

**Vision and Capital  
Delivery Programme**  
for Bedford and Kempston  
Town Centres



**BEDFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Our Vision</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Mission</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Values</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Strategy for the Town Centres</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Delivery Programme</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Operational Priorities</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Physical Regeneration Projects</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Project Funding .....	14
<b>Future Projects</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Joint Working - Capital Projects for Bedford Town Centre</b> .....	<b>18</b>

## Our best days are yet to come!

This is a really exciting time for both Bedford and Kempston towns, and we are thrilled to bring you along on the journey. This document sets out our vision and a delivery programme that will continue to evolve our towns for years to come.

We all want to be proud of where we live. Feeling part of a community is important to so many; this can be the community that you live in, work in, socialise with and much more.

To do this, though, we need change. Our town centres need to be relevant. We have a lot of good things in both of our town centres, but to move to the next step we need to take action. We are thrilled to share with you our thoughts and ideas as part of a focused programme of how we can make our towns places that we can continue to be proud of.

These new opportunities should be embraced by the whole borough – town centres we want to use, and investors want to invest in. Whether it be new shops, offices, bars, restaurants, entertainment – you name it. With more on offer, improving how you access town centres, and making them more family friendly, we hope that you will be encouraged to continue to use them or come back if you have not used them for a while.

Throughout the development of this document, we have spoken and engaged with you, something that has allowed us to hear your views and ideas to transform our town centres. We have listened to you and incorporated what you have said into the delivery programme. Our thanks go to Kempston Town Council and other key stakeholders for their engagement and input.

These centres are facing challenges, including the change in retail habits with increased online demand and falling footfall, and action is needed now to ensure that the economy remains fit for the future. We have in front of us an amazing opportunity to boost local businesses and help our towns become go-to destinations for all – and we cannot wait to share this journey with you!



**Tom Wootton**

*Elected Mayor and Leader  
of Bedford Borough Council*



**Andrea Spice**

*Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Planning  
and Prosperity (including Town Centres)*





## Our Vision

“ Create town centres that people are **proud to live in** and **excited to visit** ”

## Our Mission

To see our town centres become vibrant hubs for the Borough – offering shopping, services for the community, leisure, culture and arts, business opportunities and to be a great place to live.

This means we need to continue to improve our town centres for those who live and work in them, as well as becoming a place that attracts new visitors and provides a family-friendly offer.



## Our Values



## Strategy for the Town Centres

- Building on and enhancing the variety of markets
- Creating distinctive areas that reflect our heritage, cultures and unique features
- Delivering environmental and public space improvements
- Developing key sites
- Encouraging people to discover lesser known, interesting areas
- Ensuring that they are well maintained, clean and accessible
- Improving the approaches that lead into them
- Using the river and parks to create more appealing and connected environments
- Working in partnership to make them even safer, more welcoming and attractive

## Our Delivery Programme

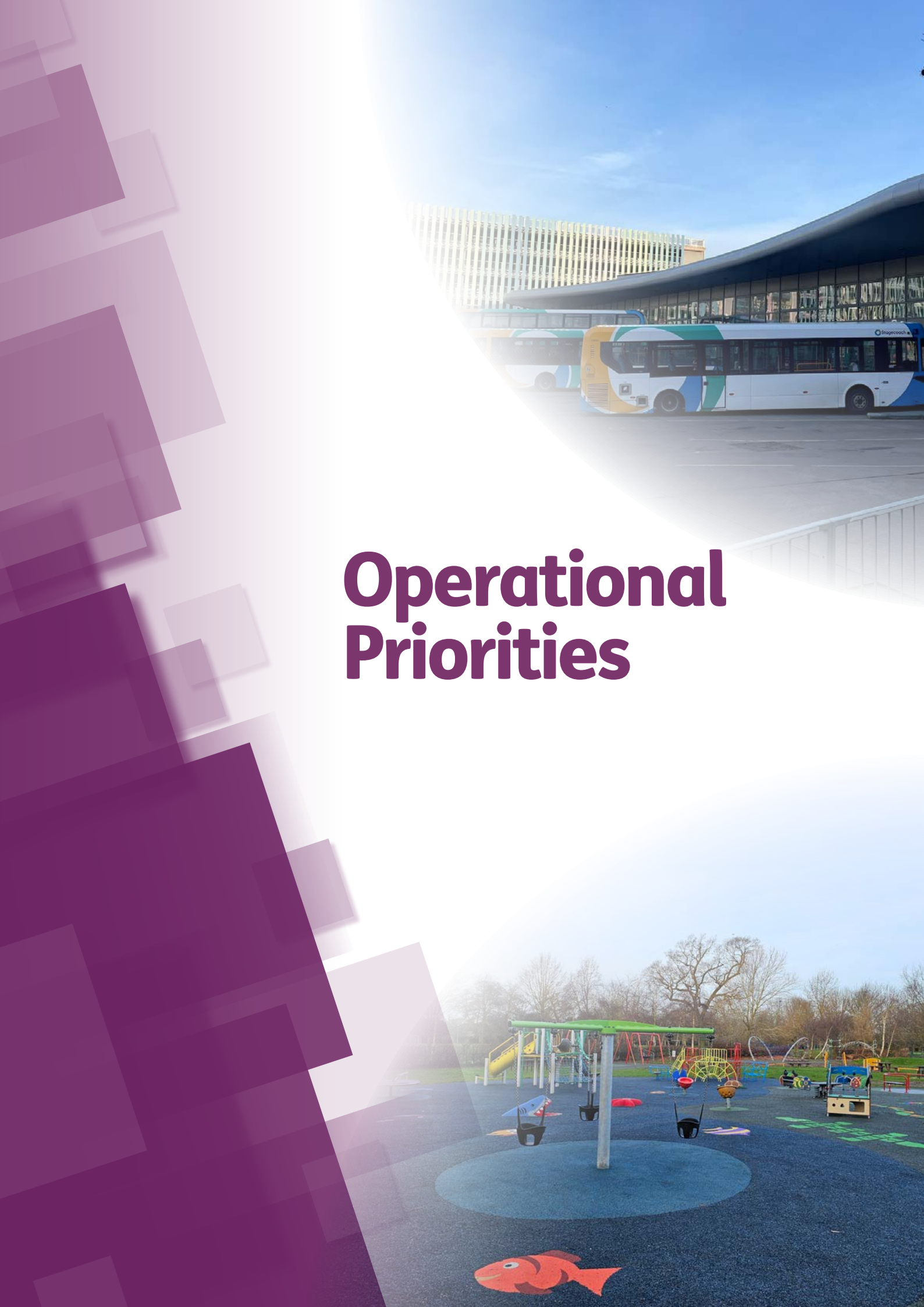
This is a high-level delivery programme that sets out the priorities for investment in our town centres going forward. It includes operational priorities and deliverable capital projects, as well as plans we would like to bring forward in the future. Short summaries of each project have been included and highlight the changes that we will deliver in our town centres.

Funding for these projects will come from various sources, including the Council's Town Centre Capital Fund, monies secured from developers, private investment, and external government grants such as heritage and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Some projects will be delivered entirely by Bedford Borough Council, some will be steered by the Council working in partnership with other agencies and the private sector, and a few will be delivered solely by the private sector with the support and promotion of the Council.







# Operational Priorities

## Operational Priorities

**These are the things you told us are the most important in creating town centres that people are proud to live in and excited to visit.**

*Throughout the delivery of many of the operational priorities listed below, work will be undertaken through partnership working with key town centre stakeholders. By working together, we can facilitate and deliver positive changes.*

### **Bedford Bus Station:**

The bus station is a hub for residents and visitors to the town. Work to ensure it is well maintained and clean has been a priority for the Council and will continue to be so. We are also looking at ways to help users feel safer.

### **Car Parking in Bedford:**

To encourage people to use Bedford town centre and to support local businesses, four-hours' free parking at Allhallows car park was introduced in August 2023. This provision will continue, and the Council are considering extending the same offer to Lurke Street.

### **Clean and Refresh:**

We will continue the ongoing work to improve the look and feel of Bedford and Kempston town centres. This includes removing unnecessary poles, signs and railings to make it easier for all to use our pavements, and general cleaning of the town centres. Work is already being undertaken to improve the cleanliness of our facilities such as car parks, as well as civic spaces in the town centres like Church Square, Bedford High Street and the Saxon Centre.

### **Community Toilet Scheme in Bedford:**

We recognise that with the loss of some facilities, the current provision is out of date. Work to develop the current scheme will be undertaken. This includes upgrading facilities, improving signage, and updating the website to accurately reflect the premises that can be used. Alongside this, we recognise the need for accessible baby feeding and changing facilities.

### **Directional Signage:**

Our town centres have great areas to explore but some are often overlooked. We will undertake an assessment of the signage already in the towns and build upon existing setups to highlight the different, interesting areas and attractions the towns have to offer.

### **Events, Arts and Culture:**

We have a wonderful diverse arts and cultural scene in the Borough. We want to grow this in order to add much wanted vibrancy into our towns and provide an alternative experience for all. Working together with local artists, creative groups and communities, we want to develop an exciting programme of events. Alongside this we will work to develop the cultural offer through promotion of our museums, theatres and galleries.

**Green Space:**

Green spaces in and around the town centres are vital for our communities and we plan to continuously work to develop them; opening up and utilising green spaces for residents and visitors of all ages to enjoy. This includes parks in both Bedford and Kempston: such as Bedford Park; Russell Park; Mill Meadows; and Addison Howard Park.

**Marketing and Branding:**

Our town centres have a lot to offer to residents, visitors and businesses and we need to get the messages across more strongly to include a focus on our independent offer.

**Markets:**

Continually developing the Markets offer in Bedford and Kempston is a key activity and this will be achieved by working with traders, visitors, and residents. We will develop Bedford Charter Market to become a thriving hub on both Wednesdays and Saturdays, as well as hosting “special” markets in both town centres offering new and exciting experiences .

**Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour:**

By working with partners and local businesses to tackle issues around crime and anti-social behaviour, we can make our town centres feel even safer. This will encourage visitors to return, as well as making it more attractive to those who already use it and help support the local economy too.

**Supporting Business:**

Working with our local businesses has a positive effect on the town centre economy. Regular engagement will be undertaken with independent businesses and the night-time and evening economies, as well as encouraging new ventures.

**Transportation:**

Work will continue to improve the road networks in and around our town centres and reduce congestion. We will encourage and facilitate a variety of sustainable transport options as well as continuing to work with bus companies.

**Visitor Information Centre:**

Developing the offer for the visitor economy in Bedford could involve a new physical Visitor Information Centre, but might also include raising the profile of the service currently on offer at The Higgins Bedford.







# Physical Regeneration Projects



## Physical Regeneration Projects

The intention is that these projects will be delivered over the next two years as they have funding identified. All projects and their delivery are subject to final confirmations.

### BEDFORD

#### **Bedford Corn Exchange - Interim Refurbishments:**

Work will be undertaken to improve the Bedford Corn Exchange by upgrading the facilities and improving the building.

#### **Goldington Road Safety Improvements:**

We will install new crossings, near the small island at the top of the roundabout close to the rugby ground, to manage the flow of, and improve safety for pedestrians. As a result of this improvement walking routes will be enhanced for those living in the Goldington Road area and residents and visitors encouraged to explore the town centre before and after rugby games.

#### **Harpur Square and St. Paul's Square:**

This project will redevelop the Squares, upgrading the space to support a variety of outdoor events, activities, and performances. This will be achieved through the creation of flexible public space by improving pedestrian accessibility, reconfiguring the highway, resurfacing and installing new event infrastructure.

#### **Horne Lane Environmental Improvements:**

We aim to make the area more attractive and safer for pedestrians by creating a more open and inviting space, especially for those using the area in the evenings. This will include removing barriers, raising the tree crowns and brightening up the area.

#### **Howard Centre Refurbishment:**

As part of the project to redevelop Horne Lane, the Howard Centre will also be refurbished. This will develop the shopping centre into a more modern space with improved lighting, new flooring and an upgraded canopy.





## Master Planning for Major Redevelopments:

### Ford End Road Quarter:

The plan is to redevelop and regenerate the area for residential, educational, and open space use. It includes a mix of types and size of dwellings, working alongside the existing retail provision in the Ford End Road local centre.

### Kingsway Quarter:

Plans for redevelopment to enhance the area, include the establishment of a mixed-use development, comprising residential properties and a mix of retail, business and community uses.

### Mayes Yard:

The comprehensive redevelopment of this significant area will transform the town with the site becoming a vibrant culture hub incorporating the Corn Exchange and Central Library as well as the former Debenhams and other surrounding properties. Options proposed include a boutique-style experience for independent retail and commercial uses alongside an outdoor hospitality space on the ground floor while upper floors of the development will include high quality residential units.

### Prebend Street Quarter (South):

The plan is for a comprehensive development of the Prebend Street area, comprising of the car park to the South and Borough Hall, to provide quality urban living space, new car parking and welcome improvements to the overall amenity.



### Mayes Yard 'Meanwhile' Uses:

As part of the ambitious redevelopment of Mayes Yard, this project will open up ground floor space to bring it back into use. Our idea is to allow for pop up retail or community space in the town centre prior to the full redevelopment taking place.

### Midland Road Environmental Improvements:

As a key entrance into the town centre from the railway station, Midland Road will see public realm improvements such as resurfacing, footway-widening, decluttering of the path and the introduction of new trees and shrubs. The project will also introduce a shopfront improvement scheme to enhance the quality of the buildings on the road.



**Mill Street Development:**

The development of this area will aim to continue the work recently undertaken on the High Street to create better space for pedestrians and improve key walkways. This will include road layout improvements and repaving as well as introducing traffic calming measures.

**Railway Station Quarter:**

The comprehensive redevelopment of the area around Bedford Midland Station to create an active gateway to the town. This will include the delivery of new public spaces, community uses and new cycle facilities. Changes to the station approach will encourage sustainable transport methods.

**Tavistock Street Shopfront Improvements:**

This project aims to build on the successful work undertaken to historic buildings on the High Street to improve and make it more attractive. This will be achieved by improving the building facades and shop fronts, preserving the buildings for future use and retaining heritage.

**Town Centre Environmental and Connectivity Improvements:**

Improvements to the pedestrian and cycle paths in a variety of locations in the town centre aim to aid flow and connection. This includes crossing improvements at Dame Alice Street to make the junction safer; new pedestrian and cycle facilities at Bromham Road / Hurst Grove; provision of active travel at Castle Road through the installation of new crossings and widened paths; and a redesigned junction at Greyfriars to improve public transport, cycle and pedestrian connectivity.



## KEMPSTON

### **B531 Footway Improvements:**

Resurfacing of the paths along the B531 in Kempston will be carried out. As a result, the convenience and safety of pedestrians using this route will be improved.

### **Back Channel Bridge:**

This project will improve the access across the bridge between Great Denham and Kempston. The work carried out will remove the steps on the bridge, therefore improving the accessibility of it for all. This will make the area more appealing to visit.

### **The Grange and Addison Howard Park:**

Refurbishment and remodelling of The Grange will be undertaken to bring it back into use. The building will provide vital community space within the park grounds. There is also potential to convert the outbuildings into small business units. Complementing this work, the installation of a civic space within the park, which works alongside its sports and recreational uses, aims to attract more families and residents to spend time and enjoy the area.

### **Kempston Mill Bridge:**

The existing structure will be replaced with a new higher apex bridge which will allow for the waterway to be used more effectively and improve safety for those crossing.

### **New Signage:**

New signage will be installed in order to develop links between the town centre, Addison Howard Park and the River Great Ouse, encouraging residents and visitors to explore Kempston's riverside location.

### **Saxon Centre - Public Realm Improvements:**

Whilst the Saxon Centre Master Plan is being developed, interim works to improve the visual environment around it will be undertaken, alongside the installation of a new secure cycle parking unit.

### **Saxon Centre Master Plan:**

This project will create a master plan to regenerate and revitalise the Saxon Centre and the space around the building to encourage footfall. This includes plans for the office block, increasing community space and environmental improvements which will improve the look and feel of this area.



## Project Funding

The table below shows the funding sources for those projects we have highlighted for delivery. The costs associated with each project are estimated and are subject to change.

Project	Indicative Funding Source	2024/25	2025/26
Programme Manager	Town Centre Capital Fund	£75,000	£75,000
<b>Bedford</b>			
Bedford Corn Exchange - Interim Refurbishments	Town Centre Capital Fund	£250,000	£2.25m
Goldington Road Safety Improvements	Town Centre Capital Fund	£100,000	-
Horne Lane Environmental Improvements	Town Centre Capital Fund	£100,000	-
Howard Centre Refurbishment	Town Centre Capital Fund	£250,000	-
Master Planning: Ford End Road Quarter	Town Centre Capital Fund	-	£250,000
Master Planning: Kingsway Quarter	Town Centre Capital Fund	-	£250,000
Master Planning: Mayes Yard	Town Centre Capital Fund	£250,000	-
Master Planning: Prebend Street Quarter (South)	Developer Led	TBC	
Mayes Yard 'Meanwhile' Uses	Town Centre Capital Fund	£200,000	-
Mill Street Development	Town Centre Capital Fund	-	£1.5m
Tavistock Street Shopfront Improvements	Town Centre Capital Fund	£500,000	-
Harpur Square and St. Paul's Square	Town Deal	£4.98m	
Midland Road Environmental Improvements	Town Deal	£4.41m	
Railway Station Quarter	Town Deal	£4.1m	
Town Centre Environmental and Connectivity Improvements	Town Deal	£3.12m	
<b>Kempston</b>			
B531 Footway Improvements	Town Centre Capital Fund	-	£800,000
The Grange and Addison Howard Park	Town Centre Capital Fund	-	£2.5m
New Signage	Town Centre Capital Fund	£50,000	-
Saxon Centre - Public Realm Improvements	Town Centre Capital Fund	£100,000	-
Saxon Centre Master Plan	Town Centre Capital Fund	£250,000	-
Back Channel Bridge	Developer Funded	£600,000	
Kempston Mill Bridge	Developer Funded	-	£1.5m





# Future Projects



WELCOME TO  
KEMPSTON

## Future Projects

*In the future, we would like to deliver the following projects.*

### **BEDFORD**

#### **Bridges:**

Ideas are being developed to install new bridges in a number of locations within the town centre which could improve access for pedestrians as well as vehicles.

#### **Bromham Road Cycle Bridge:**

The installation of a new bridge over the Midland Main Line is being considered, thus improving connectivity to the railway station for cyclists from the west. This aims to encourage active travel and sustainable transport modes, as well as relieving pressure on traffic in the area.

#### **Connectivity Improvements:**

To enhance first impressions of the entrances to our town centre, either by vehicle or foot, work will be carried out to improve the public realm and feel of Tavistock Street, St. Mary's Street and Lurke Street.

#### **Greyfriars Quarter (East):**

This is part of a major mixed-use redevelopment centred on the bus station and surrounding area (incorporating Saffron Close), providing high quality residential accommodation, improved retail offer and some office space, in conjunction with a more accessible, user friendly bus station environment. The development is being phased and complements the work already being undertaken at Greyfriars Quarter (North), with redeveloped housing, environmental and traffic flow improvements.

#### **James Street Passage:**

To make the Passage more usable, the project will redevelop this area between Midland Road and Church Square by improving the feeling of safety and making it more attractive.

#### **Prebend Street Quarter (North):**

This key area of change will complement the southern improvements and focus on providing much needed revitalisation of this key approach to the town centre. This could include new accommodation, amenity improvements as well as a new relief road to reduce congestion and improve connectivity. This will complement the work and strengthen the link to the Railway Station Quarter.

#### **Midland Road / Silver Street:**

Visual improvements to this area of the town centre aim to change the feel of it; opening it up and creating a central shopping area. This could include changes to the street furniture, planters and public art.



### **St. Mary's Garden:**

The area south of the river, opposite Riverside Bedford and next to Bedford College, is an underutilised area offering a quiet spot amongst the hustle and bustle of the town centre. Potential changes to this area could include better usage of the green space to encourage more dwell time, as well as improvements to and interpretation of the area around King's Ditch.

### **St. Paul's Square South:**

This project aims to revitalise the area on the north bank of the River Great Ouse through environmental improvements. The focus would be on making Charter Walk, behind the Court buildings, more attractive to complement the route along the Embankment. This could include greening the area and the installation of public art on a currently barren site.

### **St. Peter's Street Area Environmental Improvements:**

To encourage use of the land in and around St Peter's Street, this project will aim to brighten up the space through better utilisation of the green grassed area.



## **KEMPSTON**


### **Halsey Road Parade Improvements:**

We hope to develop a scheme that will improve the visual look of the parade of shops to build on the improved highways works.

### **Queens Bridge Access Improvements:**

We will deliver the required improvements to accessing the bridge from a variety of directions including the south-western riverbank for pedestrians and cyclists.



An aerial photograph of Bedford Town Centre, showing a dense urban area with various buildings, streets, and a large blue-roofed structure in the center. The image is partially obscured by a large, semi-transparent purple graphic on the left side of the page.

# **Joint Working - Capital Projects for Bedford Town Centre**



## Joint Working - Capital Projects for Bedford Town Centre

*There are many areas of our town centres that have the potential for significant development but are owned or being delivered by external bodies. Through working closely with these stakeholders to discuss, plan and deliver these projects, the Council aims to ensure we support them in the development and regeneration of our town centre.*

### **Bedford Blues' and Health Care Village:**

The creation of a new health village alongside a redeveloped Bedford Blues' site, will provide top-class leisure and wellbeing services. The site also has the opportunity for new housing development close to the Town Centre.

### **Broadway Quarter:**

Focusing on the area around the Broadway car park, this site has been highlighted as an area for redevelopment to create an impressive gateway to the High Street.

### **Church Arcade:**

The Church Arcade is located in a popular area of the town centre. Through working with partners, the redevelopment of this area could complement the other works happening in the west of the town centre.

### **Greyfriars Quarter (North):**

Redevelopment plans for Greyfriars North are currently underway. The Greyfriars Partnership brings together BPHA, Bedford Borough Council and Homes England to deliver the creation of a new neighbourhood. The plans include an increased number of houses, comprising both social and private ownership, as well as community, commercial and educational space.

### **Greyfriars Quarter (South):**

This project focuses on the former police station and 'QD Block' located in the Greyfriars area of the town centre. To transform this area there will be a mixed development of residential and commercial units.

### **Lime Street:**

The site on the corner of Lime Street and Harpur Street has been highlighted as a potential area for redevelopment.



