

# Redditch Town Centre Regeneration Prospectus



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# 01 Context

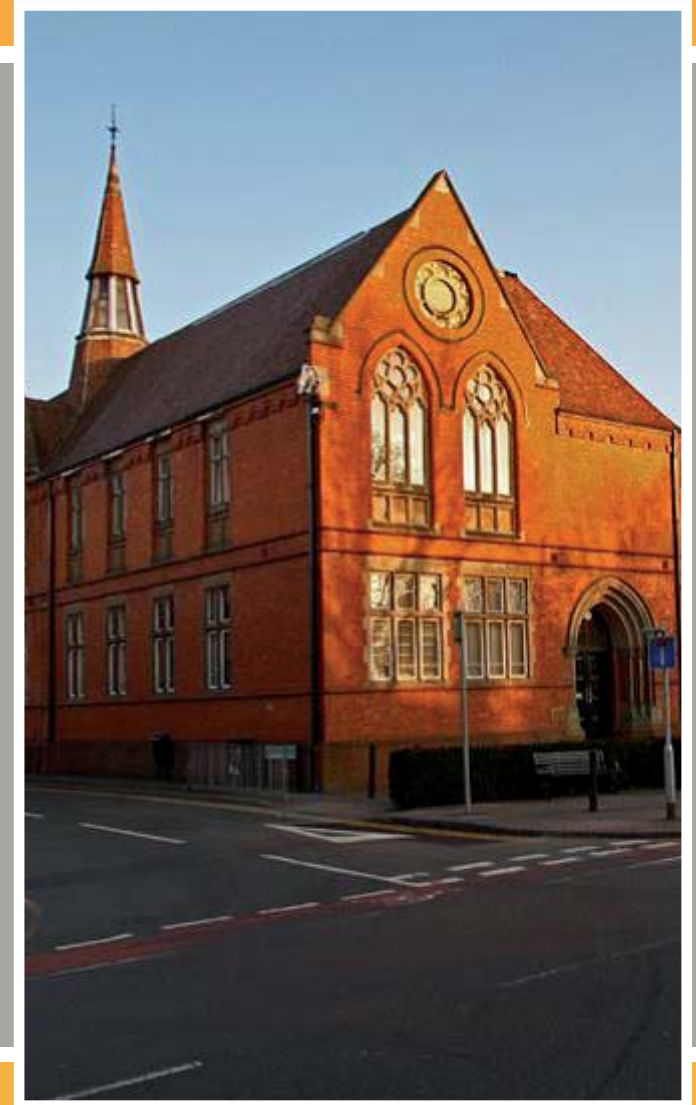
Redditch Borough is within the County of Worcestershire and borders Warwickshire County to the east and southeast. It is surrounded by Bromsgrove District to the west and north, Stratford District to the east and southeast and Wychavon District to the southwest.

**Redditch offers easy access to the West Midlands conurbation as well as to culturally rich areas such as Stratford upon Avon and naturally rich areas such as the Cotswolds.**

Redditch was formerly a market town until 1964 when it was designated as a New Town; a status it maintained up until 1985. During this period the Redditch Development Corporation was responsible for the growth of Redditch, predominantly to the east of the town.

The development of Redditch as a New Town has provided some key advantages, most notably around its excellent transport links. However, whilst the transport links and strategic location of the area are good, the legacy of the new town development for the town centre has resulted in a number of disjointed and disconnected areas being developed.

**The focus for this prospectus, therefore, is to try and address these issues and work towards repairing some of the urban fabric in the town as well as providing new development opportunities to further enhance and develop the town's offer.**



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## 02 Location



As a former new town, Redditch benefits from excellent transport infrastructure which links residential, commercial and business districts to strategic transport networks (both road and rail).

Birmingham International Airport is less than 45 minutes away and rail services depart from Redditch Town Centre every 20 minutes to Birmingham New Street, with onward national and international connections.

Redditch Town centre is located 14.5 miles south of the Birmingham conurbation and benefits from direct access to the strategic road network that this association brings.

Redditch is strategically well placed to benefit from the proposed growth surrounding Birmingham Airport and the new HS2 station.

In order for Redditch to remain an attractive proposition it is considered that investment in the town centre is required so that this locational advantage can be maximised.





# 03 Town Centre context

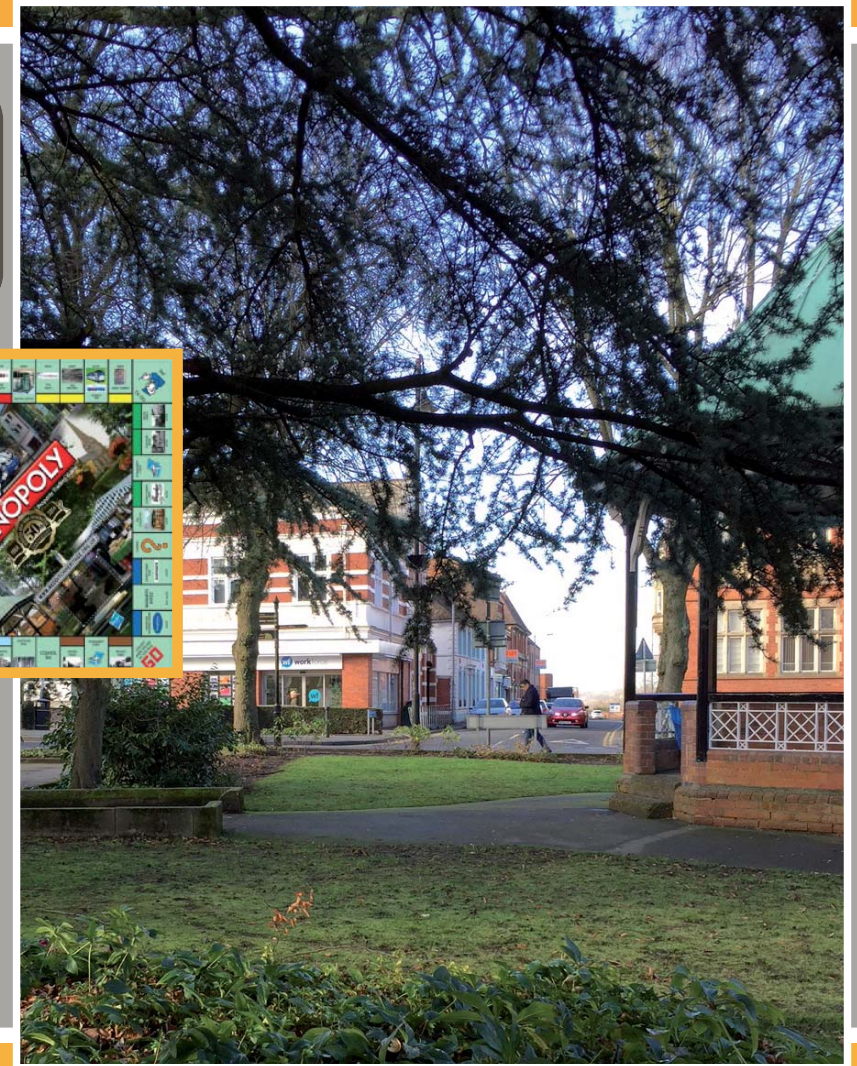
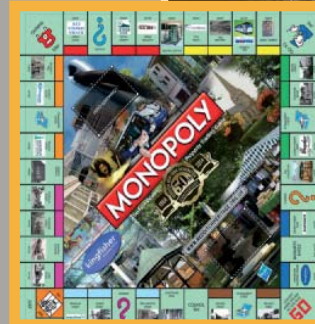


Redditch has a complex town centre which fulfils different roles and functions. Whilst Redditch has no 'High Street', the traditional heart of the centre is around Church Green and St. Stephens Church, with an outdoor market located at Church Green.

The main shopping focus of the town centre is the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Originally opened in the 1970's, the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in the main shopping area in Redditch and has undergone substantial development which has contributed to it becoming one of the largest covered shopping centres in the West Midlands.

Despite some of these competitive advantages, Redditch requires significant investment to continue the regeneration of the area ensuring it remains a vibrant and successful town centre for the future.

This is to ensure it keeps pace with nearby centres and provides an attractive offer to complement the investment proposed within the town as a whole, most notably the new residential communities and the development of the Redditch Eastern Gateway, which has the potential to attract new inward investment into the town. Providing a good town centre offer will be vital in attracting business to the area.



## 04 Why Redditch?



Despite the advantages, an unfortunate legacy of the new town has been the disconnection of the old town centre, as a result of an inner ring road which tightly encloses the area, severing it from its residential hinterlands and constraining development opportunities to enable town centre growth.

In order to tackle these problems it is considered that a targeted and focussed regeneration plan is required. This will build on the work already achieved through small improvements to the public realm and the larger investments made by the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.

It is clear that opportunities exist within the town centre environment to improve on what is already a good retail offer. However, some of this will require diversification from a reliance on retail and a shift towards a centre that is multi-functional and has people living, working and relaxing all within the environment.

This renaissance is essential if Redditch is to be able to compete effectively with nearby towns for economic activity and growth, and to attract more affluent residents and visitors into Redditch Town Centre.





# 05 Future Growth in Redditch Town Centre



This prospectus showcases an ambitious regeneration programme that would transform the face of Redditch Town Centre. There is now a one off opportunity for the Town Centre to regain some of its former significance through the release of surplus, outdated public sector buildings and when this space is combined with other private sector stakeholders land there are significant areas that can be brought forward for regeneration.

Redditch is identified as a 'Strategic Centre' within the GBSLEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The key diagram included within the SEP also confirms that Redditch is an expanding centre. This project has been established to unlock the potential that is available with the Town Centre through the re configuration and regeneration of the core area of the town.

The transformational change of Redditch Town Centre will not only provide further development opportunities but will allow for the Town Centre to develop in line with the proposed residential and commercial growth envisaged in the emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4. The Redditch Town Centre project will be transformational both in terms of the physical environment but also through delivering new job opportunities and providing new housing in a sustainable location. This will not only help to increase the prosperity and attractiveness of Redditch but would also help to deliver against the ambitious targets within the SEP to provide new jobs, houses and commercial space.



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## 06 Visioning Statement

A word cloud visualization of visioning statement keywords. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'Growth' and 'Future' being the largest. Other prominent words include 'Regeneration', 'People', 'Continuous Improvement', 'Embracing change', 'Outstanding', 'Strategic', 'Collaboration', 'Support', 'Energy', 'Dedication', 'Quality', 'Commitment', 'Professionalism', 'Opportunity', and 'Consistent'. The colors used are white, black, and orange.

Consistent  
Professionalism  
Growth  
Quality  
Commitment  
Future  
Outstanding  
Embracing change  
Dedication  
People  
Continuous Improvement  
Regeneration  
Opportunity  
Support  
Energy  
Strategic  
Development  
Collaboration

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# 07 Development Potential - Concept Plan



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## 08 Public Sector Review

The first phase of considering redevelopment within Redditch Town Centre has been via a public sector estate review known as the 'One Public Estate' initiative (OPE).

The public sector holds a significant real estate presence in Redditch town centre, which presents the public sector with a unique opportunity to initiate and drive economic growth, rationalisation and physical regeneration of the town. It is therefore important that the public sector helps to lever in further private sector investment in order to help to re-position Redditch and improve its fortunes.

The OPE Review process has included a comprehensive mapping of all public sector assets (freehold and leasehold) in the town centre was completed and property data collected from all of the public sector stakeholders to provide a framework for the review.

The majority of public sector assets in Redditch town centre are owned by either Redditch Borough Council or Worcestershire County Council.

Almost 90% of these assets in Redditch town are freehold with uses mainly as offices, retail units and schools but also including health services, community buildings and the police station, courts, fire station and library.

The long term vision of the review is to create well defined areas within the town centre all of which cohesively work towards its regeneration.



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# 09 OPE Recommendations

The key recommendations from the Review are as follows:

Deliver a new public sector 'hub' on publicly owned land situated on Church Road the new hub would provide space for co-location of public services, drive transformation and efficiency savings and would also free-up other assets within the town for redevelopment;

Convert the existing Redditch Town Hall for primarily residential use;

Demolish the current library and invest in new high quality public realm and potential new retail block fronting the Kingfisher Shopping centre.

Existing Police Station to co-locate with the fire & rescue service and create a new standalone hub meaning the existing site would be available for redevelopment;

The decisions made in relation to the public sector estate will help to frame the future development of the town. However, it is recognised that there are other areas, which do not have public sector involvement that also require intervention and a plan to regenerate them.

The remainder of this prospectus considers the visioning for Redditch Town Centre in its entirety, building on the work undertaken through the OPE initiative.



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# 10 Business Quarter



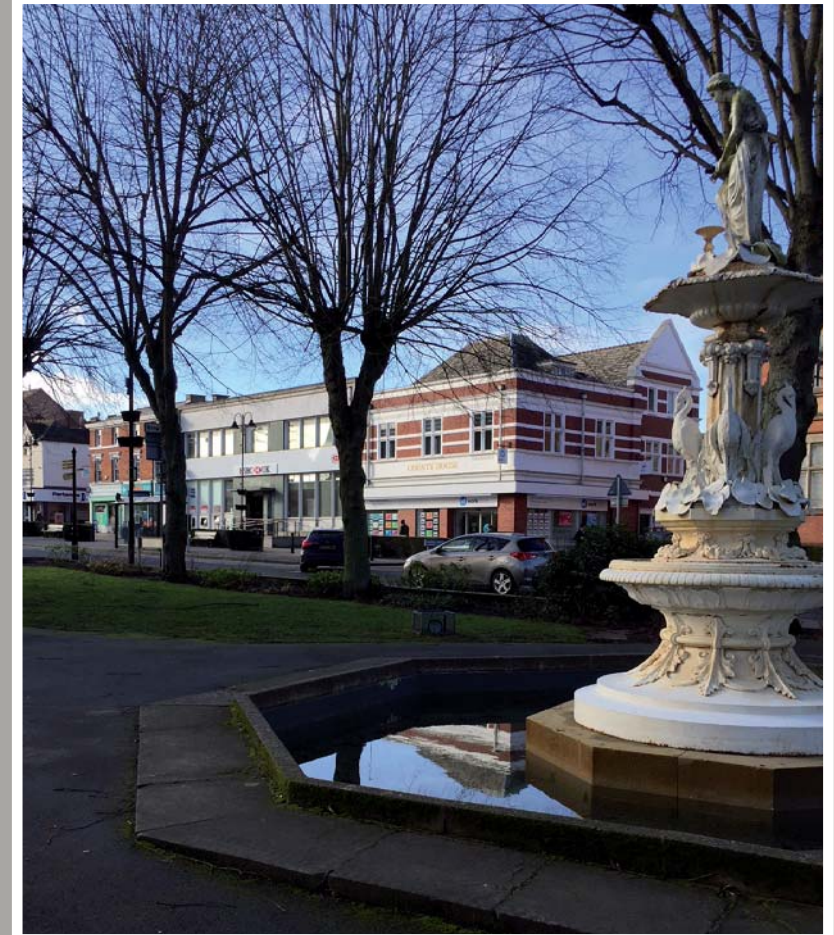
A new business quarter at Prospect Hill / Church Road and Church Green West, centred on a public sector hub utilising public sector assets.

The Church Road area has been identified as a development opportunity area, occupying a significant area within the Town Centre. The area has lots of character with a number of buildings that are locally or nationally listed within the Church Green conservation area.

The Smallwood House site, in conjunction with the adjoining land owned by the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) is seen to be the most developable site within the town centre for the new public sector services hub and has the advantage of overlooking Church Green.

This location is seen to be the most suitable and potentially available location for a new Public Services Hub due to its central town centre location and potential to revitalise an area identified for regeneration.

It is considered that investment in the area by the public sector will help to stimulate private sector investment. Given the other buildings within this location, and the site's close proximity to the railway station, it is considered that the future vision for this area would be focussed on being the 'business quarter' of the town.



# 11 Railway Gateway

The Railway Station is an important gateway into Redditch Town Centre. However, in its current state it provides a poor first impression of Redditch for anyone arriving by train, with the vacant and derelict Edward Street site adjacent to the Station site and the unattractive premises that front onto Unicorn Hill adjoining the Station car park.

Redditch Borough Council is currently working pro-actively with West Midlands Rail to develop a joined up approach to seeking the comprehensive regeneration of the Railway Gateway and to also pursue opportunities to improve and increase rail services between Redditch and Birmingham, as part of the announced £1 billion of investment in the West Midlands network.

The area is identified in the Local Plan as being an important strategic development site and it provides the opportunity to:

- Provide an appropriate Gateway development;
- Repair the urban fabric and provide integration between the Station and the Town Centre;
- Provide new development that is designed to preserve and enhance the character of the surrounding area;
- Offer new residential and commercial opportunities in a location that offers good access to services and facilities.

It will be important that key partners such as West Midlands Rail are engaged with the redevelopment of this important gateway.

Mixed use development centred on the Railway Station, focussed primarily on residential development but also some commercial opportunities.



# 12 Cultural/Leisure/Residential Quarter



Redevelopment of surplus public sector assets for a variety of uses including residential, commercial leisure/night time economy uses  
Redevelopment of private sector land to offer hotel and residential opportunities

The One Public Estate Place Review report considers the future of Redditch Town Hall and it is recommended that the Council should re-locate to a new Public services Hub on the Church Road site releasing the Town Hall for re-development or conversion.

The Place Review report recommends that the most viable option for the Town Hall is to convert it into a residential scheme creating 78 new units. Increased town centre residential provision should generate additional demand for leisure and cultural facilities and increase in spending in the local economy has the potential to draw new business and investment into the town centre.

Continue to promote the theatre and night time economy



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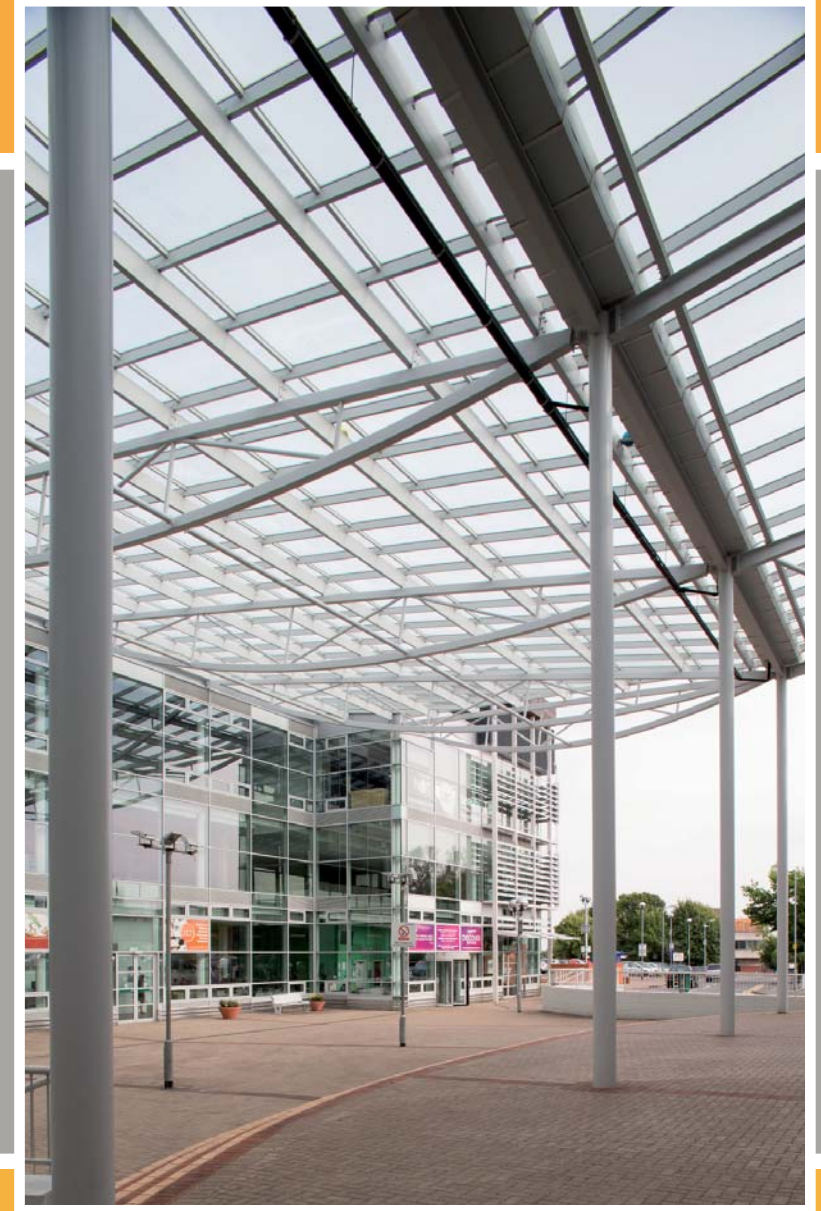


# 13 Learning Quarter



The Learning Quarter is anchored by the presence of Heart of Worcestershire College who occupy a significant area of land to the east of St. Stephen's Church. The College has invested in its Redditch campus in recent years with a variety of courses offered including construction, IT and Business'.

The focus for this area of town is on strengthening the existing role that Heart of Worcestershire College plays in supporting the town centre economy and as a key hub for developing the skills base of the Redditch area. The College has played an important role in shaping the emerging town centre regeneration and Place Review work and opportunities to further develop and expand the offer of the College within the town should continue to be explored. Furthermore, opportunities to improve the physical links between the College campus and the rest of the Town Centre needs to be identified and developed.



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# 14 Retail Hub



The Kingfisher Shopping Centre is actively benefitting from a multi-million pound investment programme, which has resulted in the creation of a new leisure and food hub, established a new fashion walk and revitalised the centre's central square.

Kingfisher Shopping Centre, which spans 920,000 sq ft, is anchored by leading high street names such as Debenhams, Next and Primark. The transformational work has seen Evesham Walk rejuvenated with modern, double storey shop fronts. The improved centre has encouraged H&M to upsize its unit to 23,000 sq ft, attracted 360 Play and The Range to the centre and brought a brighter and fresher environment for existing retailers.

In addition, the centre's food and leisure offer has developed into a dedicated leisure quarter, dubbed the 'Hub'. The vibrant area includes brands such as Pure Gym, Nandos, Prezzo, Real China, Delicious Desserts and a Vue cinema delivering a night-time economy for the town.

The Kingfisher Centre is an important asset for Redditch town centre. The continued development and diversification of the offer and land that the Centre owns around Redditch will be a vitally important element of helping to redefine and reshape the role of Redditch Town Centre as a whole. It is anticipated that the proposed additional public sector investment will create confidence in Redditch Town Centre as a place to invest and will help to entice more high quality occupiers into the town centre, including the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.



# 15 Public Realm



To create a sense of place and an improved environment it is vital that a clear public realm strategy is included to provide improved connectivity and legibility within the Town Centre.

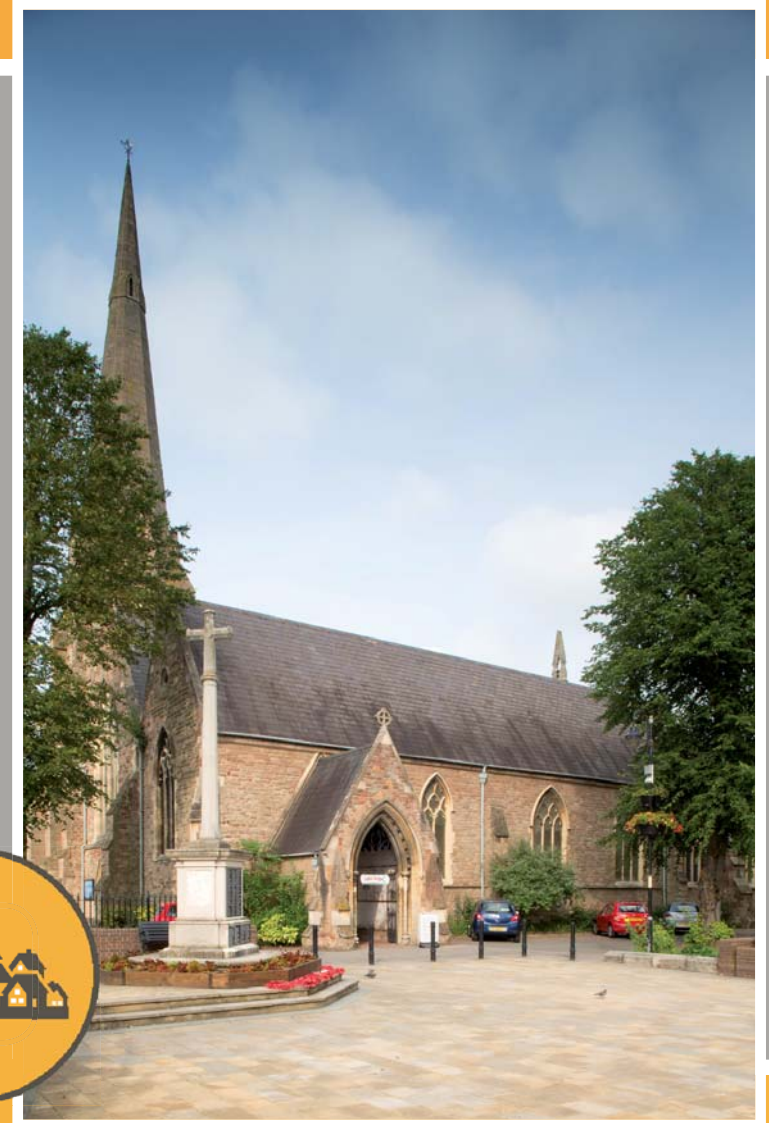
Development of new public realm within the town centre has commenced on site. Continued development of public spaces in each of the key areas and link key transport nodes such as the Railway Station with new development opportunities should continue to enhance the work already started;

An enhanced community space at Church Green and other public realm improvements to make the Town Centre feel more appealing to both residents and visitors.

Implementation of a new public/events space centred around the Palace Theatre and Town Hall;

Creation of public realm space and clear pedestrian links with small retail outlets and restaurants to create a more open and connected feeling between the Town centre and the entrance to the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.

Improved connectivity in terms of pedestrian linkages between areas outside of ring road, St Stephens Church, Town Hall/Library, Cinema and Railway Station.



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# 16 The Ring Road

Whilst providing access to the town centre, the ring road also separates the centre from its hinterland, preventing its further expansion and inhibiting pedestrian connectivity.

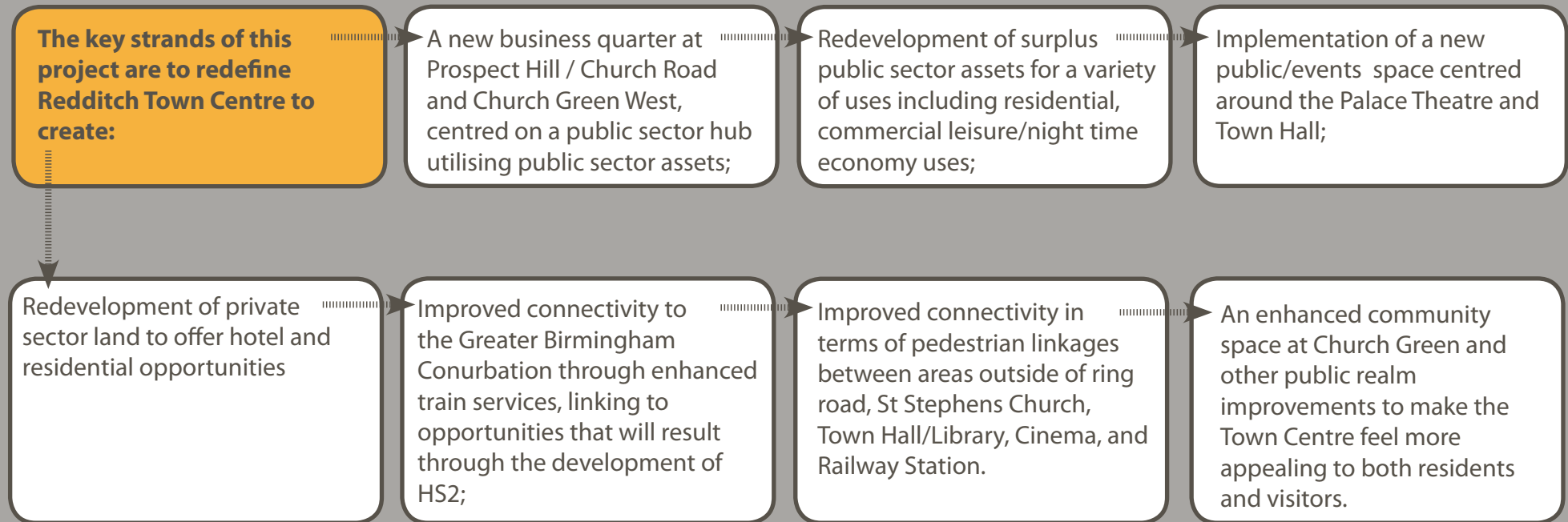
The primary purpose of the ring road, from the perspective of the visitor, is to provide access to the town centre and its car parks. This function does not however require the breadth and standard of carriageway which exists. The size of carriageway encourages speeds which are well above those associated with a normal town centre and respect for the pedestrian is limited. Therefore, the future of the road in relation to the town centre regeneration is key in terms of helping to redefine Redditch.

In order to consider this option in further detail there is a requirement to review the transport and connectivity within the Town Centre and explore options to break down the 'concrete collar' of the ring road. Work will include:

- Transport modelling
- Car parking Strategy
- Public transport review
- Potential re-alignment and/or rearrangement of traffic along the ring road
- Viability/design work to identify how the ring road can be improved for pedestrians and cyclists



# 17 Scale of Opportunity



# 18 Key Outputs



## Key outputs from the recommendations

Employment creation

Additional economic activity

Increased support for existing developments

An enhanced public realm

To act as a stimulus for future economic growth

A new public sector Hub

The proposals will result in an increase in revenues generated from Council Tax and Business rates



# 19 Challenges

The following challenges exist, some are specific to Redditch, others are a result of the current economic climate.

## Site Ownership

A number of the opportunity sites are held within various ownerships. The extent to which local authority assistance will be available through compulsory purchase powers must be established before implementation of the strategy can be considered in detail.

## Critical Mass

It will not be possible to find an immediate solution for each and every opportunity site. Critical mass, particularly in the retail and leisure field, is an important factor and this can only be achieved by concentrating on a small number of opportunity sites initially.

## Retailer Demand

In the current economic climate, property development is strongly end-user led. It is difficult to predict future demand and therefore a possible mismatch between the ability of the regeneration partnership to respond to current requirements can be an issue.

## Funder/Developer Demand

Securing public and private investment and funding is crucial in delivering the site opportunities set out in this prospectus. Furthermore, there will need to be consideration of the most appropriate delivery vehicle.

## 20 Next Steps

Undertake feasibility work to define the opportunity areas in more detail, work to include:

Masterplanning work;

High level costings;

More detailed architectural concept plans;

Transport modelling and testing of proposals

Secure political support from Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council for the vision set out in this prospectus and proposals that relate to their specific land/property assets.

Establish a 'Redditch Regeneration Board' led by Redditch Borough Council and comprising of key stakeholders to drive forward the delivery of a defined regeneration programme.

Establish resources and capacity required to deliver the projects set out in this prospectus.

Scope potential delivery vehicles and identify a preferred option including potential funding streams.

In addition, an economic assessment of the overall project will be undertaken which will help to define the economic potential that exists within the town centre. In parallel with this work will be the requirement to engage and work closely with key stakeholders who are pivotal to delivering the proposals considered within this document.