlarged pedestrian and cycle bridge linking the new Railway Esplanade and Bedford Wharf. This will provide visitors with an alternative engaging route for reaching Guildford's centre and support a transformed Bedford Road area with evening economy activities that face the river.

Onslow Street presents a significant opportunity to redefine the pedestrian experience in Guildford town centre. The retail uses within the Friary Centre can be turned 'inside out', so that shops line the street with homes above.

The traffic flow can be normalised as two-way working with pavements widened to provide a more comfortable environment. Railings that hinder pedestrian movement can be removed, a central reservation created to aid street crossing, trees planted and cycle parking provided. Bus stops can serve the town centre and connect with the train station.

Throughout the town centre, street signage, lighting and litter bins can be rationalised to give space back to pedestrians and provide a more comfortable environment.

The historic centre's hilly topography and cobbled surfaces provide a beautiful setting for shops and services. Measures will be introduced to aid pedestrians including the provision of more benches and the introduction of a town centre hopper bus.

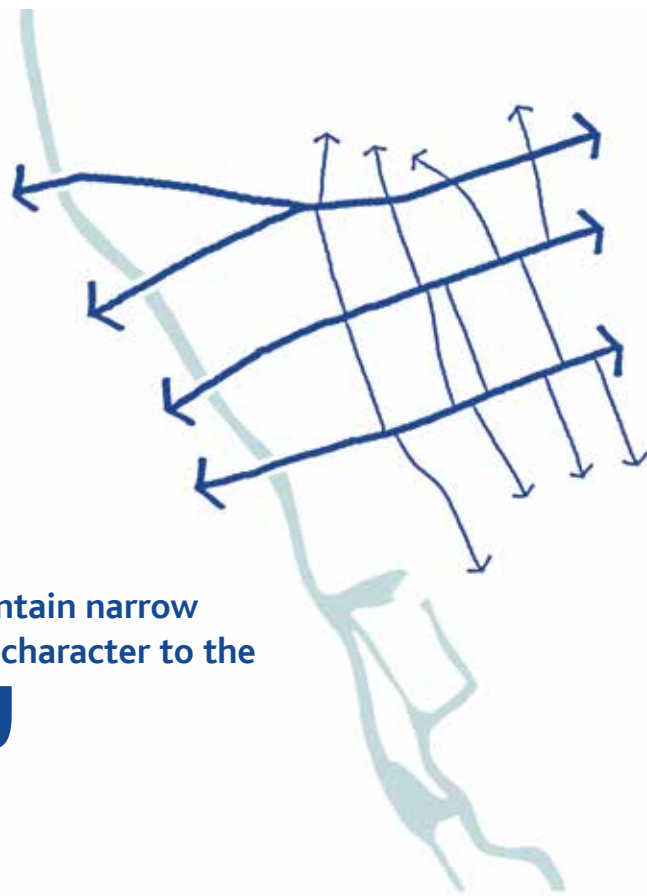






# 5 GOING WITH THE GRAIN

The historic street pattern of Guildford is one of its strong defining features. The broad east-west routes of North Street and High Street establish a bold scale and character whilst the connecting north-south lanes create a network of intimate and attractive spaces.



“ It is important to maintain narrow alleyways which give much character to the shopping environment ”







Right:  
Aerial photograph 1919





North Street, 1896, last cattle market.



High Street, 1975.



## The generous proportions of High Street and North Street reflect their historic functions as spaces for trade and commerce, including the livestock market which was held in North Street until 1896.

The wide streets accommodate a number of imposing buildings and landmarks and have become the principal shopping streets. Both North Street and the High Street also help to establish Guildford's strong links with the landscape. The steep terrain and straight alignment means that there are attractive views out to green space which appear to draw the countryside into the heart of the town.

Whilst the broad streets establish the main shopping destinations for major

retailers, Guildford's narrow lanes and courtyards are host to a wealth of smaller retailers and independent businesses. These complementary elements are an important aspect of Guildford's attractiveness as a place to live and work.

The North Street area of the town provides an opportunity to expand the town centre in a manner which reflects these unique characteristics, making new spaces which reinforce the historic identity of Guildford. Brewery Square

is the meeting point of broad east-west streets and will be a focal point for major retail space. A series of new lanes connects from this back to North Street, extending the network of exciting spaces to explore.

A new heritage quarter will be created to cover the High Street and Guildford Museum and Castle, which integrates the area with the town centre, and improves heritage interpretation and the visitor experience in Guildford.







# 6 GUILDFORD: A TOWN IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

“ One of Guildford’s greatest assets is its views ”

Guildford is a town which is intimately connected with the surrounding landscape. The location of the town, nestled between two hills at a crossing point in the river, has shaped the growth of the historic street pattern and remains a defining feature. The dynamic topography has been exploited over the centuries to elevate significant buildings such as the Castle and the Cathedral.







**Views between the town and the surrounding countryside are a particularly attractive feature of Guildford. Both the High Street and North Street benefit from long views to the Hog's Back ridge west of the town centre, providing a link to both the landscape and the seasons.**

The High Street view is punctuated by the square tower of St Nicolas' Church with its flat copper pyramidal roof set against a backdrop of smaller houses stepping up the lower slopes of the hill. The North Street view is largely defined by the roofscape of Wey House which has a strongly horizontal character, highlighting the potential for sensitive redevelopment of this block.

It is proposed that both these views are protected with a defined approved viewing corridor against the potential impact of inappropriate development

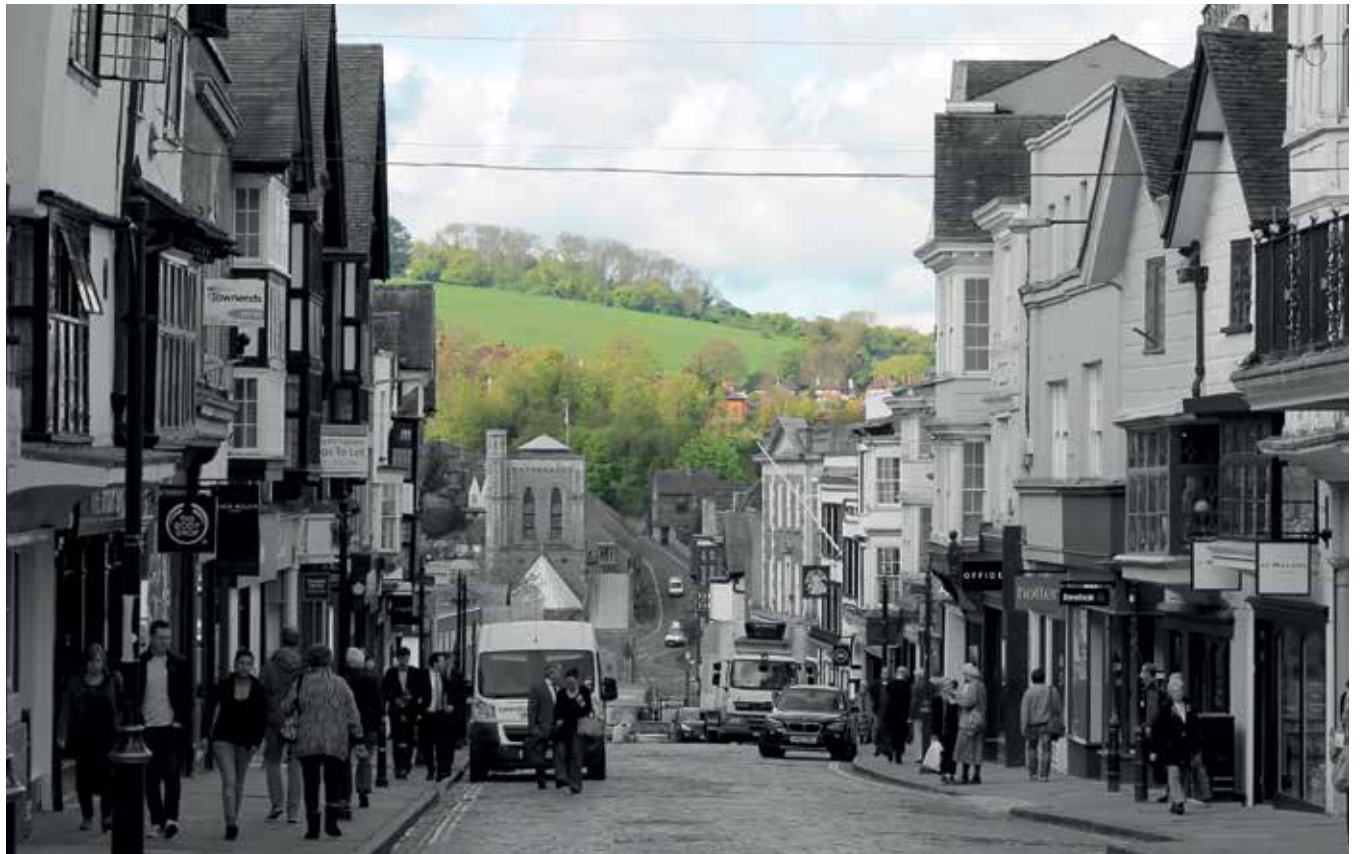
which may either obscure the sightlines to the hills or have an adverse impact on the character of the roofscape framed in the view.

The issue of roofscape also resonates more widely across the town, as most of the urban area can be seen from elevated vantage points. The historic character is one of small scale roofs stepping down the hillside. This means that a strong emphasis needs to be placed on the careful articulation of larger buildings to design a character that sits comfortably in context.



A further aspect of Guildford's setting in the landscape is the issue of future housing capacity and the need to deliver housing on brownfield sites to limit the need for the town to expand beyond its existing extents. The industrial area of Walnut Tree Close presents a strong opportunity for this. The area is within easy walk of the town centre and the station and development would significantly improve the river corridor and links between the town centre and the University.





Above:  
High Street  
Right:  
North Street

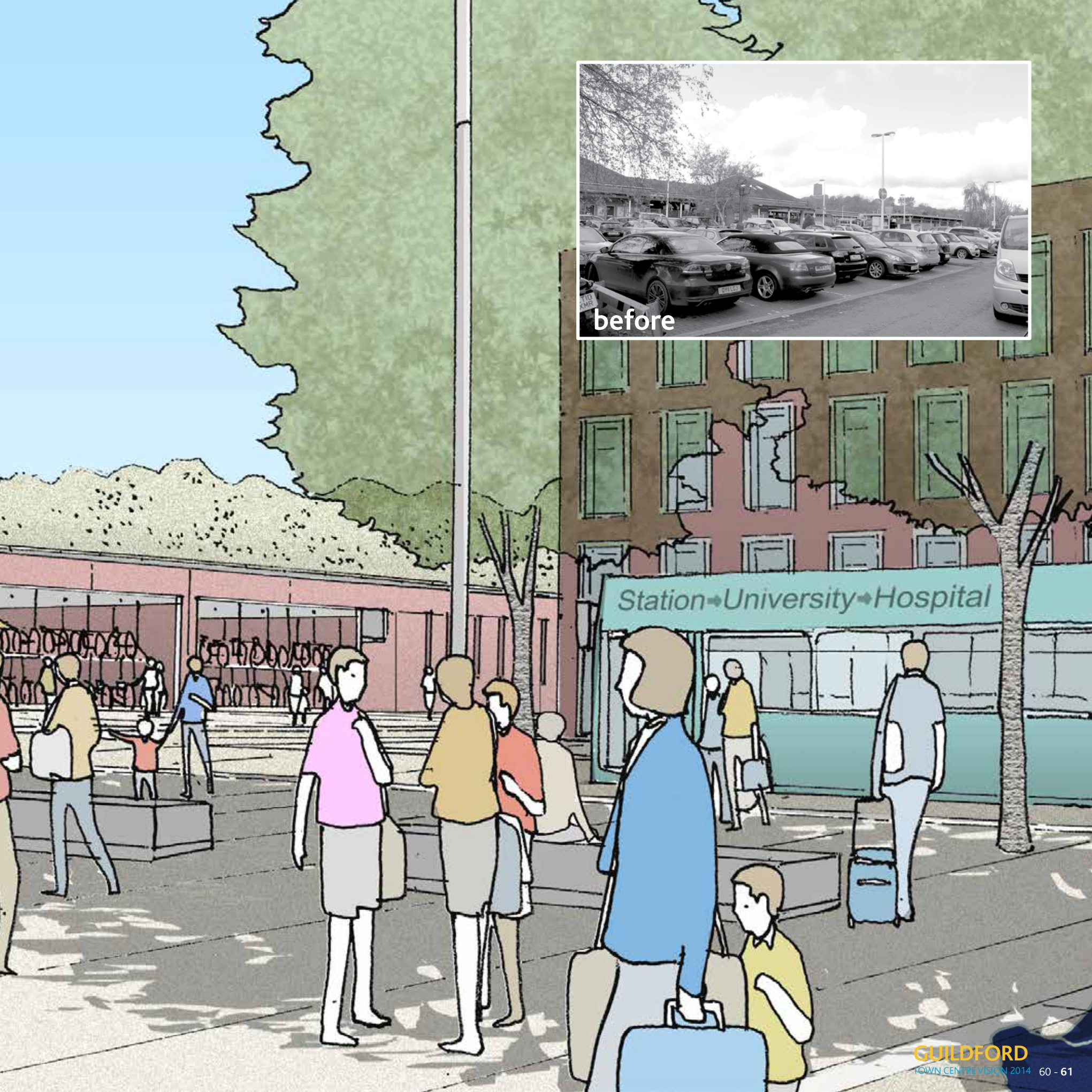


# 7 MAKING CONNECTIONS



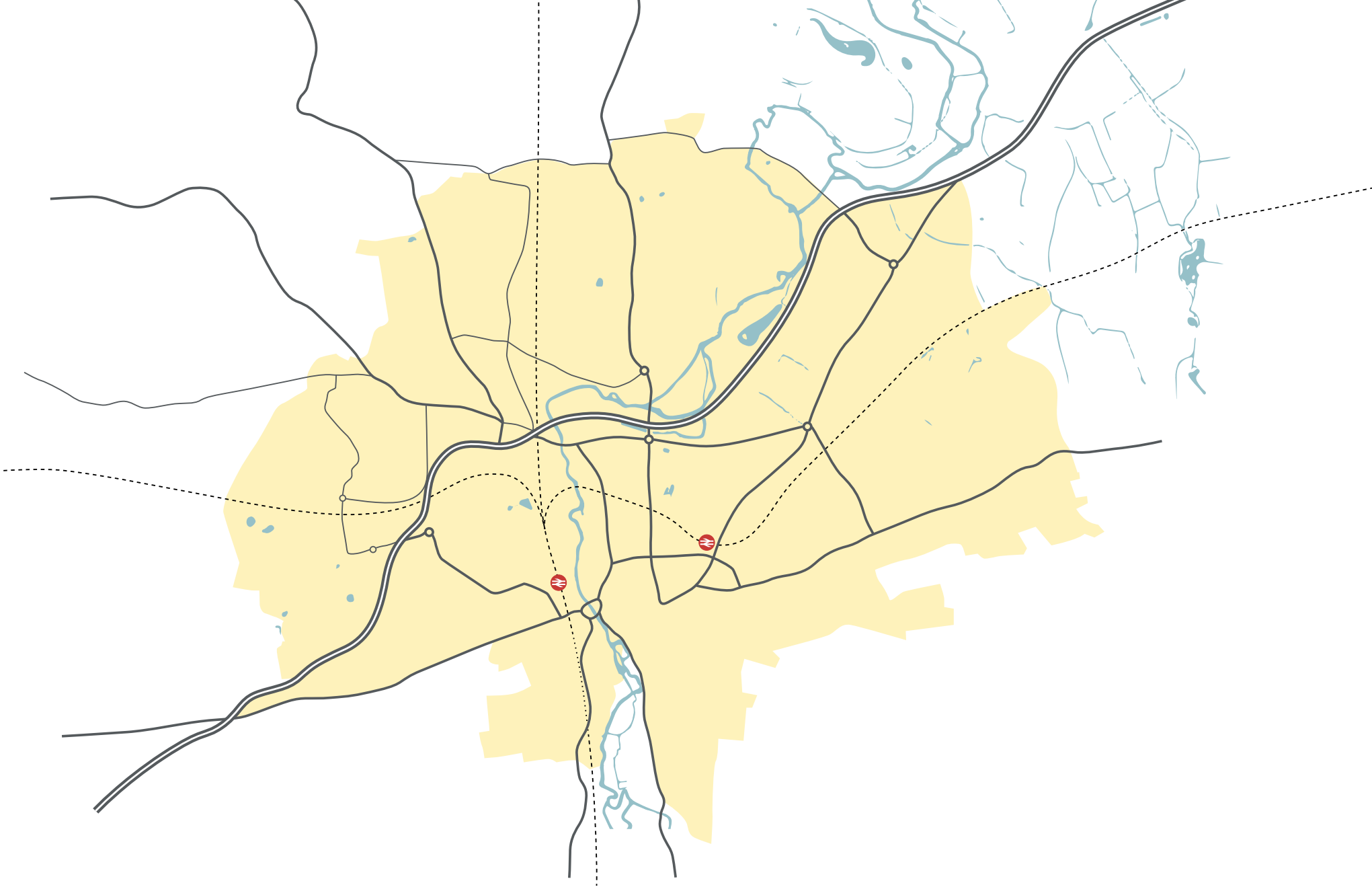
**The proposed Railway Esplanade will create a strong gateway for the town and reinforce local connections.**





before





**Although the town centre is compact and walkable, connections with the station and riverside need to be strengthened. At a wider scale, there are opportunities to forge better connections to the University and Cathedral, with an improved bridge over the railway delivering a new dedicated bus service providing fast connections to the station. The re-planning of the town centre road network will make it much easier to navigate.**



Unpicking Guildford's gyratory will help to rejuvenate pedestrian connections within the retail heart, enabling attractive buildings that face streets, broad pavements and less street clutter. Beyond the core town centre, walking links to local attractions such as Stoke Park, along Stoke Road, and the Cathedral, along Guildford Park Road and Ridgemount, can also be strengthened.

The river corridor has significant potential to provide walking and cycling links between the town, University, Hospital and Research Park and with the surrounding neighbourhoods and countryside. This can be achieved while retaining the natural character of the river, and help to bring the beauty of the surrounding rural environment into the town.

Co-ordinated and attractive street signage will be integral to strengthening each of these walking and cycling links and in bringing together Guildford's wonderful but dispersed assets.

Cycling in the town centre can be further promoted by the creation of shared spaces for pedestrians and

cyclists and the introduction of electric cycles available from docking stations around the town centre.

Changes to the road network may include a new bridge to replace Yorkie's Bridge over the rail line to the north of Guildford Station which will provide a public transport, walking and cycling link to the University.

Investment in public transport, the Park and Ride system and cycling links will help encourage people out of cars and limit growth in traffic levels in Guildford town centre. The Park and Ride system could even be complemented by a 'Park and Glide' system, in which people park to the north of the town and catch a boat to the proposed Malthouse Square, arriving by the new public space in the cultural hub on the river at the bottom of the High Street.

Reconfiguration of the railway station will improve the sense of arrival. The creation of the proposed Railway Esplanade will establish clear onward connections including walking routes into the town centre, bus connections, new taxi rank and drop-off area.

Reintroducing the hopper bus in Guildford will improve accessibility to shops and services in the centre. Replacement of the bus station with on-street bus stops which are closer to the train station will not only improve the physical environment but provide easier walking links as people transfer between buses and trains. This connection will be important in providing a useable alternative to the car.

Guildford currently has a large number of surface car parks in central locations which do not make best use of the town's land. These car parks can be rationalised, and decked parking provided elsewhere in their place, to free up space for more valuable town centre uses. Parking provision will also be more easily accessed, without cars being forced into a gyratory system. Guildford's enhanced profile with a new contemporary cultural building will bring more visitors and coach parking will be important for this and other cultural assets.

Coach parking will be provided outside the town centre with a coach drop-off point close to the station.



# 8 GROWING GUILDFORD'S KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

“ It would be superb if the education and employment uses to the west of the town could be integrated as part of the town ”

**Guildford's position and strong transport links make it an excellent location for a thriving knowledge-based economy, exemplified by the University and significant businesses at Surrey Research Park. The town is able to draw on an excellent pool of talent and skills within the region. This is a vital strand in planning the long term future of the town.**





 **DJO**  
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## **Guildford enjoys a strong business profile in the UK, with internationally significant companies such as Philips, BAE Systems and Electronic Arts based in the town.**

Residents of the town are well placed to take advantage of these knowledge economy jobs, with degree level education attainment levels for Guildford almost double the national average. The town is in a strong position to continue to attract businesses from growth sectors such as bio-technology and advanced manufacturing in order to secure long term economic vitality and cement its place as a globally recognised centre for high-tech industries.

A balanced future economy for Guildford will incorporate retail as one of its economic drivers as part of a highly diversified and resilient economy that includes attracting high quality jobs to the town centre and providing affordable homes.

The University of Surrey and Surrey Research Park both make important contributions to Guildford's knowledge base, with a growing community of scientists and researchers, but these are currently disconnected from the town centre. Improved cycle links between these areas and the town centre can make use of the attractive river corridor. Public transport improvements can include a new station in this area, to serve the Research Park, the Hospital and Surrey University. Fostering organisational and research links between the university and knowledge based businesses can generate high quality jobs and raise Guildford's profile.

Attracting new businesses to the town centre itself will be critically important in the future. The local environment

is now a significant factor in location strategies for international companies. An attractive setting, access to quality shops, affordable homes and a decent cultural offer are each important to businesses in attracting and retaining staff and, therefore, important for a town in attracting and retaining businesses.

The town centre vision sets out a framework for transforming Guildford's streets and spaces, including celebrating the River Wey. A new contemporary cultural offer can be provided close to the river front, which can attract residents and visitors as well as local workers. Space exists within new development sites for high quality office space in the centre of the town, which can integrate with the town's broader economy.







# 9 BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Guildford's attractive historic town centre is one of the town's key assets and plays an important part in distinguishing it from other competing towns. It has a truly memorable quality based on a fine grain of historic buildings and a mix of streets and spaces which is at once legible but intriguing to explore. Buildings step progressively down the hillside setting up attractive roofscape views whilst shop fronts enliven the streets and lanes.

Alongside this cohesive central area Guildford has a significant stock of twentieth century buildings such as the Friary Centre. These buildings invert the historic conventions with large floor plates, creating internal streets and blank elevations rendering streets inhospitable places for pedestrians.

The North Street area of the town centre has been identified as a major opportunity for new development, including substantial retail floorspace and new residential development. This provides a unique opportunity to invert the current outmoded model of internal shopping malls and re-establish

a conventional network of streets and spaces which respond to the natural terrain and connect into the existing grain of the town. The sloping nature of the existing site and the existing form of the buildings should allow for underground service access. It is envisaged that over time the Friary Centre may be renewed as two blocks, although in the short term, it is proposed that the centre introduces new shop units facing the surrounding streets.

Town centre living, including student housing, is an important aspect of the future of Guildford, and will contribute to the spread of uses which help to maintain life and vitality. Housing should be introduced at the upper levels of the building and can be used to wrap the flanks of large format uses and to create a varied roofscape which will respond to the appealing historic forms.

Along the river corridor, new development should respond to the context by echoing the remaining historic industrial and wharf buildings. These will help to establish a robust and characterful identity which is capable

of accommodating a range of uses including active ground floor space, business and residential development at upper levels.

The scale and bulk of buildings in the town is a key issue, particularly in the light of some post-war development which has a significant negative impact on the skylines and key views. New development in and around the town centre needs to respect and blend with the prevailing scale of the town, whilst development on the line of the proposed High Street and North Street viewing corridors should be carefully moderated.

Away from the core town centre new development should have a clear focus towards establishing a clear and connected public realm framed by attractive buildings which present good street frontage.

New development at sites such as Guildford Park car park and the Plaza site should conform to a traditional perimeter block layout with active edges onto the public realm and street network.



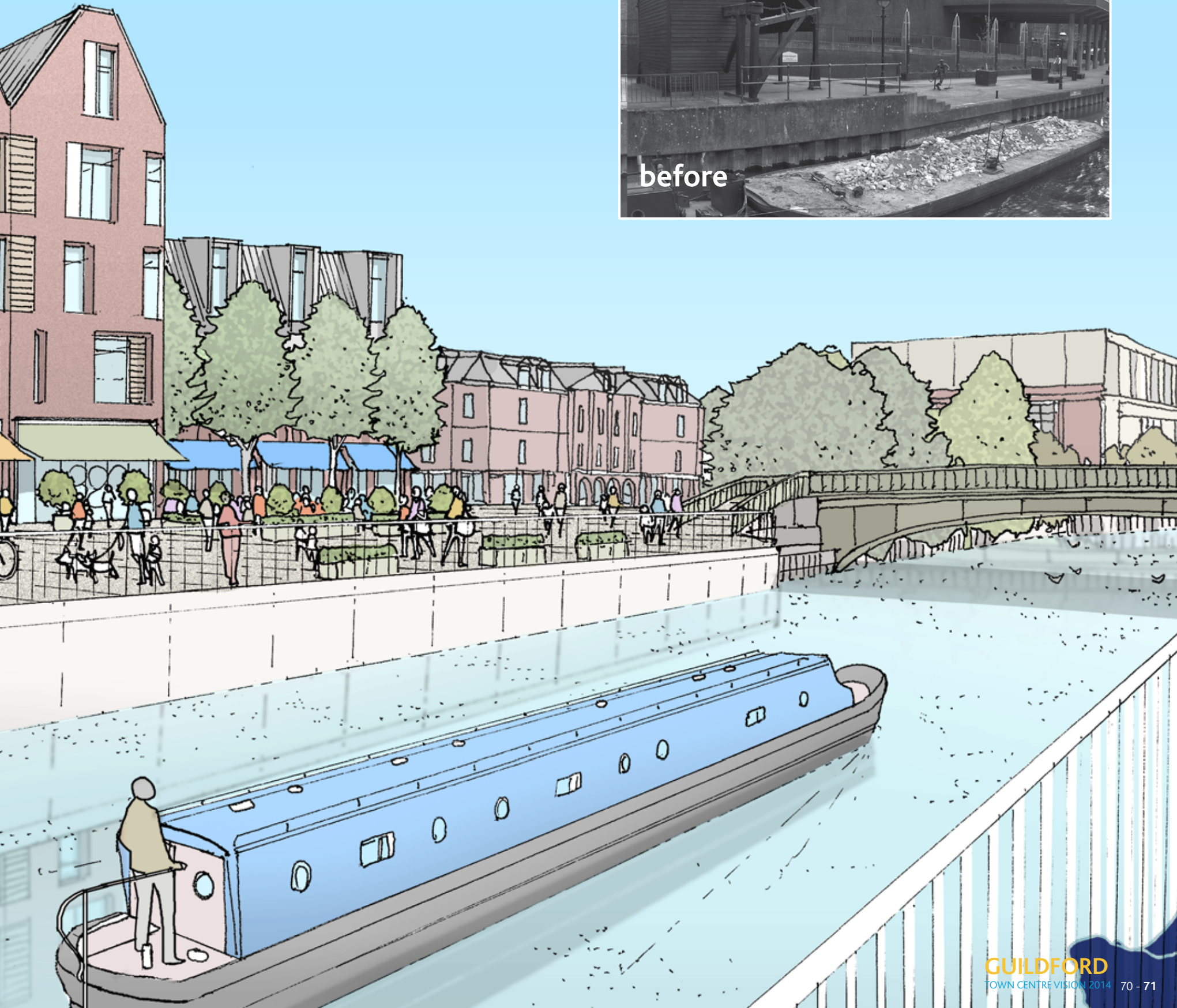






**The proposed Malthouse Square will establish a completely new riverside public space at the bottom of the High Street.**





before



# THE PLAN FOR GUILDFORD

## Key features of the Vision for Guildford Town Centre

1. Station View extended and improved to provide a rapid bus link to the University, Hospital and Surrey Research Park
2. New Railway Esplanade Hotel
3. Redeveloped station building
4. Station forecourt remodelled to remove parking and establish a new Station Esplanade
5. New bridge creating a strong link from the Station Esplanade towards the town centre via Bedford Road
6. Redeveloped cinema block including a remodelled cinema and riverside apartments
7. Improved pedestrian link from station to the town centre via Bedford Road
8. New mixed-use development on the existing car park site incorporating a mix of leisure and residential uses to create Bedford Wharf
9. Traffic removed from Onslow Bridge creating a pedestrian and cycle link shared with buses
10. Onslow Street – Millbrook established as a clear north-south route with two way traffic and a tree-lined central reservation. This will be framed by active building frontages and will be the main location for bus stops in the town centre
11. Preferred location for a new anchor store as part of comprehensive redevelopment of the North Street area
12. Brewery Square - a new public space created as part of the connecting network of streets
13. New mixed-use development blocks. These include shop units, restaurants and cafes facing onto streets and lanes with residential development at upper levels accessed from shared rooftop courtyards
14. Remodelled decked car park
15. Redeveloped Wey House, creating a more sympathetic frontage to the riverside. The design and scale will reflect the importance of the North Street viewing corridor
16. Barrack Yard – an intimate space connecting the Rodboro building with the Electric Theatre and the new cultural centre
17. New cultural building
18. Royal Surrey Square – a major new space linking the bottom of North Street with the river frontage with a jettied area over the river creating new access around the Electric Theatre
19. Friary Bridge remodelled to provide two-way working for all vehicles, along with a further footway on the southern side
20. Portsmouth Road car park redeveloped, creating new river frontage. Any development will retain the river aspect of the George Abbot public house
21. New riverside development including retail, restaurants and apartments
22. Malthouse Square – a new space linking the High Street with the riverside
23. Bury Street infill development
24. Potential for the partial redevelopment of the existing Debenhams site to introduce new riverside apartments and improve access to the river frontage





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ONSLOW ST

LEAPDALE ROAD

BRIDGE STREET

NORTH STREET

FARNHAM ROAD

HIGH STREET

MILLBROOK



## Key features of the Vision for the wider Guildford Town Centre

1. Station View linked to the University, Hospital and Surrey Research Park via an upgraded bridge to provide a rapid bus link and direct route for pedestrians and cyclists
2. New mixed use redevelopment of the Walnut Tree Close area including the creation of strong river frontage
3. Proposed Walnut Tree Gardens
4. Improved riverside walk providing a strong link from Walnut Tree Gardens to the town centre
5. Potential for 'Park and Glide' riverboat service linking to Malthouse Square
6. Potential new bridge link providing an east west connection between Walnut Tree Close and Leas Road
7. Protection for key view corridors from North Street and High Street to the surrounding countryside
8. Signage and routing strategy to guide traffic away from the town centre and to restrict HGV access
9. Heritage quarter established to raise the profile of the Museum and Castle, integrate the area more effectively with the town centre and improve the visitor experience







# A DEDICATED IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

During the consultation exercise there has been a high degree of interest and enthusiasm for significant and lasting improvements to Guildford town centre. There has been a recognition that this will be in part driven by large scale developments such as North Street; that there should be changes in the circulation of traffic (and that these will be quite radical) and that there are important gains to be made in developing the leisure and amenity value of the River Wey and riverside space. The Council will now build on this interest and develop an implementation programme that demonstrates commitment and builds momentum behind a delivery programme. The focus will be on working in partnership, that is the Council, the local community, landowners, businesses and Surrey County Council highways authority.

The suggested programme is divided into a series of time frames:

Preliminary (whilst work is continuing on the strategy). This is largely research to set up the institutional arrangements to take the strategy forward and is not contingent on the consultation.

Immediate (following adoption/ endorsement of the strategy) October 2014 – January 2015. This is a series of visible projects that aim to prototype and demonstrate the advantages of key elements of the strategy.

Soon (early projects and preparation for large scale elements) January 2015 – December 2015) First phases of development and highway projects.

Later (major project delivery) January 2016 – January 2018

The suggested delivery programme is also broken down into a series of themes:

- Public realm and events;
- Highways and circulation;
- Development sites; and
- Process and organisational structures.







## Preliminary: June 2014 to October 2014.

During the period of consultation and prior to the strategy being formally adopted by the Council, preliminary work will take place on the following:

### **Development**

Announce the intention to set up a design review panel, agree terms of reference and membership. The panel should be based on the Design Council/CABE best practice and have an independent chair with professional standing. The panel should consider all major applications as well as commission themed work (for example shop front and public realm design). The panel can be set up as soon as a proposal is agreed by the Council and this is an early demonstration of intent.

Commission a review of all Council owned land in the Town Centre, including a review of availability for development and preliminary valuations.

### **Process and Structures**

In addition, research will be undertaken as follows:

- Research models for a Town Development Trust or other appropriate implementation vehicles.
- Set up an interim partnership structure, The Guildford Town Centre Partnership with 15 members drawn from the Council, local community, landowners and business community with an independent chair, which will meet once a fortnight.
- Research and agree a model for holding and accumulating S 106/CIL payments as well as specific capital receipts from land sales.

### **Highways and circulation**

Further work will be undertaken on the transport and movement aspects of the vision:

- Agree the programme with Surrey County Council concerning the parameters for the major changes to the Town Centre network as set out in the vision.
- Review off street and on street car and coach parking, including the impact of a series of changes on the parking revenue account.



## Immediate October – December 2014

As soon as the strategy is adopted the Council and its partners will seek immediate change through a programme of temporary uses and prepare briefs for key sites on the vision:

### Process and structures

- Set out proposals for the formalisation of the Guildford Town Centre Partnership as a delivery vehicle, backed by Council assets.
- Commence the procurement of a development partner(s) for possible joint ventures on key sites. Identify sites and communicate the purpose and advantage of the proposed development on each site.
- Engage in further consultation.
- Initiate planning briefs.

### Highways and circulation

- Publicise and consult on the results of discussions with the County Highways department and the parking review.
- Put forward a programme of temporary street closures and width restrictions and the HGV ban.
- Prepare and adopt a streetscape design manual and set aside a capital budget for enhanced maintenance.
- Implementation of on-going measures to further improve the pedestrian environment including paving repairs, crossings and street furniture.

### Public realm and events

A series of ten public realm interventions have been identified:

Repairing the High Street - The Council will employ conservation specialists to repair the historic public realm of the High Street.

50 public realm fixes for £50k - The Council will prepare a list of 50 public realm fixes (with links to Project Proud and Business Team activities) to make during the next year that can help to refresh the town centre and reveal its splendour.

Turning to the river for Christmas - As a first step and a statement of intent, it is proposed to light the River Wey from the High Street across the River Wey in the lead up to Christmas, to animate this wonderful but under-used space. The High Street can be linked back to the river by adjusting the traffic light phasing and a decorative 'carpet' applied to visually connect the two.

A drive-in cinema for Guildford - Sites are already coming forward in Guildford



town centre and as these are cleared to make way for new development, they can be reused creatively to rejuvenate Guildford's cultural life. The cleared North Street site, for example, could provide a drive-in cinema, using a blank gable wall for a screen and providing a programme of films on weekend evenings. This use could still co-ordinate with a temporary car park during the day.

Establishing protected views westwards from the High Street and North Street - Guildford's relationship with the surrounding countryside is particularly distinctive and this relationship should be retained and enhanced. New development should not compromise these views.

Install smart hoardings and temporary tree planting to vacant sites - The process of transforming Guildford will take time. Whilst work is going on it is

intended to maintain smart sites using high quality screening and tree planting.

Preparing a design brief for Portsmouth Road car park site - This site is Council owned and can come forward relatively easily. A design brief will set the parameters for the site and be a first step in animating the river.

A new public space on the river - As part of the design brief for the Portsmouth Road car park site the area in front of the George Abbot Pub can be set aside and delivered as an early element of the new public spaces. The Vision identifies this area as a valuable new public space in the longer term and there is no reason why this could not be established as a temporary public space in the shorter term. The space can provide seating for the pub in the summer months and space for a Christmas market extending over the bridge in the winter months. This could

even be supported by a seasonal ice rink on the Portsmouth Road car park.

Preparing a design brief for the Bedford Road area - This area is largely in Council land ownership and will be critical in both reviving the river front and connecting the station with the town centre. A design brief can be developed for this area, with a clear statement on the role the site can play in cross-funding a new pedestrian bridge to the station.

Reintroducing the hopper bus - The hopper bus was valued by Guildford's community and there have been many calls for its return during consultation for the Town Centre Vision. This would improve accessibility to shops and services and help to reduce the number of cars on the roads.



## Soon January 2015 – December 2015

Commence work on the major highways and development projects.

### Development

- Work up Joint Venture proposals for key sites, especially on the riverside and gyratory, define planned objectives in accordance with the strategy.
- Consider financial development models where the land value to the Council is either taken as a longer term equity stake or in kind, for example. Implementation of key parts of the strategy such as road realignment.
- Undertake negotiations with developers of key sites against a menu of S 106 requirements.

### Highways and circulation

- Progress traffic orders and the design of the reconfiguration of the gyratory.
- Implement additional phase of public realm improvements.
- Implement the first phase of improvements to the riverside/ towpath including lighting.

### Events

- Implement a coherent programme of public events related to forthcoming developments and projects.

## Later phases January 2016 onwards

### Development

- First phases of Council Joint Venture site developments consented and on site.
- Commencement of the North Street development.

### Highways and circulation

- First phases of works on the gyratory.
- First phases of work on the new bridge/link to the station.

### Events

- Continue with the programme of temporary events in the Town Centre, with a focus on the opening up of the new public realm and the riverside through a series of events and festivals.



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**Guildford Borough Councillors and Officers**

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initial concept sketch



